



Board Report

File #: 2015-0756, **File Type:** Informational Report

Agenda Number: 30.

PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
JUNE 17, 2015
SYSTEM SAFETY, SECURITY & OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
JUNE 18, 2015

**SUBJECT: ALL-DOOR BOARDING PILOT AND OFF-BOARD FARE
PAYMENT**

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE PRELIMINARY RESPONSE TO MOTION #24

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE this update on the **Wilshire Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) All-Door Boarding Pilot and the Off-Board Fare Payment study** in response to the April Board Motion 24.

ISSUE

At the April 30, 2015 meeting, the Board directed staff to report to the June Planning and Programming Committee with a preliminary analysis of the opportunities and challenges of implementing an All-Door Boarding and/or Off-Board Fare Payment program to support Metro's Countywide BRT expansion. The motion (Attachment A) further directed staff to conduct a study using the Wilshire BRT or other appropriate corridors to assess the practical challenges and opportunities of an All-Door Boarding and/or Off-Board Fare Payment. This report responds to the Board directive.

DISCUSSION

Background

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) identifies several major elements in developing Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), including running ways, transit priority, branding, station amenities, and expedited fare payment and boarding. Incorporating these elements is critical in achieving the objectives of BRT service, such as travel time savings, improved reliability, branding to attract new markets, enhanced safety and security, enhanced capacity (passenger throughput), and accessibility. When implemented in June 2000, the Wilshire Metro Rapid Line 720 incorporated several key BRT elements, but did not include dedicated bus lanes and/or right-of-way and expedited fare payment.

When the Wilshire BRT Project's construction is completed in August 2015, Wilshire Boulevard will have a total of 7.7 miles of dedicated peak period bus lanes (6.8 miles currently operational). While

the lanes allow buses to operate at higher speeds through the congested corridor, excessive dwell times at key stops continue to impact travel time. All Door Boarding and/or Off Board Fare Payment would further improve service quality by expediting boardings at heavy stops.

Motion 24 directs staff to conduct a study using the Wilshire BRT corridor or other appropriate corridors to fully assess the practical challenges and opportunities of implementing an All-Door Boarding and/or Off-Board Fare Payment program in support of planned Countywide BRT expansion projects.

All-Door Boarding Pilot

As a first step towards evaluating All-Door Boarding and/or Off-Board Fare Payment, staff from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and TAP are leading an agency wide effort, in conjunction with Communications, Countywide Planning, Operations, and Security, to pilot All-Door Boarding on the Wilshire BRT corridor (Metro Rapid Line 720). The Pilot commenced on Monday, May 18, 2015 and is expected to extend through July 10, 2015 (eight weeks), weekdays only. During this time, mobile Stand Alone Validators (SAVs) are being placed at two of Line 720's busiest bus stops:

- Wilshire/Vermont, westbound, from 6:00 AM to 11:00 AM
- Wilshire/Westwood, eastbound, from 2:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Passengers with valid TAP cards are allowed to validate their card at an SAV and board at any door (front, middle, and rear). Passengers paying with cash, transfer, token, or requiring assistance are required to board through the front door.

TAP "Blue Shirt" ambassadors are on site throughout the test period to provide information on the pilot project and to remind passengers with valid TAP cards that they may board through any door. OMB and Revenue Department staff are also on site during the test to address any issues with the operation of the project, ensure equipment is functioning properly, and data is captured accurately from the TAP SAVs. Vehicle Operations Supervisors are present to monitor on-street operations, and security personnel are on hand to address any safety/security issues.

Prior to commencing the pilot, a comprehensive marketing and outreach effort was conducted, including the distribution of a number of marketing materials in various languages, and social and electronic media. Staff also visited affected Operating Divisions to solicit input from the bus Operators. OMB staff will provide an update at the June 17th Planning and Programming Committee meeting including initial findings to date, with a full evaluation report to be presented in the Fall.

Off-Board Fare Payment Study

As directed, OMB, TAP and Countywide Planning staff are developing a Scope of Work for an All-Door Boarding and Off-Board Fare Payment (OBFP) Study. The purpose of the study is to assess both the challenges and opportunities of implementing an All-Door Boarding and/or Off-Board Fare Payment program using industry best practices in technology, station design and enforcement. The study will include, but not be limited to:

- The impacts on bus dwell times, passenger convenience, fare evasion, and pedestrian accessibility and circulation
- Guidelines/criteria for implementing this type of program, including options for payment systems, required right-of-way, capital costs, and on-going support and/or maintenance
- A Cost/Benefit analysis
- Developing thresholds for ridership and/or boardings at stops that could benefit from all-door boarding and/or off-board fare payment
- Bus stop locations with right-of-way characteristics that are highly constrained and those with more ample space
- Best practices regarding off-board fare payment at peer transit agencies

The Request for Proposal (RFP) is expected be released to the Planning Bench in Summer 2015 with contract award anticipated in Fall 2015. It is estimated that the study will take approximately six months to complete from the Notice to Proceed.

