



CIRCULATION ELEMENT WHITE PAPER NO. 1

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SETTING

INTRODUCTION

According to the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), by 2030 the six-County region will be home to 22.9 million residents and 10.2 million jobs, representing a 38 percent and 36 percent increase over year 2000, respectively. From 1960 to 2000, while the population more than doubled, the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) increased by about 350 percent and State highway miles increased less than 30 percent. These growth forecasts point to total daily delay from congestion increasing from 2.2 million person-hours in 2000 to 5.4 million person-hours by 2030.

In the context of this robust regional growth forecast, Los Angeles County, the Westside Cities, and Beverly Hills will experience more modest growth. Currently, Beverly Hills is projected to experience annual population and employment growth rates of about 0.6 percent and 1.1 percent, respectively, over the next 10 years. Given the City's geographic location and that the Westside is job-rich and home to the region's largest concentration of activity centers; the City of Beverly Hills is disproportionately affected by regional growth influences, especially trips attracted to and through Beverly Hills. The City's daytime population is a reflection of these influences, and these factors. Based on 2000 Census data, the City's daytime commuter population is slightly greater than the resident population. When estimates of tourists, shoppers, employees, users of professional and other services in Beverly Hills, and transit riders are included, the City's daytime population approaches 300,000, compared to the 2005 35,930 resident population who, along with hotel occupants, constitute the nighttime population. Some of the key regional growth influences include UCLA/Westwood, Miracle Mile/Museum Row, Century City, Cedars Sinai Medical Center, LAX Expansion, Playa Vista, Hollywood and West Hollywood. This reality presents a major challenge to mobility in the City and is a major driver of the significant regional through trips affecting the City.

For example, the most recent license plate survey data indicates about 25-40 percent through regional trips on Wilshire Boulevard within the City limits. A more extensive cordon study would more accurately determine the levels of regional through traffic, as well as total traffic, in both the east-west and north-south travel directions.

CURRENT REGIONAL TRAVEL PATTERNS AND MODES

Regional travel to and from Beverly Hills is via the Sepulveda Pass, the Cahuenga Pass, the Santa Monica Boulevard Corridor (including Burton Way/Beverly Boulevard connections), Wilshire, Sunset, Olympic and San Vicente Boulevards (east-west routes), Robertson and La Cienega Boulevards (north-south routes from the Santa Monica Freeway), and Benedict, Beverly Glen, and Coldwater Canyons (north-south connections to San Fernando Valley). Figure 1 shows the regional context, including current traffic volumes.

With the exception of the current and proposed Metro Rapid buses on Wilshire, Santa Monica and Beverly Boulevards, no major regional public transit service expansion is likely to be implemented in the near future for Beverly Hills. The proposed Exposition Light Rail Transit (LRT) line from downtown Los Angeles to Culver City (and ultimately Santa Monica) will have little direct effect on the Beverly Hills area. Recent pronouncements by Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky regarding extending the Metro Red Line subway from Wilshire Boulevard at Western Avenue to the coast in Santa Monica are positive, but that is likely to be more than a decade away at the earliest. Notwithstanding this relatively long time frame for implementing light and heavy rail transit, it is in the City's best interest to continue to support implementation of a viable, integrated regional public transit system building upon the support expressed through adoption of the *Westside Mobility Study*. Now is the time for the City to formulate policy and strategies geared toward immediate and long-range support for the timing and alignment of heavy rail projects that best serve the City's interests.

In the past, light rail and monorail have been suggested to serve the Beverly Hills region, however the noise, visual and other impacts associated with these transit modes, combined with the significantly greater capacity of a heavy rail infrastructure may make these modes a less viable alternative.

Anyone who has followed development and travel patterns over the past several years knows that the Los Angeles Basin and the Westside Cities (SCAG subregion) are experiencing significant infill, adaptive reuse and densification. Traffic and congestion are consistently one of the top concerns of citizens, based on quality-of-life polling. So, the reality is that congestion is increasing and people are increasingly modifying their travel patterns accordingly and will continue to do so until local and regional traffic improves. It is anticipated that intelligent transportation system (ITS) improvements to the arterial street network will be accomplished throughout the Westside in the next five to 10 years. Congestion pricing for rationing scarce peak hour freeway capacity is still just a gleam in the transportation economist's eye. Ultimately, a well-conceived public transit system integrating light and heavy rail, bus rapid transit, and local and shuttle bus operations offers the best long-term hope for improving mobility on the Westside.

