

**Board Report**

File #: 2017-0135, **File Type:** Motion / Motion Response

Agenda Number: 6.

**AD-HOC CONGESTION, HIGHWAY AND ROADS COMMITTEE
APRIL 19, 2017**

SUBJECT: HIGH DESERT CORRIDOR (HDC) STATUS UPDATE

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE **status report on the HDC project.**

ISSUE

The purpose of this report is to update the Board on the actions taken since the completion of the environmental process in response to a motion (Attachment A) by Directors Najarian and Antonovich (File # 2016-0949), and discuss next steps toward the implementation of the Project.

DISCUSSION

Project Overview

The HDC Project is a proposed 63-mile multi-purpose transportation improvement project linking State Route (SR) 14 in Los Angeles County and SR-18 in San Bernardino County (Attachment B - Project Map). The project is intended to improve east-west transportation mobility to accommodate existing and future transportation demand between Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties, improve the regional goods movement network, and enhance traffic safety.

In June 2016, the HDC Project Approval and Environmental Document (PAED) process was completed and the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) and the Project Report were signed by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). A comprehensive status report on the Preferred Alternative was presented to the Board in July 2015 under Board Report No. 2015-0896.

The Preferred Alternative (PA) consists of a combination of a freeway, an expressway, a toll segment, and a High Speed Rail (HSR) Service (Attachment C - Preferred Alternative). The incorporation of green energy technology such as solar power and a bike path along the corridor were also included in the PA.

Caltrans served as the lead agency responsible for compliance with the California Environmental

Quality Act (CEQA) and the preparation of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Caltrans, under delegated authority by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) also ensured compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The final step, securing one or more Records of Decision (ROD) from Federal agencies would require a financial plan for the project.

During the PAED process, the Project Development Team (PDT) comprised of Metro, Caltrans, and the HDC Joint Powers Authority (HDCJPA) representing local Cities along the High Desert Corridor, and the Counties of Los Angeles and San Bernardino conducted detailed evaluation of all alternatives considered including various alignments for the project and potential benefits, costs, and impacts of those alternatives including a No-Build alternative, freeway/expressway with and without HSR feeder/connector service, and freeway/tollway with and without HSR feeder/connector service; and the appropriate analysis of various options and variations under each alternative. The PDT also identified appropriate mitigations for the Project impacts. The proposed roadway configuration was planned to begin in Palmdale as a freeway, follow Avenue P-8 in Los Angeles County, continue parallel to and south of El Mirage Road where entering San Bernardino County, turn east to Air Expressway Boulevard near I-15, transition to an expressway at Dale Evans Parkway, and end at SR -18/Bear Valley Road in the Town of Apple Valley.

The HDC HSR was envisioned to connect the proposed California High Speed Rail (CHSR) station in Palmdale to the proposed XpressWest high speed rail station in Victorville. XpressWest is a privately-owned high speed passenger rail service planned to operate between the cities of Victorville in San Bernardino County and Las Vegas in Nevada.

Further details of the Project were reflected in the report presented to the Board in July of 2015.

Financial Plan

The Project Initiation Document (PID) and PAED phases of the HDC Project were funded by \$32.5 million in Measure R funds, \$4,447,535 in Measure I funds from SANBAG, and \$15.5 million in grandfathered Regional Improvement Program (GF RIP) funds.

Total project cost is estimated at over \$11 billion in 2018 dollars. Metro has programmed \$270 million in Measure M funds in Fiscal Years (FY) 2019 through 2021 based on a rough estimate of right-of-way acquisition costs. These funds can be repurposed for appropriate project uses as approved by the Metro Board. Additionally, \$1,878,700,000 in Measure M funds were programmed for the LA County segment in FYs 2063 through 2067.

No other funds are available for this project at this time.

Public Private Partnership (P3)

The Project is being considered for implementation through a P3 process. While seeking P3 opportunities, Metro staff began communication with Caltrans District 7 and District 8, SANBAG, and the HDCJPA to detail the timing of implementation of the Project, identify potential future funding for the project from various sources, confirm the anticipated schedule of implementation of

complimentary and connecting projects (CHSR and XpressWest), as well as coordinate multi-agency efforts in advancing the various components of the Project. The HDC JPA recently completed a HSR Ridership and Revenue Study and held a live webinar to publish the results in March 2017.

Initial findings suggest that the implementation of the Project would likely be in phases with consideration of urgency or need for each segment and component as well as the expected benefits gained by the proposed investments. For each highway segment, “logical termini” will need to be identified and fully funded to advance to subsequent phases. In this case, partial RODs may be pursued for the phases of the Project in lieu a single ROD for the entire Project. In the event the various components of the Project are to be implemented on separate schedules, the current Project documents may need to be amended to reflect the necessary changes to satisfy design and environmental requirements.

NEXT STEPS

The HDC JPA recently completed a HSR Ridership and Revenue Study, and held a live webinar in March 2017 to publish the results. Metro will complete a Level II Traffic and Revenue study for the proposed freeway tolling in May 2017. Upon completion and review of both studies, Metro will work with the PDT towards completing the Project Financial Plan, which is required prior to issuance of a Record of Decision (ROD) for the project.

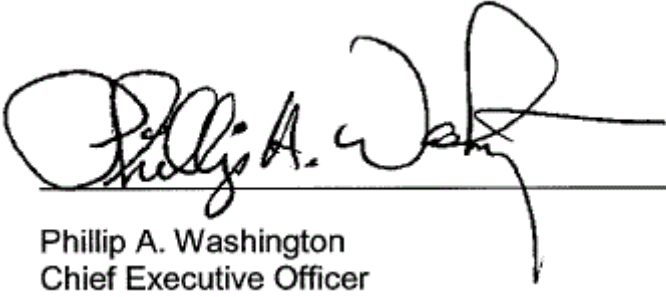
Additionally, Metro will continue to work with Project partners (Caltrans and the HDCJPA) to identify feasible and practical ways to advance the project including appropriate phasing by segments and/or Project components and the necessary variations from what has been identified in PAED phase. Staff will report back to the Board in August 2017 with an update.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Motion Najarian & Antonovich
Attachment B - Project Map
Attachment C - Preferred Alternative
Attachment D - Project History

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