



AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: March 4, 2014

Item Number: F-1

To: Honorable Mayor & City Council

From: Susan Healy Keene, AICP, Director of Community Development
Aaron Kunz, AICP, Deputy Director of Transportation

Subject: CONSIDERATION OF SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Attachments:

1. Graphics – North Santa Monica Blvd Reconstruction Project
2. Graphics – Photo Rendering Overlay Exhibits
3. Meeting Notices
4. Psomas Scope of Work Summary
5. Blue Ribbon Committee Notes
6. Memos to Blue Ribbon Committee
7. Committee Vote
8. Cities of West Hollywood and Los Angeles Correspondence
9. Public Correspondence

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council review the Santa Monica Boulevard Blue Ribbon Committee recommendations as outlined below and provide direction on how to proceed with detailed project design.

- Widen the existing curb-to-curb width to 66 feet to improve conditions for motor vehicles and bicycles. This requires a 3-foot widening from the northern curb face from Doheny Drive to Canon Drive and a 6-foot widening from Canon Drive to Walden Drive. The roadway between Wilshire Boulevard and the western City limits is planned to be widened as part of the development of the Hilton and 9900 Wilshire projects. The Committee voted 7 to 4 in favor.
- Stripe the pavement for bicycle lanes if the roadway is widened to 66 feet. The Committee voted 9 to 1 in favor with one abstention.

- Add landscaped medians where appropriate (with the condition that final design details are coordinated with the Fire and Police departments). Committee voted 11 to 0 in favor.

City Council action on the Blue Ribbon Committee's recommendations will be a determining factor to facilitate the Traffic & Parking Commission's development of recommendations for a construction mitigation and scheduling plan, and is required for the Psomas team to proceed with project design.

INTRODUCTION

In 2005, the State of California relinquished North Santa Monica Boulevard within the City of Beverly Hills to the City of Beverly Hills. The pavement quality, drainage system and other physical elements were minimally maintained by Caltrans prior to relinquishment to the City of Beverly Hills, and have deteriorated to the extent that the existing pavement system now requires a complete reconstruction. The existing roadway geometry, drainage patterns, cross street elevations and curb and gutter condition each impose constraints to fix the roadway with routine asphalt-overlay maintenance. Recently-performed field observations, pavement coring operations and pavement condition analysis confirm the extent of the damage and distress of the existing pavement system and support the need for the Boulevard's reconstruction.

At its June 4, 2013 meeting, the City Council approved an agreement with Psomas, a civil engineering firm, to lead a team of professionals to perform pre-design (phase 1) and design services (phase 2) for the project. Please see Attachment 4 for a summary of the Psomas team's scope of work.

For the Phase 1 (pre-design), the City Council approved the following at the October 15, 2013 Study Session to facilitate public outreach:

- Formed a 15-member Santa Monica Boulevard Blue Ribbon Committee comprised of three appointees by each City Councilmember with the following Committee Assignment: *Receive public input and provide the City Council with recommendations for a concept alternative for the Santa Monica Boulevard Reconstruction project.*

North Santa Monica Blvd Blue Ribbon Committee Appointees:

Mayor Mirisch:	Barry Bernstein Howard Fisher Andy Licht
Vice Mayor Bosse:	Ed Brown (Vice-Chair) Mark Elliot Kathy Reims
Councilmember Brien:	Craig Corman Barry Pressman, MD (Chair) Jeff Wolfe
Councilmember Gold:	Robbie Anderson Lester Friedman Lillian Raffel

Councilmember Krasne: Charles Aaronberg, MD
Russ Levi
Marc Saleh

- Assigned the Traffic & Parking Commission to evaluate and make recommendations on methods to mitigate construction, including measures to minimize disruption to residential areas, provide access to City's commercial areas, work hour restrictions and extent of lane closures allowed.

In addition to work performed to support the development of the Blue Ribbon Committee and Traffic & Parking Commission's recommendations, Phase 1 work includes:

- Evaluation of existing conditions, including existing roadway and intersections, storm drains, structural pavement section and geotechnical field investigation.
- Providing pre-design level cost estimates for design options.
- Provide consultation services to support the determination of the project's environmental documentation required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

As the construction cost estimates used for the Capital Improvement Program budget were originally developed soon after Caltrans relinquished the Boulevard to the City in 2005, with no back-up assumptions, staff included in the Psomas agreement the requirement that pre-design cost estimates be provided early as a part of Phase I services.

After evaluating existing conditions and preparing initial cost estimates, the Psomas team and City staff have concluded that the existing Capital Improvement Program budget of \$17.2 million is inadequate to construct the required improvements. Current cost estimates for reconstructing the entire length of North Santa Monica Boulevard (escalated to the mid-point of construction) range between \$30 and \$35 million, depending on the design elements selected. This includes a 25% contingency due to unknown conditions and unknown construction costs due to increased construction activity and higher material costs. Staff will provide City Council a report at the April 1, 2014 Study Session with updated cost estimates, revenue options and/or delivery strategies to break the project into construction segments.