PLANNED AND PROPOSED FUTURE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

The following are planned and/or proposed significant transportation projects that would have an effect on travel conditions to, from, through and within Beverly Hills:

Regional Freeway/Highway System

- I-405 Carpool Lanes
 - southbound from Waterford Street to Century Boulevard
 - northbound from Century Boulevard to the Santa Monica Freeway
 - northbound from the Santa Monica Freeway to U.S. 101 (project proposed with estimated cost of \$500 million)
- Santa Monica Freeway Carpool Lanes (proposed in *Westside Mobility Study*¹)

¹ The *Westside Mobility Study*, completed in October 2003, was initiated by the Westside Cities (Beverly Hills, West Hollywood, Culver City and Santa Monica) to take a multijurisdictional approach to addressing regional transportation needs.

- Santa Monica Transit Parkway (I-405 to western City limit)
- Wilshire Boulevard and Santa Monica Boulevard intersection improvements (including possible grade-separation of Santa Monica under Wilshire) proposed in *Westside Mobility Study*

Regional Public Transit System

- Metro Rapid Line 714
-serving Santa Monica Boulevard upon completion of Transit Parkway
- Adding articulated buses to the existing line on Wilshire Boulevard including possible dedicated bus lanes
- Exposition LRT from downtown Los Angeles to Culver City (and ultimately Santa Monica) proposed in the *Westside Mobility Study*
- Metro Red Line subway western. (An extension from current Western Avenue/Wilshire Boulevard terminus has been proposed by Mayor Villaraigosa and others)

Signal Synchronization

- In concert Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), transit signal priority will be installed throughout Beverly Hills. This will speed bus service along Wilshire, Olympic, La Cienega, Beverly and Santa Monica Boulevards and enhance overall vehicular flow through the City. It is anticipated that the installation will be complete in May 2006.

Trip Reduction Alternatives (Transportation Demand Management)

- E-commerce (work-telecommuting, information, contacts, shopping, entertainment and education)
- Alter land use patterns to promote alternatives to trip making, i.e. Mixed Use, Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)
- Transportation Demand Management (TDM)
- Bicycle routes (a regional route currently discontinuous through City)

Of the trip reduction alternatives listed above, none are likely to produce trip reductions that result in significant congestion relief due to their lack of applicability to the unique circumstances of Beverly Hills. For example, although the City is a major employment center there are no large employers with significant numbers of employees located within viable carpooling distance of each other, so employer-based TDM programs are limited in scope. There may be limited opportunities for mixed use or TOD on along commercially-zoned streets if a concern for the fiscal impacts of significant displacement of commercial uses by housing on the major corridors, especially Wilshire Boulevard, results in limiting these land uses. Finally, the City has not provided opportunities for in-street bicycle lanes due to concern for the safety of cyclists on the heavily congested corridors that are the most likely routes for regional bicycle travel (Wilshire, Santa Monica and La Cienega Boulevards). The City will need to revisit its policy on bicycle paths as it considers future improvements to Santa Monica Boulevard that provide the opportunity to establish a regional bike path linkage.

IMPLICATIONS FOR GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

In the long term, regional public transit solutions can be expected to provide the greatest solution to local mobility, but they require active City participation in the regional process in order to assure that regional solutions best serve the City's interest. The Westside Council of Governments and the *Westside Mobility Study* represent good examples of engaging circulation issues at a regional and sub-regional scale and where the City is on record to support an extension of the Metro Red Line subway. It will be necessary to develop a strategic approach to address the regional growth in traffic over the long term. The current political environment appears to provide an ideal situation for Beverly Hills to take advantage of the potentially positive support they are likely to get from local, regional and state agencies for expansion of the public transportation project that would have the greatest impact on the City of Beverly Hills in the years to come: the westerly extension of the Metro Red Line subway line.

With regard to the possible subway extension, the City needs to be actively engaged in the route alternatives, station location and environmental clearance process. With a western subway extension along a Wilshire Boulevard alignment, as the line approaches the City's eastern limit, there are two logical route alignment options: either continue straight under Wilshire Boulevard or turn northerly along San Vicente Boulevard to either Burton Way or Third Street to join Santa Monica Boulevard and then westerly toward the Wilshire Boulevard intersection and onward toward Century City. The Wilshire alignment would likely have two stations within the City; while the San Vicente alignment would likely have a Beverly Center/Cedars Sinai station and one within Beverly Hills. In either scenario, a station location would likely be accessible to the Business Triangle, however, a San Vicente alignment would preclude location of a station on the eastern part of Wilshire Boulevard in Beverly Hills.

It behooves the City to build on the efforts of the Westside Cities Council of Governments to develop a strategy to use the potential influence of the City of Los Angeles, MTA, and the State of California to complete these projects, in particular the subway extension. Avoiding continued deterioration in mobility or slowing the rate of deterioration within the City of Beverly Hills is heavily dependent on the ability of the regional transportation system to accommodate much of the increases in travel demand that would be consistent with these forecasts.



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