



## Board Report

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**File #:** 2018-0588, **File Type:** Contract

**Agenda Number:** 32.

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**CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE  
OCTOBER 18, 2018**

**SUBJECT: DIVISION 20 PORTAL WIDENING AND TURNBACK FACILITY**

**ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS**

**RECOMMENDATION**

CONSIDER:

- A. CERTIFYING the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR);
- B. AUTHORIZING the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to file a Notice of Determination with the Los Angeles County Clerk and State of California Clearinghouse;
- C. ADOPTING the:
  - 1. Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations (FF/SOC) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); and
  - 2. Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP).

**ISSUE**

Division 20 is located at 300 S. Santa Fe Ave near 4th Street in downtown Los Angeles. Metro committed to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), as part of the Full Funding Grant Agreement for the Westside Purple Line Extension (WPLE) Section 1, to make appropriate infrastructure modifications to allow the Purple Line system to operate at reduced headways. The Full Funding Grant Agreement states that reduced headways must be achievable by late 2024.

To achieve the required headways for the Red and Purple Lines, the existing portal between Union Station and Metro Rail Division 20 must be widened, and existing tracks must be modified where Purple and Red Line trains transition from the existing twin bored tunnels to the current rail yard facilities at Metro Rail Division 20. In addition to the portal widening, a turnback facility must be constructed to maximize and optimize the ability of trains to change directions to and from Union Station. The portal widening and turnback facility are herein referred to as the Proposed Project.

After considerable technical study and internal and external stakeholder outreach, staff is

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recommending that the Board: certify the FEIR; adopt the FF/SOC (Attachment A) and the MMRP (Attachment B); and authorize the CEO to file a Notice of Determination (Attachment C). The Proposed Project and the environmental process are described in the FF/SOC. The FEIR, FF/SOC, and MMRP are available at <https://www.metro.net/projects/division-20/>.

## **BACKGROUND**

On March 23, 2017, the Metro Board of Directors certified the Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) and approved the award of a design contract for the Division 20 Portal Widening Turnback Project (original project). The scope of the project was to construct a turnback facility on the west side of the Red and Purple Line yard (Division 20) with the turnback facility terminating east of the One Santa Fe residence and within Metro property located between 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets. It also included widening the existing tunnel portal to accommodate the additional tracks. The adopted IS/MND environmental analysis prepared for this original project included full acquisition of the Viertel's Tow Yard property (just northwest of the portal opening).

On April 27, 2017, the Board received an update (File #2017-0130) on Metro's long-term needs at Division 20 in the Downtown Los Angeles Arts District and the accommodations necessary for a potential future Arts District passenger rail station (the majority of public comments on the certified IS/MND showed a strong preference for a station to be located in the Arts District near 6<sup>th</sup> Street). The report also addressed the increased need for additional storage capacity for Metro's growing rail fleet including accommodations for storage of WPLE trains at Division 20.

Subsequently, the Division 20 Portal Widening Turnback Project has been revised to include storage tracks for WPLE as well as a modified turnback facility that not only meets operational requirements and flexibility, but minimizes significant future infrastructure modifications and interruptions to service if the 6th Street Station is approved and funded. The combination of portal widening and turnback tracks to support two-minute headways, additional storage tracks and accommodation for a future station at 6th Street - all within a constrained footprint of an active rail maintenance and storage site - have significantly increased the size and complexity of this project.

Due to these changes in scope, an EIR has been prepared for the modified project (the Proposed Project), incorporating relevant analysis from the IS/MND.

Staff is recommending approval of this Board action to certify the FEIR. Certifying the FEIR establishes that the FEIR complies with CEQA; the FEIR was presented to the Board and that the Board reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final EIR prior to approving the Proposed Project; and the Final EIR reflects Metro's independent judgment and analysis.

Staff also recommends authorizing the CEO to file a Notice of Determination with the Los Angeles County Clerk and State of California Clearinghouse. In addition, staff is recommending the adoption of the FF/SOC and the MMRP.

## **DISCUSSION**

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The Proposed Project will widen the existing portal for the Metro Red and Purple Lines Maintenance Yard (Division 20), develop a high-capacity turnback facility, increase train storage capacity, and reconfigure the existing internal tracks and access roads at Division 20 (Attachment D, Project Map) so as not to preclude a future Arts District/6<sup>th</sup> St. Station. In April 2016, the Board approved a budget of \$3.5M to initiate design of the project.

