

**Board Report**

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**File #:** 2019-0715, **File Type:** Motion / Motion Response

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**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE  
OCTOBER 16, 2019**

**SUBJECT: REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ANTELOPE VALLEY LINE STUDY IN  
RESPONSE TO MOTION 5.1 FROM JULY 2019**

**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

**RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE report on the implementation of the Antelope Valley Line Study in response to Board Motion 5.1 from July 2019.

**ISSUE**

At the July 2019 Metro Board meeting, the Board unanimously approved Motion 5.1 (Attachment A) introduced by Directors Barger, Najarian, Krekorian and Solis to support the implementation of three augmented service scenarios, each with a corresponding set of infrastructure improvements, as part of a phased implementation plan to deliver higher quality, faster and safer Metrolink service on the Antelope Valley Line.

Motion 5.1 directed the CEO to report back this month on several items identified in the motion, including project development plans, cash flow considerations, and associated operating costs for the four projects necessary to implement the approved service scenarios, and an update on a discretionary grant strategy coordinated with Metrolink to fund fully these four projects.

This report provides staff's response to these items. Staff will continue to deliver the entirety of Motion 5.1 and report back with additional updates in a timely manner.

**BACKGROUND**

The Metrolink Antelope Valley Line (AVL) serves as the rail transit corridor that serves the communities between Lancaster in the Antelope Valley and Los Angeles Union Station, offering traffic congestion relief on State Route 14 and Interstate 5 which run parallel to this 76.6-mile class 4 rail corridor route owned by Metro and used primarily by SCRRRA running Metrolink commuter rail service and secondarily by the Union Pacific Railroad for class 1 freight service. Amtrak also operates LOSSAN intercity rail service on the southern portion of the line. Currently Metrolink runs up to 30 commuter trains and Union Pacific Railroad operates 12 freight trains daily on the AVL.

The AVL serves as the only rail transit system linking residents and employment opportunities in the North Los Angeles County region to the Los Angeles basin. Additionally, this line is also the only rail transit serving the cities of Glendale, Burbank, San Fernando and the northeast San Fernando Valley. Running parallel to Interstate 5 and State Route 14, the Metrolink AVL serves as a modal alternative to driving for commuters that live and work near the 11 stations between Lancaster and Glendale, with connections to the line made possible to other Metrolink, Metro Rail, Metro Bus and municipal bus lines that serve the line's southern terminus at Los Angeles Union Station. With future transit lines planned to intersect with the AVL throughout the region, including the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor, improvements along the AVL will generate additional benefits and opportunities for the regional transportation system.

The importance of this Metrolink line to Los Angeles County was never more apparent than when the Interstate 5/State Route 14 freeway interchange connector collapsed in the 1994 earthquake, sparking emergency action to extend the line beyond its then-terminus in Santa Clarita to Lancaster to provide a vital transportation alternative for North Los Angeles County communities severed from the regional transportation system for months. Twenty-five years later, this Metrolink corridor has evolved from a transportation lifeline to a growing transportation service of choice for 7,000 weekday passengers, equivalent to the removal of one million car trips annually from the regional highway system. The AVL enjoys its status as Metrolink's third most popular line despite many constraints to speed, capacity, reliability, and expansion of service on the line - these constraints include aging infrastructure, significant grades, curves through mountainous topography, and 60% of the corridor limited to single track.

Recognizing the impact these limitations have on the AVL's ability to meet the transportation, employment and equity goals of the communities along the corridor, the Metro Board commissioned several planning studies-the 2012 Metrolink Antelope Valley Line Infrastructure Improvement Strategic Plan and the 2013 North County Multimodal Integrated Transportation Study (NCMITS)-to begin the examination of these limitations and of the opportunities available to improve mobility in North Los Angeles County and along the AVL.

Building on these studies and the passage of Measure M in 2016, which provided additional funding for Metrolink service, Directors Barger and Najarian introduced Motion 47 (Attachment B) at the July 2017 Metro Board meeting. This motion, approved unanimously by the Board, authorized a more focused study of the Metrolink AVL between Burbank and Lancaster and directed staff to coordinate with Metrolink and the North County Transportation Coalition to:

- A) Determine a range of frequency of service to maximize regional accessibility throughout the day;
- B) Assess the condition of the existing rail infrastructure (e.g. tracks, culverts, tunnels, crossings, etc.) that limits operational flexibility and service reliability; and
- C) Recommend needed infrastructure and capital improvement costs (in level of priority) along with cost-benefit analysis to support the range of frequency of service, service reliability, safety, and on-time performance including latest technologies in rail propulsion, controls and rail stock.

