

**Board Report**

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**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 16, 2015****SUBJECT: WEST SANTA ANA BRANCH TRANSIT CORRIDOR****ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE****RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE the **West Santa Ana Branch (WSAB) Transit Corridor Technical Refinement Study**.

ISSUE

The WSAB Transit Corridor is one of the twelve (12) Measure R Transit corridors and is contained in Metro's 2009 Long Range Transportation Plan with a scheduled revenue service date of 2027. In February 2013, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) approved the Pacific Electric Right of Way (PEROW)/WSAB Alternatives Analysis (AA) Study. This bi-county study explored the 34-mile corridor between Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS) Los Angeles to Santa Ana in Orange County. The AA identified numerous challenges for the Los Angeles portion of the alignment, including the following five key issues: 1) access to LAUS; 2) further analysis of the feasibility of the two recommended alignments accessing LAUS via the West Bank and East Bank of the Los Angeles River; 3) feasibility and impacts of the alternative station locations and alignment reconfiguration requested by the City of Huntington Park; 4) feasibility and challenges of adding a new Metro Green Line Station; and 5) impacts of moving the southern terminus station from the City of Cerritos to the City of Artesia. Attachment B contains a map of the five key issues from the AA Study. In January 2014, Metro initiated the WSAB Technical Refinement Study (the "Refinement Study") to further analyze the challenges identified in the SCAG AA Study. The Refinement Study has been finalized and staff is requesting the Metro Board to receive the Study's findings. Attachment A contains the Executive Summary. The full report can be accessed at <http://www.metro.net/projects/west-santa-ana/>.

DISCUSSION**Background**

In Los Angeles County, the WSAB corridor stretches approximately 20 miles from the City of Artesia to LAUS. The alignment uses eight miles of Metro owned abandoned Pacific Electric Rail ROW from the Los Angeles/Orange County Border north to the City of Paramount. It extends 12 miles north of the City of Paramount to downtown Los Angeles through nine cities via a combination of local streets

and private and Metro owned rail ROW. Per Metro Board direction in January 2014, Eco-Rapid Transit participated in the Refinement Study in coordination with the Gateway Cities Council of Governments and the corridor cities.

For the Los Angeles County portion of the corridor, two build alternatives were recommended by SCAG for further study, which included Light Rail Transit (LRT) to LAUS along: the “West Bank” of the Los Angeles River (West Bank 3); and the “East Bank” of the Los Angeles River (East Bank).

The Refinement Study is not a revision to the AA, but rather a focused study that used the SCAG AA recommendations as a starting point to further refine and analyze the challenges identified at the conclusion of the AA. As the Refinement Study is only a technical study, public outreach was not conducted. Coordination and technical meetings with the various affected cities’ staff were held throughout the Refinement Study process. Below is a discussion of the Refinement Study’s five key study areas. Travel forecasting and preliminary cost estimates were provided for each Los Angeles County alignment alternative, and are contained in Attachment C.

Northern Terminus at Los Angeles Union Station

Analysis was conducted to determine where within LAUS a new light rail platform could be added to serve as the northern terminus for the WSAB project. In coordination with Metro’s Union Station Master Plan (USMP) and Rail Planning staff, two potential zones for a new WSAB Terminus Station LRT platform were identified: 1) above the recommended relocated bus plaza; or 2) above the Metro Gold Line Station Platform.

Northern Alignment Analysis

Further refinement of the two SCAG AA recommended northern alignments was conducted to address issues/challenges along the West Bank and East Bank of the Los Angeles River. The analysis took into consideration alignment variations requested by the City of Huntington Park at the conclusion of the AA Study. As part of this effort, several new alignment options were identified. Based on the analysis, the East Bank Alignment was not recommended for further study based on significant conflicts with operating freight railroads and overhead utility conflicts. However, four variations of the SCAG AA Study West Bank alignment option were recommended for further study. These four new alignment options utilize two corridors: 1) the Pacific Boulevard Corridor through the cities of Huntington Park and Vernon; and 2) the Metro Blue Line/Alameda Street Corridor via the existing Metro Blue Line ROW from Slauson Avenue to Washington Boulevard and heading north along Alameda Street. Both corridors include an Arts District and/or Little Tokyo station option and extend the route to a northern terminus in LAUS. These station locations will require further analysis and consultation with the affected communities, but represent technical refinements to the previous SCAG alignments that can be further improved in cooperation with the Arts District, Little Tokyo, Vernon and the Huntington Park communities.

City of Huntington Park Station Locations

At the conclusion of the AA Study, the City of Huntington Park proposed alternate station locations to the ones proposed in the SCAG AA. The proposed alternate locations include a station on Randolph St. east of Pacific Blvd. and a station south of Florence Ave. in the center of Salt Lake Ave. Both alternate station locations were deemed feasible and can be carried forward to replace the previous locations identified in the AA study.

New Metro Green Line Station

Analysis was conducted to determine the feasibility and challenges associated with a new Metro Green Line Station within the median of the I-105 Freeway east of the I-105/I-710 Interchange. This station would provide a direct transfer to the WSAB project aerial station proposed immediately above it. Based on the conceptual plans, a new Metro Green Line station can feasibly be built within the existing I-105 Freeway and ROW. It is recommended that the station concept be further advanced, including more detailed planning and design evaluations with Caltrans.

New Southern Terminus Station in the City of Artesia

The SCAG AA originally included a station in the City of Cerritos at Bloomfield Ave. to serve as the southern terminus of the WSAB project. At the request of the City of Cerritos, SCAG removed this station and recommended the City of Artesia as the line's southern terminus. The Refinement Study analyzed how the City of Artesia Pioneer Station, originally conceived as a through-station, would function as a terminus station. Based on the conceptual design, Pioneer Station was deemed feasible as a southern terminus for the WSAB Transit Corridor; however, the anticipated high parking demands will require additional analysis to evaluate reasonable capacities for bus and auto access.

NEXT STEPS

The Refinement Study completed a conceptual level of analysis of the challenges Metro previously identified. The findings will be used to inform the project's environmental process. Staff is proceeding with procuring consultant services for the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) which will further refine ridership and costs, and identify potential project phasing. Staff will return to the Board for contract award.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A - Executive Summary, WSAB Transit Corridor Technical Refinement Study
- Attachment B - Five Key Issues Map
- Attachment C - Travel Forecasts and Preliminary Cost Estimates

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