



July 14, 2015

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx,

The Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council (“DLANC”) urges the inclusion of Phase Two of Metro's Purple Line subway extension in the U.S. Department of Transportation's Fiscal Year 2016 New Starts Report. DLANC firmly believe that this extension will pay dividends in economic development and improve the quality of life for residents of the Downtown Area and Los Angeles as a whole.

First, it is important to note there is no direct freeway route from Downtown Los Angeles to the northern Westside area that will be served by Phase Two of the Purple Line extension. Commuters must take congested surface streets over ten miles to travel between these residential and economic hubs. Thus, this extension will not be redundant with any existing high-speed transportation infrastructure. Two stations will be constructed as part of this phase of the subway extension. One station will be placed in downtown Beverly Hills, an area of considerable tourism and retail activity. The other station will be constructed in Century City, a hub of employment in the Westside area.

The Beverly Hills station will connect tourists staying in Downtown to shopping and sightseeing, and connect tourists in Beverly Hills, with its 2000 hotel rooms, to Downtown. This will help foster more hospitality activity in both regions, bringing money from all over the world into the economy of Los Angeles and potentially creating jobs in tourist-serving industries.

In addition, Phase Two of the Purple Line extension makes shopping on Rodeo Drive, a nice dinner out in Beverly Hills, or access to the Century City mall a much more viable option for the residents of Downtown. It also opens up the increasing number of restaurants, shopping, and entertainment possibilities in Downtown for employees in Century City and the residents of Beverly Hills. So businesses in these municipalities will enjoy an expanded customer base.

A dependable and consistent 25-minute commute between these regions can only help to foster economic opportunity and growth. There are a wide range of jobs represented in these municipalities, including restaurant, retail, hospitality, film industry, tech, and white-collar employment. Swift, reliable rail access to these jobs will ensure upward mobility and economic opportunities for a broad swath of Los Angeles's population.

Additionally, the construction of this extension is integral to ongoing residential development in a city that, according to the 2010 U.S. Census, already contains the greatest residential density in the country, despite the stereotype of L.A. as the pinnacle of sprawl. Transit oriented development enabled by this subway line may open up not only residential opportunities, but access to jobs for lower and middle-income citizens who find the economic burden of a car too onerous, or for those residents that prefer to live car-free.

The Purple Line extension will also help take pressure off of the roadways in the area. According to Metro, vehicle miles in the area of the Purple Line are expected to grow 26% by the extension's opening date, with no commensurate increase in road capacity possible. Construction of the Purple Line allows for the connection of the Los Angeles Westside to other existing and future Metro rail lines, express bus lines, and protected bicycle lanes, ultimately creating a more comprehensive Los Angeles transit system that does not wholly rely on the automobile.

At a certain density threshold, there simply isn't enough room on existing roadways for everyone in the city to drive. And there is no readily available land in metro Los Angeles to build more roads. As Los Angeles is seeing a shift from its historically sprawling residential construction to more density-creating in-fill residential construction, a comprehensive public transit system will become more critical to ensure that residents can get where they need to go without creating economy-stifling automotive gridlock. The Phase Two extension of the Purple Line is a crucial component of this extensive transit system that is critically integral to the future of Los Angeles.

As a final note, the construction of all three phases of the Purple Line extension is expected to create in the neighborhood of 52,500 direct and indirect jobs, according to the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation. And Phase Two is an integral part of this construction. Federal funding may greatly accelerate this project, and thus the creation of many of these 52,500 jobs so vital to the region and the country.

In short, it is difficult to overestimate the benefits of this project to the population of Downtown and to the greater Los Angeles area. Thank you very much for your consideration to include the Phase Two extension of the Purple Line subway in the Fiscal Year 2016 New Starts Report.

Sincerely,

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SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY DLANC BOARD ON JULY 14, 2015

Patricia Berman
DLANC President

Stephen Kane
DLANC Livability Committee Chair