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Official wants to downsize busways linking downtown L.A. and Westside

L.A. Councilman Bill Rosendahl proposes that the bus-only lanes end at Beverly Hills and that the Westwood section and the remaining route to Santa Monica be eliminated. Environmentalists and transit advocates oppose his plan.



"I'm for the bus-only lanes, but a continuous system," Los Angeles City Councilman Bill Rosendahl said. "The 5.4 miles would be a first step. If that is successful, we could work with Santa Monica and Beverly Hills," which are not participating in the project. "If everyone got on board, we could have a real system."

By Dan Weikel, Los Angeles Times
February 2, 2011

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Plans to create exclusive busways from downtown Los Angeles to the Westside have hit another bump in the road.

Wilshire Boulevard was supposed to get almost nine miles of bus-only lanes stretching off and on from MacArthur Park to Centinela Avenue. Then in December, transit officials cut a mile out of the proposal in Westwood to ease the concerns of high-rise residents who fear that it would push already heavy automobile traffic into even fewer lanes.

Now Los Angeles City Councilman Bill Rosendahl wants to downsize the project again to 5.4 miles, stop it at Beverly Hills and eliminate not only the Westwood section but the remaining route to Santa Monica.

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The idea is supported by Westside neighborhood organizations and opposed by environmentalists and transit advocates who contend that the councilman is bowing to the wishes of a few constituents at the expense of thousands of bus riders.

"I'm for the bus-only lanes, but a continuous system," Rosendahl said. "The 5.4 miles would be a first step. If that is successful, we could work with Santa Monica and Beverly Hills," which are not participating in the project. "If everyone got on board, we could have a real system."

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Rosendahl's proposal is scheduled to be addressed Wednesday by the City Council, which must decide whether to support the truncated route and add it to the busway options that will be evaluated during the project's environmental review.

According to current plans, buses would get exclusive use of the lanes nearest the curb during weekday rush hours from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Signal improvements, new turn lanes and street widenings would also be added.

MTA officials say the dedicated lanes would speed up bus service, make it more reliable and encourage transit ridership along the Wilshire corridor, which has about 80,000 boardings daily, the highest of the authority's routes.

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Rosendahl's proposal would have the bus lanes run without interruption from South Park View Street to South San Vicente Boulevard on the eastern border of Beverly Hills. He says that using traffic lanes for buses during rush hours would further congest surface streets in his district.

Opponents of the proposal, such as the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Green L.A. Coalition, the Bus Riders Union and the Transit Coalition, contend that shortening the busways might threaten federal funding for the project and setback the effort to build dedicated lanes around the county.

"We are mortified by what Rosendahl is doing," said Bart Reed, director of the Transit Coalition. "This project is for the greater good. He is doing this to help a few squeaky wheels in his district."

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ocean hill at 6:40 AM February 02, 2011

C'mon Rosendahl, LEAD! Get people out of their cars and into mass transit. LA needs faster buses. For those westside residents taking their cars, hop on the bus instead and stop clogging the system. C'mon Santa Monica and Beverly Hills, get with the program and stop adding cars to the roads. It's all clogged up and we need less cars on the road, not more!

Schigolch at 2:25 AM February 02, 2011

We tried a bus lane on Wilshire in West LA and it was a disaster. It locked all car traffic into one lane and resulted in massive traffic jams. Wilshire became unusable. After several years of god-awful traffic jams and inaccessibility for businesses, the thing was finally abandoned. What a relief! Never again.

dex127 at 11:01 PM February 01, 2011

White people on the Westside and Santa Monica are trippin'. U can't stop progress no matter how much money you have. You want the mexican maids to come to get your kids to school and cook youyr breakfast but you don't want to make it convenient for them. Just Selfish. Just a known fact. The expo line is coming through in the next five years and you wont be able to stop the ease of flight to the westside of all the Mexican and Black robbers and rapeist you think we are... Get into it. It's coming...

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