The elements of the Proposed Project described in the EIR include:

- Widening the tunnel portal that currently connects the Metro Red and Purple Lines to Division 20, including construction of a column in the portal area and a new ventilation shaft building;
- Constructing new storage tracks;
- Reconfiguring existing tracks and access roads to accommodate a turnback facility;
- Installing a new Traction Power Substation (TPSS) and emergency backup power generator;
- Expanding the rail yard west, into areas currently occupied by the Citizens Warehouse/Lysle Storage Company building, the LAPD Viertel's Central Division Police Garage, and the National Cold Storage facility;
- Repurposing an existing building at 100-120 North Santa Fe Avenue for MOW activities (however, Metro does not intend to acquire this property as it's no longer needed for the Project);
- Modifying the 1st Street Bridge piers and superstructure; and
- Vacating portions of three City streets (i.e., Jackson, Banning, and Ducommun Streets east of Center Street).

### *Project Goals and Objectives*

Given the ongoing Metro Purple Line Extension Project, storage constraints that inhibit fleet expansion, and the absence of a turnback facility, the goal of the Proposed Project is to accommodate the expansion and associated increased ridership of the Metro Red and Purple Lines while reducing existing headways. The two objectives of the Proposed Project are:

- Objective #1: Provide core capacity improvements needed to accommodate increased service levels on Metro Red and Purple Lines.

Objective #2: Provide new tracks and switches that will allow trains to provide faster service times than the current turnback at Union Station.

### *Environmental Analysis*

The Project was analyzed through an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) under CEQA.

The EIR Notice of Preparation was published on October 18, 2017 (with a 30-day public comment period) and the Notice of Availability of the DEIR was published on March 16, 2018 (and circulated for a 45-day public comment period). The Proposed Project was analyzed under all CEQA issue areas and was found to have no impacts or less than significant impacts in 16 issue areas, less than significant impacts with mitigation measures in two issue areas (Aesthetics and Tribal Cultural Resources), and significant and unavoidable impacts related to Cultural Resources (due to the partial demolition of a historic building, complete demolition of a historically significant facility, and

modification to the 1<sup>st</sup> Street Bridge), and Noise and Vibration during construction (due to potential exceedance of FTA noise standards near One Santa Fe residential buildings and potential generation of excessive groundborne vibration).

### *Mitigation Measures*

The FEIR includes a total of fifteen mitigation measures for impacts related to Aesthetics (two mitigation measures), Cultural Resources (nine mitigation measures), Noise and Vibration (three mitigation measures), and Tribal Cultural Resources (one mitigation measure). Metro is responsible for administering and implementing the mitigation measures during construction and operation of the Proposed Project. A full description of the mitigation measures is included in the MMRP (Attachment B).

### *Significant and Unavoidable Impacts*

*Cultural Resources (Historical Resources).* The Citizens Warehouse/Lysle Storage Company building (formerly known as the Pickle Works building) is considered a historical resource under CEQA. Demolition of approximately 30,000 square feet of the eastern portion of the Citizens Warehouse/Lysle Storage Company building would result in a significant and unavoidable impact. The MMRP includes mitigation measures to preserve and protect approximately 24,000 square feet of floor area on three floors (including a basement) of the extant portion of the building, including the Art Dock and the frontage facing Center Street. In addition, as required by Mitigation Measure CR-3, Metro will preserve the opportunity to expand the extant portion of the historical resource to the south to provide an additional 2,700 square feet of floor area on three floors (including a basement). This would amount to a maximum total floor area of approximately 26,700 square feet for potential future reuse and historic rehabilitation. However, even with mitigation, the impact to this historic resource would still be significant and unavoidable.

Another historic resource to which the Proposed Project would create significant and unavoidable impacts is the 1st Street Bridge, designated by the City as a Historic-Cultural Monument. The Proposed Project would remove two bents from the Bridge and widen two bents and one pylon to accommodate new tracks. Modifications to the Bridge would result in a significant and unavoidable impact. The MMRP includes mitigation measures to retain the original decorative brackets, reflect the original board-form appearance on new concrete, and use an infill treatment similar to the treatment used when the Bridge was first widened to accommodate the Metro Gold Line. However, even with mitigation, the remaining impact would be significant and unavoidable.

Demolition of the National Ice and Cold Storage facility, which is listed as historically significant on SurveyLA, the City of Los Angeles' official historical resources survey, would result in a significant and unavoidable impact. The MMRP includes mitigation measures to document the historic nature of the building. However, even with mitigation, the impact would still be significant and unavoidable.

