



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Transit
Administration**

The Administrator

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

JUN 30 2010

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Waxman:

Mr. Waxman:

Thank you for your earlier letter to Secretary LaHood and your recent letter expressing support for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (LACMTA) proposed Regional Connector light rail and Westside Extension subway projects. The Secretary asked me to respond on his behalf. In your letter to the Secretary, you discussed local funding resources, including Measure R sales tax revenues, and recent National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) activity on both projects, and requested that \$77.6 million of New Starts funds for preliminary engineering activities for the projects be included in the President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 budget request.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) recognizes the strong local funding provided by Measure R and the ambitious project schedules proposed by LACMTA. FTA has been working diligently with LACMTA to advance planning and NEPA activities for the Regional Connector and Westside Extension projects.

As you know, the Regional Connector and Westside Extension projects were not included in the FY 2011 budget. As in past years, the budget gave priority to those projects that have existing Full Funding Grant Agreements (FFGAs) and are under construction. Any remaining New Starts funds were proposed in the budget for projects that met the following requirements: 1) the project had been evaluated on the statutory New Starts criteria and received at least a "Medium" rating; 2) the project had completed NEPA or was nearing completion of NEPA; and 3) the project was anticipated to be approved into final design and be ready for an FFGA and construction during the fiscal year for which the budget is being prepared. The budget does not typically include funding recommendations for engineering activities, but rather focuses on construction funding.

In your letter to me, you asked for FTA's consideration of the entire 9-mile Westside Subway Extension project, instead of a shorter minimum operating segment, for entry into preliminary engineering in the New Starts process. You also requested that FTA provide clearance for the entire 9-mile project under NEPA.

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On June 3, Secretary LaHood communicated his support for the "30/10" plan proposed by the City of Los Angeles Mayor Villaraigosa in writing to Senator Barbara Boxer and emphasized the Department of Transportation's commitment to working with local decision-makers to find ways to accelerate transportation improvements in the region. As part of that support, FTA will consider the entire 9-mile Westside Extension project for entry into preliminary engineering so that implementation of the entire project may be accelerated if additional funding is identified. FTA will also address the full 9-mile project in the NEPA review.

I appreciate your support for the Regional Connector light rail and the Westside Subway Extension projects and assure you that FTA will continue to work closely with LACMTA. If I can provide further information or assistance, please feel free to call me directly on (202) 366-4040.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Rogoff", written in a cursive style.

Peter Rogoff