As a concurrent activity, staff will engage with other agencies about their experience with All-Door Boarding and/or Off-Board Fare Payment to identify keys to success, lessons learned, and other critical information to help shape the consultant effort and future opportunities for implementing projects. This key BRT element will also be examined as part of the two technical studies that are in the procurement phase for the Vermont and North Hollywood to Pasadena corridors.

Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Grant

Concurrently, OMB and TAP staff submitted an application for a 2015 Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant to support an All-Door Boarding and/or Off-Board Fare Payment program based on the results of the pilot and study. Final TIGER grant applications were due to the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) by June 5, 2015.

NEXT STEPS

Immediate Next Steps include:

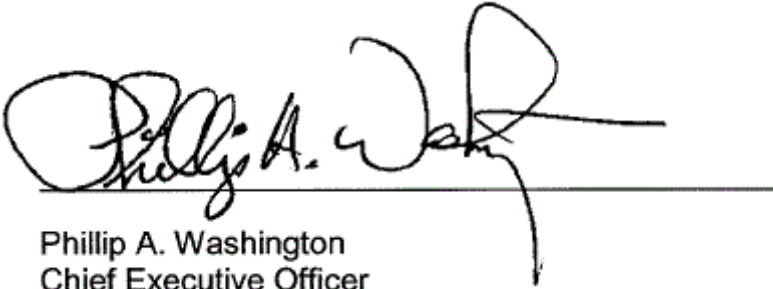
- 1) An evaluation report on the All-Door Boarding pilot, to be presented to the Board upon completion of the test period; and
- 2) Procurement of consultant services for the All-Door Boarding and Off-Board Fare Payment study.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - April 30, 2015 Board Motion

Prepared by: Conan Cheung, Executive Officer, (213) 922-6949
David Sutton, Executive Officer, (213) 922-5633
Martha Butler, Director, (213) 922-7651
Mark Simpson, Systems Project Manager, (213) 922-4842
Pari Ahmadi, TPM IV, (213) 922-2864

Reviewed By: Nalini Ahuja, Executive Director, Finance & Budget
Martha Welborne, Chief Planning Officer



Phillip A. Washington
Chief Executive Officer

Motion by Directors Bonin, Garcetti and Kuehl
Amending Item # 24 Countywide Bus Rapid Transit
Planning & Programming Committee
April 15, 2015 - REVISED

Metro recently completed a Countywide BRT and Street Design Improvement study and is now embarking on the expansion of its BRT system to address regional mobility goals. BRT systems have proven highly advantageous to passengers, providing frequent, fast, reliable, high capacity service.

Metro has already implemented a range of BRT type improvements in the County from the Rapid system to Dedicated Bus Lane projects to the Orange Line. Travel time and service reliability could be improved through the proper application of off board fare payment and/or all door boarding.

The time needed to load all passengers through the front door and require on board fare payment can significantly slow bus operations, increasing dwell time at stops and potentially impacting schedule reliability.

Moving fare payment off the bus and/or using all doors for boarding offers the potential to reduce dwell time.

Off-board fare payment can present challenges in terms of technology, enforcement and the constrained right of way common in an urban environment. Nevertheless, if Metro is to pursue a world-class system of BRT, the advantages of off-board fare payment and/or all door boarding should not be ignored and should be studied concurrently with Metro BRT studies currently underway.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Board direct the CEO to report back at the Planning and Programming meeting with a preliminary analysis of the opportunities and challenges of implementing an off-board fare payment program and/or all door boarding to support our Countywide BRT expansion, using industry best practices in technology, station design and enforcement as a guide.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Board direct the CEO to undertake an applied study using the Wilshire Boulevard BRT corridor or other appropriate corridors as an opportunity to fully assess the practical challenges and opportunities. The study should include, but not be limited to:

- A. The impact of off board fare payment and all door boarding policy on bus dwell time, passenger convenience, and fare evasion
- B. Guidelines and criteria for off board fare payment and all door boarding, including options for payment systems, requirements for right of way and utilities for each option, capital cost and ongoing support for each (i.e. maintenance, revenue collection, fare enforcement, etc.)
- C. Cost/benefit analysis of implementing a program
- D. Impacts to pedestrian accessibility and circulation
- E. Station design, technology enhancements and enforcement
- F. Recommendations on thresholds of ridership and/or boardings at specific stop locations that could benefit from off-board fare payment and/or all door boarding
- G. Consideration of bus stop locations with right-of-way characteristics that are highly constrained and those with more ample space.