DISCUSSION

In October 2013, staff sent out City-wide public notices (both residents and businesses) advising of three evening public outreach meetings and two mobile Trolley tours. Below is a summary of the Blue Ribbon Committee meetings that led to the development of their recommendations. Attachment 5 provides Committee meeting notes. Attachment 6 provides two memos to the Committee responding to their questions and comments.

November 7, 2013 Blue Ribbon Committee Meeting

At the first meeting, November 7, the Blue Ribbon Committee appointed Dr. Barry Pressman as Chair and former Mayor Ed Brown as Vice Chair. The Psomas team presented an overview of the project, including discussion of the Committee's Assignment and project goals. The Committee received an overview of "Complete Street" concepts, a discussion of bicycle connectivity to neighboring jurisdictions and an

overview of existing Boulevard conditions. Approximately 25 members of the public attended and 15 spoke during the comment period.

The meeting concluded with the Committee prioritizing the project goals, as originally presented to the City Council, as follows:

PROJECT GOALS	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	TOTAL VOTES	WEIGHTED SCORE*
Maintain vehicular flow along the corridor	7	2		9	25
Respect the character of the corridor; including preservation of green space	3	5	2	10	21
Maintain access to the Beverly Hills Business Triangle		4	4	8	12
Consider a "Complete Streets" policy to enhance safety and promote transit and non-motorized modes (bicycling and walking)	1			1	3
Minimize construction impacts on business and residents (Assigned to TPC)			3	3	3

Mobile tours

Mobile tours were held on Wednesday afternoon, November 13, 2013 and Sunday afternoon, November 17. Approximately 16 persons attended the tours, including seven Committee members. The mobile tours provided an overview of the deteriorated roadway conditions along the Boulevard and segments on the north side of the street were staked out showing what grass area might be removed if the roadway were expanded. Some public comments received questioned why the Boulevard needed such extensive reconstruction. Staff and the consultant team pointed out the pavement failures, existing drainage problems, sidewalk and curb/gutter issues, light standards too close to the street, and other issues that would be addressed.

December 10, 2013 Blue Ribbon Committee Meeting

More details related to existing conditions of the Boulevard and options for bicycle connectivity and the potential for landscaped medians were presented. The Committee requested additional study data, including data related to bicycle lanes, bicycle accidents, use of bus turn-outs and potential for widening to the south side of the Boulevard. The January 8th memo (included in Attachment 6) to the Committee responded to the Committee's request for additional information.

Approximately 30 members of the public attended with 15 speakers. Speakers were generally focused on the discussion of bicycle lanes, with 10 supporting some form of bicycle lane and five opposing.

The Committee concluded with Chair Pressman asking the Committee what project elements they supported the consultant team investigating further, via straw poll, with the following results:

Element	Support	Do Not Support
Medians	13	0
Widening with Bike Lanes	5	9
Recreational Off-street Bike Paths in Park	0	13

January 8, 2014 Blue Ribbon Committee Meeting

With the Committee showing limited support for bicycle lanes at the December 10, 2013 meeting, the consultant team focused on alternatives without bicycle lanes, as requested. These options included:

- Maintain existing curb-to-curb width with no medians
- Maintain existing curb-to-curb width with medians

These two options would accomplish the pre-requisite goal of the project of rehabilitating the roadway, while not impacting the existing grass area north of the roadway.

Psomas presented a third alternative for Committee consideration:

- Widen roadway to provide a 66' curb to curb with no bikeway designation.

Psomas recommended this option to provide a shared roadway (with no Bikeway designation) as described in the Caltrans Highway Design Manual, Chapter 1000 Bicycle Transportation Design. This recommendation was also consistent with California Vehicle Code 21760, "Three Feet for Safety Act", that will take effect in September 2014 requiring vehicles to provide three feet of clearance to bicycles when passing them. The Psomas team felt this alternative would more fully accomplish the project goals, particularly the first goal of maintaining vehicular flow. Without a widening, vehicles would have to veer into the adjacent lane to pass a bicyclist in the outside lane allowing three feet of clearance.

The Committee requested that the Police and Fire Chiefs attend the January 22, 2014 meeting to provide their opinions on the potential impacts of bicycle lanes and landscaped medians on public safety and response time. The Committee also asked for input from Los Angeles and West Hollywood regarding their plans to connect to a potential future bicycle facility on North Santa Monica Boulevard in Beverly Hills.

Approximately 40 members of public attended. 26 spoke focusing on bicycle lanes, with 16 speaking in support and 10 against.

