

Metro



Board Report

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**REGULAR BOARD MEETING
OCTOBER 22, 2020**
Motion by:**DIRECTORS SOLIS, HAHN, GARCIA, FASANA, GARCETTI, AND BONIN**

I-605 Corridor Improvement Project Build Alternatives

The I-605 Corridor Improvement Project seeks to modify and/or widen 16 miles of freeway including segments on the I-605, I-10, SR-60, I-5, and I-105 in the Gateway and San Gabriel Valley Subregions. The Project scope currently includes several alternatives that would build various combinations of additional auxiliary, general purpose, high-occupancy vehicle, and high-occupancy toll lanes along the corridor. Preliminary reports for the project suggest that hundreds of partial and full property acquisitions will be necessary in addition to hundreds of temporary and permanent easements, which would affect unincorporated communities as well as the cities of Baldwin Park, Industry, Pico Rivera, El Monte, South El Monte, Whittier, Downey, Norwalk, Santa Fe Springs. The Project alignment moves largely through disadvantaged communities experiencing housing and homelessness crises that have only been exacerbated by the ongoing pandemic.

On September 2, 2020, the Gateway Cities Council of Governments (GCCOG) sent a letter to Metro's Chief Executive Officer requesting to delay the release of the I-605 Corridor Improvement Project Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) and to incorporate a local option alternative that reflects the Guiding Principles adopted by the SR-91/I-605/I-405 Corridor Cities Committee in October 2007. The GCCOG's Guiding Principles include a provision that new freeway construction, including the addition of lanes, should be confined to existing State right-of-way in order to preserve and enhance local economies and environments. In response to this letter and to concerns raised by other stakeholders, Metro has agreed to delay the release of the EIS/EIR until early 2021. However, the impacts anticipated for the Project necessitate a fresh look at the scope of work and the alternatives proposed.

California's transportation sector currently accounts for more than 50 percent of the state's greenhouse gas emissions, and vehicle ownership rates have significantly increased in the region over the last 30 years. According to a 2018 study from the UCLA Institute of Transportation Studies, the six-county region covered by the Southern California Association of Governments (Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside San Bernardino, Ventura, and Imperial Counties) added 1.8 million people and 456,000 household vehicles between 1990 and 2000 with an average of 0.25 vehicles per new

resident. These numbers exploded to 0.95 vehicles per new resident between 2000 and 2015 when the region saw 2.3 million people and 2.1 million household vehicles added. Despite Metro's efforts to rapidly expand its transit network, vehicle miles traveled per capita have steadily climbed upwards throughout the county since 2010, and transit ridership across the state has been declining since 2012. Metro has put forth several efforts to restore and increase transit ridership and reduce greenhouse gas emissions including the ongoing NextGen initiative and the advancement of Twenty-Eight by 28' Pillar Projects. Per a motion written by Director Bonin last year, Metro is also working to align its highway program with the Executive Order issued by Governor Newsom in September 2019 which directed the California State Transportation Agency to realign its portfolio of construction, operations and maintenance projects to help reverse trends of rising fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector. However, Metro must also begin taking on a holistic, equity-based examination of its projects' scopes to ensure investments do not increase induced demand or work against existing greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals.

SUBJECT: I-605 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT BUILD ALTERNATIVES

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE Motion by Directors Solis, Hahn, Garcia, Fasana, Garcetti, and Bonin that the Board direct the Chief Executive Officer to report back to the Planning and Programming Committee in January 2021 with a status update and in April 2021 with a final report on suggestions for other I-605 build alternatives that consider:

- A. An additional locally-supported alternative that minimizes right-of-way impacts and/or a stand-alone Transportation System/Demand Management (TSM/TDM) alternative similar to the TSM/TDM alternative put forth on the SR-710 North Project; and
- B. A review of the project's purpose and need and its alignment with various local and state policies and plans related to equity, greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled.

WE FURTHER MOVE that staff, including the Executive Officer of Equity and Race, engage with the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, the Gateway Cities Council of Governments, the I-5 Joint Powers Authority, the County of Los Angeles, corridor cities, and community stakeholders to develop this report. The release of the EIS/EIR should be further delayed until after the final report is received by the Metro Board.