*Noise and Vibration (Construction Noise and Vibration).* The Proposed Project would include construction activities involving heavy-duty equipment directly adjacent to One Santa Fe. In addition, nighttime construction may be required to limit operational impacts to the existing Rail Yard. Noise levels would potentially exceed FTA standards near One Santa Fe residential buildings. Additionally,

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the Proposed Project may generate excessive groundborne vibration. The MMRP includes the preparation of a Noise Control and Monitoring Plan and a Vibration Monitoring Plan as mitigation measures. However, no feasible mitigation measures were identified that would reduce the significant impact to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, even with mitigation, the impact would still be significant and unavoidable.

### *Alternatives*

CEQA requires an analysis of alternatives to the Proposed Project to reduce or eliminate significant impacts associated with project development. An EIR must briefly describe the rationale for selection and rejection of alternatives. Alternatives may be eliminated from detailed consideration in the EIR if they fail to meet most of the project objectives, are infeasible, or do not avoid any significant environmental effects. This section describes potential alternatives to the Proposed Project that have been carried forward for comparative analysis with respect to the significant environmental impacts.

Three alternatives were evaluated:

- Alternative 1, “no project” alternative, (required by CEQA) will leave the current conditions in place;
- Track Design Alternative 2 would include many of the same project elements as the Proposed Project, which includes widening the tunnel portal, construction of a new ventilation building, constructing new storage tracks, installing a new TPSS and backup generator, vacating portions of City streets, and accommodating a turnback facility. This alternative would reduce impacts to cultural resources by not requiring modification of the 1<sup>st</sup> Street Bridge. However, the track configuration for the new storage yards would create a single point of failure for connections to the new storage tracks; and
- Track Design Alternative 3 would have the same project elements as Track Design Alternative 2 and would include two points of failure. Because this alternative would only modify two, rather than four, of the 1st Street Bridge’s bents, it would reduce impacts to cultural resources as compared to the Proposed Project. However, this alternative would only allow four-car train lengths, which would be inadequate for projected passenger loads.

Alternative 1, “no project” alternative, would avoid the Proposed Project’s significant impacts. However, in pursuing the No Project Alternative, Metro would not be able to meet the Proposed Project’s objectives of providing core capacity improvements to accommodate increased service levels on the Metro Red and Purple Lines and providing new tracks and turnouts to allow trains to provide faster service times at Union Station, and makes Alternative 1 infeasible. Track Design Alternatives 2 and 3 would each result in lesser impacts to cultural resources. However, Track Design Alternative 2 does not provide operational redundancy in its single point of failure. Failures at the double slip switch to the storage yard access points would render the storage facility unusable until the issue is addressed, creating inefficiency and poor reliability in operations. This deficiency would conflict with the Proposed Project Objective #2, which is to provide new tracks and switches that will allow trains to provide faster service times than the current turnback at Union Station, and makes Track Design Alternative 2 infeasible. Track Design Alternative 3 does not provide the six-car train lengths that would satisfy the capacity requirements of the Westside Purple Line Extension. This deficiency would conflict with the Proposed Project Objective #1, which is to provide core capacity improvements needed to accommodate increased service levels on Metro Red and Purple Lines, and

makes Track Design Alternative 3 infeasible.

### *Outreach*

Staff led a robust outreach program during the preparation of the EIR, and continued engagement with stakeholders beyond the requirements of CEQA leading up to the release of the FEIR. The initial Scoping public comment period lasted forty-five days from October 18 to November 17, 2017, during which time two public scoping meetings were hosted on October 25, 2017 and November 8, 2017 to receive public input. The Proposed Project's scope was later revised to include additional property, which initiated a revised Scoping public comment period, lasting from January 3 to February 2, 2018. During this process, several briefings and meetings took place with local community groups, community members, elected officials, public agencies, and other stakeholders. Similar briefings were held upon the release of the DEIR and in advance of Metro's public hearing at Metro Headquarters on April 12, 2018 with 11 members of the public present and 15 members of the public viewing via a live webcast. In total, over 20 briefings were held with stakeholders; Attachment E includes a summary of the stakeholder engagement during the environmental process.

During the DEIR public comment period, a total of 50 distinct public comments were received, and 4 commenters spoke during the April 12 public hearing. Broadly, the comments focused on the following topics:

- Cultural Resources
- Transportation/Traffic
- Air Quality
- Noise
- Land Use and Planning
- Aesthetics

Responses were prepared for all comments received and, where applicable, changes (as indicated below) were incorporated into the FEIR. The comments and responses are presented in Chapter 3 of the FEIR.

