Project Background and Objectives

From the LADOT / CalTrans May 2014 Request for Proposal:
The I-10 Freeway/Robertson/National area has a dysfunctional on/off-ramp configuration coupled with skewed intersection alignments of the major arterial streets. The current configurations and alignments create severe traffic circulation issues for motorists. As a result, the area suffers from poor traffic conditions as motorists travel circuitously to and from the freeway ramps. The westbound I-10 on and off-ramps are located at different locations, with the off-ramp located north of the freeway and the on-ramp located south of the freeway. The eastbound I-10 on and off-ramps are also at different locations, with the on-ramp at National Boulevard and the off-ramp at Robertson/Venice. This inconsistency leads to motorist confusion and circuitous travel in order to access the freeway ramps.

The location of the EXPO LRT Culver City Station is in the heart of the study area. The EXPO LRT Culver City Station consists of a light rail line and Clean Mobility Center with car-sharing and bicycle facilities. The Culver City Station currently has a significant number of feeder bus lines connecting to the station to interface with the EXPO LRT, and the station's parking lot generates a significant amount of automobile traffic in the vicinity. The station's bicycle facilities will generate a high volume of bicyclists making connections to other bicycle facilities, mainly to the Venice Boulevard (State Route 187) bike lanes, and to downtown Culver City. The Culver City station will also generate a high volume of pedestrian traffic. The contribution of these multi-modal facilities will exacerbate the already poor traffic conditions in the area.

The Washington/National Project is a large mixed-use transit-oriented development in the Washington/National area adjacent to the EXPO LRT Culver City Station. The project is bounded by Venice Boulevard (State Route 187) on the north, Washington Boulevard on the south, National Boulevard on the east, and the Expo/Metro right-of-way on the west. The project is planned for the growth surrounding the light rail transit station. As part of the development's future environmental review process, a traffic study for the Washington/National Project will identify the project's impacts on traffic and measures needed to mitigate the impact.

A significant challenge to transportation planning for the I-10/Robertson/National area is that there are five agencies that have jurisdiction over the transportation facilities in the area, the City of Los Angeles, City of Culver City, Caltrans, FHWA and Metro. To address this challenge, the four agencies, spearheaded by the City of Culver City, formed a Working Group (FHWA was not included). Further, the City of Culver City had applied for and received a federal grant for the I-10 Robertson/National Area Circulation Improvement Project. The scope of work for this project includes the planning, preliminary engineering and design, and environmental analyses of a package of improvements to the I-10 Robertson on/off-ramps and arterial streets in the study area. The project has been identified by the Westside Cities Council of Governments (COG) as one of its top priority projects to help relieve traffic congestion in the Westside area of the County of Los Angeles.

Traffic circulation improvements are needed to accomplish the following:

- Relieve bottlenecks (and motorists confusion) on I-10 and all major boulevards caused by the existing on/off-ramp system and street configuration;
- Rationalize traffic movements in the area and reduce conflicting movements between vehicles and other modes of transportation;
- Mitigate the adverse impacts created by traffic to and from parking facilities at EXPO LRT Culver City Station;
- Accommodate traffic generated by all developments in the area, including the proposed future high-density developments adjacent to the EXPO LRT Culver City Station; and
- Improve the operation of the I-10 Freeway.

Improved traffic circulation in the I-10/Robertson/National area is critically important in serving travelers with destinations in the cities of Los Angeles and Culver City within the study area, and equally important in facilitating automobile, bus, bicycle and pedestrian traffic traveling through the area.

Neighborhood Council Response

While the South Robertson Neighborhoods Council (SORO NC) generally agrees with the above assessment by the LADOT, the working solution in the RFP is problematic and would not serve residents, businesses, students—and indeed drivers—well. We maintain that an approach that puts pedestrians first and that works to solve the area’s overall circulation issues, is not only possible, but also potentially more cost-effective.