Chair Pressman closed public comment and continued the meeting to January 22, 2014. He requested staff to prepare a Committee voting matrix with enhancement options.

January 22, 2014 meeting (continued from January 8, 2014)

Fire Chief Ralph Mundell and Police Chief David Snowden addressed the Committee and informed that landscaped medians designed with sufficient breaks would have minimal impact to public safety response.

The Committee members identified the following considerations for each design element, before voting, as described below:

Widen Roadway to 66 feet

➤ Vote: Yes – 7; No – 4

Pro	Con
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will be safer for bicyclists • Will accommodate anticipated increase in bicycle activity • Shorter construction period • Opportunity to change nature of boulevard. • Support from public/speakers at meetings • Allows additional width for stopped buses • Allows additional width for emergency vehicle access • Opportunity to change nature of Boulevard • Improve vehicle flow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes 3 to 6 feet of grass area • Extends into park – part of City Heritage • Encourages bicyclists on to busy roadway • Concerns of infringements – future taking of park • Impacts to Churches • Potential alternative exists for the City to purchase parcels 12 and 13 for a bicycle lane; then directing bicycles to South Santa Monica Boulevard near City Hall • Potential alternative of Carmelita

If widened, should the roadway be striped for bicycle lanes?

➤ Vote: Yes – 9; No – 1; Abstain – 1

Pro	Con
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies support safety of bicycle lanes • Could provide incentive for Los Angeles and West Hollywood to make connection. • If widened, makes sense to stripe for bicycle lanes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Los Angeles and West Hollywood need to show connection first • Potential of drivers using bicycle lane to make right turns • May encourage additional bicycle use. • Requires additional signage and striping • Encourages bicyclists on to busy roadway • Concerns of infringements – future taking of park. • Potential alternative exists for the City to purchase parcels 12 and 13 for a bicycle lane; then directing bicycles to South Santa Monica Boulevard near City Hall

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential alternative of Carmelita.
--	---

Should Landscaped medians be included?

➤ Vote: Yes – 11; No – 0

Pro	Con
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support with condition that public safety is closely involved with the design • Support with low maintenance/drought resistant vegetation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern of site visibility • Concern of on-going maintenance

Other potential project elements on which the Committee voted and that lacked support to forward to the City Council include:

- **Bus Turn-outs:** The Committee voted unanimously against including bus turn-outs in the design of the reconstructed Boulevard based on input from Metro that bus turn-outs are not typically used as they are problematic for bus operations.
- **Adding street trees on the northern side of the Boulevard:** The Committee unanimously agreed that any inclusion of street trees should be determined as part of the Beverly Gardens Park Restoration planning efforts and did not make a recommendation.
- **Adding bus shelters.** The Committee split evenly (5-5 with one abstention) to include bus shelters as part of the reconstruction project. Staff recommends that bus shelters be addressed as a separate city-wide effort.

Other Public Input

In addition to speakers who attended the Blue Ribbon Committee meetings, 205 comments were received on the project website. The majority supported the addition of bicycle lanes on Santa Monica Boulevard. Additionally, Attachment 8 includes correspondence from the Cities of Los Angeles and West Hollywood supporting bicycle lanes and plans to connect bicycle lanes in their respective Cities should Beverly Hills decide to construct bicycle lanes on North Santa Monica Boulevard.

Notices for the March 4, 2014 City Council consideration of the Blue Ribbon Committee meetings were mailed to all residents within the City of Beverly Hills.

FISCAL IMPACT

As noted in the introduction, current project-cost estimates for the reconstruction of North Santa Monica Boulevard are \$30 to \$35 million. Increased construction costs (beyond the budgeted costs) are related to the condition, or complete lack of, base material, and degraded, high-moisture subgrade soils below the existing pavement discovered through pavement coring, paving analysis, and geotechnical investigations conducted by the consultant team as a part of their pre-design efforts. The potential for unsuitable subgrade “contaminated” soils also warrants the inclusion of a significant

(25%) construction contingency in the updated cost estimate due to the unpredictability of dealing with such soil conditions during construction.

The costs for the Blue Ribbon Committee recommendations follow:

- Widening the Boulevard to 66-feet is estimated to ultimately cost the same or lower than maintaining the existing curb-width primarily due to construction factors related to Traffic Lane Requirements (maintain two open traffic lanes in each direction during construction), additional costs related to temporary construction and controls for a non-widened roadway, and a longer construction duration required to sequence the non-widened option.
- Striping the roadway for a bicycle lane is estimated to cost \$50,000
- Landscaped medians are estimated to cost \$310,000

The agreement with Psomas has a not-to-exceed amount of \$1,940,730. Project costs billed to date total \$192,500.


Approved By
Susan Healy Keene, AICP