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**CITY COUNCIL REPORT**

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**POLICY AGENDA**

CITY CLERK DEPT.

TO: Rick Naimark  
Deputy City Manager

AGENDA DATE: November 18, 2014  
2014 NOV 14 AM 7:37

THRU: Maria Hyatt  
Public Transit Director

ITEM: 5A

FROM: Albert Santana  
Light Rail Project Administrator

SUBJECT: SOUTH CENTRAL LIGHT RAIL EXTENSION

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This report provides information and requests City Council approval to refine the approved Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) to include lane configuration and station locations and to initiate the Federal environmental reviews, conceptual engineering documents, and develop preliminary business assistance elements for the South Central Light Rail project.

**THE ISSUE**

In 2012, the City of Phoenix and Valley Metro received a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant to conduct an Alternatives Analysis in the South Central Avenue Corridor. In 2013, the Phoenix City Council approved an LPA that defined light rail transit as the preferred transit mode and Central Avenue as the preferred alignment; however, the LPA did not define the roadway configuration or passenger station locations. It is important that these elements be defined as part of the LPA prior to initiating the environmental review and conceptual engineering phase of the project.

Following the City Council adoption of the LPA, a subsequent study identified a two-lane roadway configuration (one through traffic lane in each direction) with intersection flares at four locations (Baseline Road, Southern Avenue, Broadway Road, and Buckeye Road) as the recommended roadway configuration for the South Central Avenue Light Rail Extension. This configuration minimizes private property impacts while maintaining existing automobile capacity at four arterial intersections.

The subsequent study effort also identified passenger station locations at Baseline Road, Southern Avenue, Roeser Road, Broadway Road, Audubon Center (south of the Rio Salado), Buckeye Road, and Lincoln Street. These stations are recommended based on ridership potential, community access, connectivity to other transit services, and future development potential.

The next step in the project planning phase is to complete the environmental review process in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and complete preliminary engineering.

## OTHER INFORMATION

During the past two years, the City of Phoenix and Valley Metro conducted an extensive community outreach and public engagement campaign for the South Central Light Rail Corridor Study. Nine public meetings provided stakeholders an opportunity to offer input throughout various stages of the study. An additional five meetings specifically targeted the business community along the corridor. Meeting with the businesses provided opportunities for staff to interact with business owners by listening and responding to their questions as well as beginning a dialogue about best practices and lessons learned to help businesses prepare for a future light rail project. In addition to community meetings, City of Phoenix and Valley Metro staff attended over 90 community meetings and events, and received feedback forms/comment cards from over 250 stakeholders.

In 2014, the City Council approved the initiation of amending the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) to include the South Central Light Rail Extension and this project in any proposed extension of T2000. The RTP amendment process is currently underway and has been approved by the State Transportation Board and Maricopa County Board of Supervisors.

In 2014, the City of Phoenix received a U.S. Department of Transportation TIGER grant to complete the environmental review process and conceptual engineering. The grant award is \$1.6 million with a local match of \$1.6 million totaling \$3.2 million to complete this phase of the project.

## RECOMMENDATION

This report requests City Council approve the following:

1. A two-lane roadway configuration along South Central Avenue between approximately Baseline Road and Buckeye Road with intersection flares at Baseline Road, Southern Avenue, Broadway Road, and Buckeye Road for evaluation as part of the South Central environmental review process.
2. Station locations along South Central Avenue at Baseline Road, Southern Avenue, Roeser Road, Broadway Road, Audubon Center (south of the Rio Salado), Buckeye Road, and Lincoln Street for evaluation as part of the South Central environmental review process.
3. Work to commence the environmental review, conceptual engineering documents and develop preliminary business assistance elements for the South Central Light Rail project.

On November 12, 2014, the Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee unanimously recommended City Council approval of these recommendations, including developing preliminary business assistance elements.

Attachment

South Central Project Recommendation