To that end, we have developed three alternative plans, included here along with the original LADOT / CalTrans RFP proposal. While the engineering aspects of all four have yet to be assessed, SORO NC believes their directional suggestions have numerous benefits over the original proposal. We hope they spark on-going and constructive dialogue between the community, the NC, the City Council offices, and the Working Group.
Robertson on/off ramps for 10 Freeway: current configuration

Key community issues:
- Not pedestrian-forward: does not have any accommodation for pedestrian traffic from Expo stop to Hamilton or SORO business district
- Ramps scattered throughout area makes access difficult
- Westbound on-ramp requires confusing sharp right turn only accessible via southbound Robertson; backs up traffic along Robertson during peaks
- Westbound off-ramp dumps traffic at Hamilton High School, creating pedestrian safety and traffic issues at known chokepoint
- Eastbound on-ramp has short surface street access, backing up traffic; local business drives vehicles across National at ramp entrance
- Eastbound off-ramp merges with busy Robertson surface traffic at semi-blind stop sign; requires difficult lane-crossing and sharp left turn for Robertson northbound traffic
Robertson on/off ramp configuration for 10 Freeway
SORO NC Option 1 Initial Draft • 10 November 2015

Advantages:
- Minimizes new ramp construction
- Rationalizes traffic flow and removes bottlenecks
- Limits disruption to existing buildings to the widening of Robertson Blvd.
- Creates attractive, inviting new greenspace and safe pedestrian pathways for Hamilton students and commuters
- Removes ramp across from Hamilton High School, increasing student safety and reducing traffic congestion at arterial chokepoint

Key
- Existing Livonia cul-de-sac (two lanes, remove merge with off-ramp)
- Widen Robertson to five lanes (two southeast bound, three northwest bound)
- New 4-way traffic light
- Existing westbound on-ramp
- New westbound off-ramp
- New eastbound on-ramp (entrance forks off of westbound on-ramp)
- Existing eastbound off-ramp (no merge with Livonia)
- Remove ramps by high school and National Blvd.
- Leftover land converted to pocket gateway/greenway. Footpath for students and commuters. Inset on Venice for bus dropoff and pickup.
Robertson on/off ramp configuration for 10 Freeway
SORO NC Option 2 Initial Draft • 10 November 2015

Advantages:
• Rationalizes traffic flow and removes bottlenecks
• Limits disruption to existing buildings to the widening of Robertson Blvd.
• Creates expanded industrial/creative area using existing roads; sale of CalTrans property helps fund project
• Creates attractive, inviting new greenspace and safe pedestrian pathways for Hamilton students and commuters
• Removes ramp across from Hamilton High School, increasing student safety and reducing traffic congestion at arterial chokepoint

Key
- Isolate and extend Livonia industrial/creative area and create entrance on Venice
- Widen Robertson to six lanes
- New 3-way traffic light
- Existing westbound on-ramp
- New westbound off-ramp
- New eastbound on-ramp (entrance forks off of westbound on-ramp)
- Existing eastbound off-ramp (no merge with Livonia)
- Remove ramps by high school and National Blvd.
- Leftover land converted to pocket gateway/greenway. Footpath for students and commuters. Inset on Venice for bus dropoff and pickup.
Robertson on/off ramp configuration for 10 Freeway
SORO NC Option 3 Initial Draft • 10 November 2015

Advantages:
• Rationalizes traffic flow and removes bottlenecks. Reroutes local traffic to National. Separates uses and eliminates merging with Freeway access
• Creates long on/off ramps to alleviate backups on the Freeway and single access/egress point
• Creates expanded industrial/creative area; sale of CalTrans property helps fund project
• Limits disruption to existing buildings to the on/off-ramp corridor
• Creates attractive, inviting new greenspace and safe pedestrian pathways for Hamilton students and commuters
• Removes ramp across from Hamilton High School, increasing student safety and reducing traffic congestion at arterial chokepoint

Key
- Isolate and extend Livonia industrial/creative area and create entrance on Venice
- Robertson terminates at National. Access to existing businesses via Ellis.
- Existing westbound on-ramp.
- New westbound off-ramp
- New eastbound on-ramp (entrance forks off of westbound on-ramp)
- Existing eastbound off-ramp (no merge with Livonia)
- Remove ramps by high school and National Blvd.
- Leftover land converted to pocket gateway/greenway. Footpath for students and commuters puts pedestrians on west side, reducing street crossings. Reduced traffic on the deadend makes underpass more inviting. Inset on Venice for bus dropoff and pickup.