Of note, the most prevalent public comment concerned the partial demolition of the Citizens Warehouse/Lysle Storage Company building and public requests for preservation, if feasible, or utilization of the space for a community use.

In response, Metro has revised Mitigation Measure CR-3 to provide more details related to preserving and rehabilitating the Citizens Warehouse/Lysle Storage Company building for future reoccupancy. These include:

- Metro will retain and stabilize approximately 24,000 square feet of floor area for potential future reuse.
- Metro shall consult with the Arts District community to identify an appropriate future use for the Citizens Warehouse/Lysle Storage Company building.

- Upon identification of an appropriate future use for the Citizens Warehouse/Lysle Storage Company building, Metro shall develop an adaptive reuse plan in consultation with the Los Angeles Conservancy and the City of Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources.
  - The identified use shall preserve the building's character-defining features and not preclude its eligibility to be designated as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.
- Metro shall preserve the opportunity to expand the Citizens Warehouse/Lysle Storage Company building towards the 1st Street Bridge to provide up to approximately 2,700 square feet of additional floor area.
- Metro shall apply to nominate the Citizens Warehouse/Lysle Storage Company building as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.
- A certificate of occupancy shall be recorded on the property for its future reuse within five years of Metro's purchase of the property from the City.

Other stakeholders' comments focused on design considerations, construction impacts, and operational concerns, and were addressed with stakeholders during the design process. These include:

- Addition of a column structure to accommodate high-speed rail service and avoid potential long-term closure of the Metro Purple and Red lines during future high-speed rail construction activities;
- Clarification regarding the study of a potential future revenue station in the Arts District, undertaken as a separate effort per Board direction in June 2018;
- Incorporation of additional historic features such as notation of the original boundaries of old Chinatown;
- Inclusion of analysis regarding total volatile organic compound (VOC) operational emissions.
- Clarification of Metro's policy for construction engine specifications, as described in the Metro Green Construction Policy.
- Reconsideration of purchase of additional property.
- Reassurance that a robust outreach process will be in place during construction.
- Confirmation that Construction of the Proposed Project would not involve road closures or impacts to neighboring businesses.

### *FEIR Recommendations*

Staff recommends that the Board certify the FEIR with the Proposed Project. Although Track Design Alternative 2 would result in lesser impacts to cultural resources than the Proposed Project, the Proposed Project better achieves the desired project benefits and project objectives.

### *Statement of Overriding Considerations and Findings of Fact*

CEQA Guidelines Section 15091(a) states that if the specific economic, legal, social, technological or other benefits of the project outweigh the unavoidable adverse effects, those effects may be considered acceptable. The Board must find that notwithstanding the disclosure of these significant and unavoidable impacts, there are specific overriding reasons for approving the Proposed Project and that these reasons override and outweigh the Proposed Project's significant unavoidable effects. CEQA requires Metro to support, in writing, the specific reasons for considering a project acceptable

when significant impacts cannot be avoided or substantially lessened. The findings are described below and in the necessary Statement of Overriding Considerations.

Though the Proposed Project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts related to cultural resources and noise and vibration, the Proposed Project would create regional environmental and social benefits. The main benefits of the Proposed Project are described below and in greater detail in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

- *Regional Transit Capacity.* The Proposed Project will substantially improve capacity of the Metro Red and Purple Lines. In November 2016, over 70 percent of Los Angeles County's voters approved Metro's Measure M ballot measure to raise sales taxes to pay for critical transportation improvements, including the acceleration of the Purple Line Extension. The improvements to the Division 20 Rail Yard will provide core capacity improvements to accommodate increased service levels previously approved for the Metro Red and Purple Lines and allow trains to provide faster service times at Union Station. Metro Red and Purple Line ridership is expected to increase by approximately 49,000 following the Purple Line Extension to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs West Los Angeles Medical Center. In order to effectively serve the additional patronage during weekday peak hours, planned service improvements include operating trains every four minutes on each line - which is every two minutes in the trunk portion of the system - and expanding the fleet. Currently, eastbound trains in the trunk portion of the system use special trackwork at Union Station to reverse directions (i.e., 'turnback'). However, the capability of turning back trains is capped at 7.5 minutes on each line, or 3.75 minutes combined due to the original design of Union Station. In addition to improving Metro Red Line service, the Proposed Project would provide quicker turnaround times and capacity for storing trains for the full build-out of the Purple Line Extension.
- *Reduced Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and Associated Emissions.* The Proposed Project would allow for the increase in service and expansion of the geographical reach of the Metro Red and Purple Lines. This would increase the appeal and viability of heavy rail transit as a mode of transportation in Los Angeles County. Such improvements to alternative modes of transportation would provide the opportunity for reductions in regional single-occupancy vehicle VMT and associated air pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions. In combination with the Purple Line Extension, the Proposed Project would result in an annual net reduction of approximately 19,960 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. The entirety of the Purple Line Extension was incorporated into the Southern California Association of Governments Regional Transportation Plan. Enhancing and expanding the public transit network is at the crux of reducing regional VMT and associated GHG emissions, which is the top priority of the regional and local transportation and sustainability plans, as well as the California Air Resources Board Scoping Plan. The Proposed Project would contribute to regional efforts to improve sustainability and reduce VMT.

Notwithstanding the significant and unavoidable Project impacts, changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Proposed Project which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effects as identified in the EIR.



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## **DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT**

Approval of this item will have no impact on safety.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

There is no impact to the FY19 budget for the proposed recommendations. Funding for the environmental services was included in the FY18 budget in Project 865119 Division 20 Portal Widening and Turnback Facility, cost center 8510, account number 50316 Professional and Technical Services. This is a multi-year project requiring expenditure authorizations in fiscal year increments until a Board Authorized Life of Project Budget is adopted. It is the responsibility of the Project Manager and Chief Program Management Officer to budget for this project in the future fiscal years.

### Impact to Budget

There is no change to the FY19 approved budget. The current funding for the project is CTC approved Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) funds and Measure R 35% funds.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

Approval of this recommendation supports the following Metro Strategic Plan Goals:

1. Provide high-quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time travelling;
2. Deliver outstanding trip experience for all users of the transportation system; and
3. Enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity.

## **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

The Board could delay action to certify the FEIR, adopt the Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations, as well as the MMRP. Deferral of these actions is not recommended as they would delay the Proposed Project's overall schedule to be complete before opening of the WPLE Section 1 in 2023 as well as delay the achievement of the FFGA reduced headway capabilities by late 2024.

The Board could decide to certify the FEIR but reject the staff recommendation to approve the Proposed Project and instead advance Track Design Alternative 2 or 3 as the Preferred Alternative. This is not recommended. The Proposed Project and Track Design Alternatives 2 and 3 are similar in overall design but have key operational differences to the Proposed Project. Track Design Alternative 2 does not provide operational redundancy in its points of failure, which would prevent continuing rail service in the case of a trackwork failure. Track Design Alternative 3 does not provide for the six-car train lengths that would satisfy the capacity requirements of the Westside Purple Line Extension. The selection of Track Design Alternative 2 or 3 would thus conflict with the Proposed Project's objectives. As a result, Track Design Alternatives 2 or 3 are infeasible.

The Board could decide to select Alternative 1, "no project." This is not recommended as it would maintain existing conditions, would be contrary to the overall vision for future revenue service, and

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would not fulfill Metro's commitment through the WPLE FFGA to provide reduced headway capabilities by late 2024. The selection of Alternative 1, "no project," would thus conflict with the Proposed Project's objectives. Additionally, Metro has secured State grant funding to advance this project. As a result, the No Project Alternative is not feasible.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Upon Board certification of the FEIR, staff will file a Notice of Determination with the State of California and Los Angeles County, and advance key project contracts for Early Demolition and Construction.

The project is advancing to complete final design by the end of the calendar year with construction bid documents to be released in early 2019. Once construction bids are received and the lowest bidder is identified, staff will establish a LOP budget and will return to the Board for adoption.

Staff will also return to the Board for approval of any final property required for the project.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations

Attachment B - Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan

Attachment C - Notice of Determination

Attachment D - Project Map

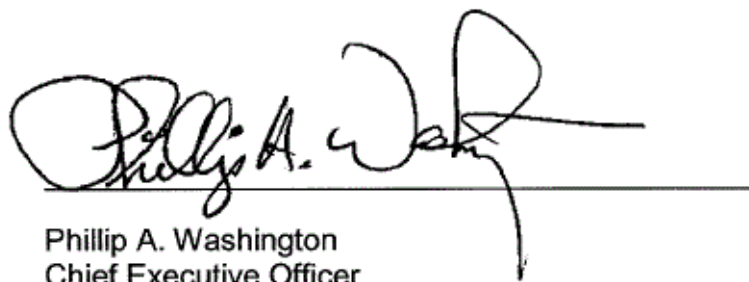
Attachment E - Summary of Outreach

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