Metro collaborated with Metrolink, the North Los Angeles County Transportation Coalition, California State Transportation Agency and LOSSAN to develop the AVL study. At the July 2019 Planning and Programming Committee, Metro staff presented its findings with Item 5 (Attachment C), including six service scenarios that aligned with the California State Rail 2040 Plan and Metrolink's Southern California Optimized Rail Expansion (SCORE) Plan, along with a set of cost-effective infrastructure improvements needed to support each scenario, based on a phased implementation plan. Staff found that service Scenarios 1 through 3 offered the potential for tangible improvements in AVL service. Staff also found that the Balboa Siding Project was necessary to support Scenarios 2 through 6, and therefore was a critical path improvement to support additional service levels.

In response to Item 5, Directors Barger, Najarian, Krekorian, and Solis introduced Motion 5.1 and approved unanimously by the Metro Board, that supported the implementation of Scenarios 1 through 3, as detailed in the AVL Study, with the Balboa Siding Project prioritized in this effort. Implementing Scenarios 1 through 3 would result in the following outcomes:

- Three new late evening train trips,
- Bi-directional hourly mid-day service between Lancaster and Los Angeles Union Station, and
- Bi-directional 30-minute service during the regular weekday between Santa Clarita and Los Angeles Union Station.

The motion also called for the CEO to accomplish the following:

- Coordinate with Metrolink on the implementation of Scenarios 1 through 3 and the inclusion and prioritization of the capital projects detailed therein as part of Metrolink's SCORE program;
- Program Multi-year Subregional Program funding from the North County Subregion to bring the four projects supporting Scenarios 1 through 3 to "shovel ready" status;
- Develop project plans, cash flow considerations, and associated operating costs to implement Scenarios 1 through 3;
- Coordinate with Metrolink on a discretionary grant strategy and with the North County Subregion on additional local funding options that could be leveraged to fund the remaining construction costs of the capital projects included in Scenarios 1 through 3;
- Support the implementation of a diesel, electric, battery electric, or hybrid multiple unit train pilot program on the AVL; Coordinate with Metrolink in pursuit of grant funding opportunities that focus on the offsetting of mobile source pollution in order to implement the pilot program; and
- Work in partnership with Metrolink to engage appropriate state agencies and the private sector on additional strategies to implement all directives of the motion.

This report is a first update on the implementation of Motion 5.1 and the elements of the motion that required a report back to the Metro Board during the October 2019 Board cycle.

## **DISCUSSION**

In response to Motion 5.1, Metro staff initiated a recurring task force comprising board staff from the authors of the motion, various internal departments, Metrolink, and staff consultants to realize the full implementation of the motion through a collaborative partnership. As this effort continues to develop, additional stakeholders such as the North County Transportation Coalition and the California State Transportation Agency will be invited to participate in this collaborative effort.

The following updates are highlights responsive to Motion 5.1, with additional updates to be brought to the Board during the November/December 2019 Board cycle and beyond as needed.

### Scenarios 1 through 3: Project Development Plans and Cash Flow Considerations

In response to Part C of Motion 5.1, Metro staff will generate a proposed 10-year programming schedule and cash flow to develop the four projects identified in Scenarios 1 through 3 to shovel-ready status and to be implemented by Fiscal Year 2030 should discretionary grant funding be secured for these projects in a timely manner. This proposed schedule will prioritize the Balboa Siding Project (i.e., Double Track Extension) as required by Motion 5.1. The costs and cashflow associated with these capital projects will continue to be refined and solidified to support efforts to secure discretionary grants to implement Scenarios 1 through 3. Metro staff will also coordinate with Metrolink and the North County Subregion to finalize these items and report back on these items during the November/December 2019 Board cycle.

### Roles and Responsibilities

Metro and Metrolink will develop a formal agreement delineating roles and responsibilities for implementing the four capital projects necessary for Scenarios 1 through 3. Staff will update the Board on the outcome of this objective when it is completed.

### Associated Operating Costs

Metro staff is currently refining the operating costs associated with the service augmentation to be implemented through Scenarios 1 through 3. With concurrence from the Board offices that authored Motion 5.1, staff will update the Board on these costs in full during the November/December 2019 Board cycle.

### Local Funding Options

Motion 5.1 called upon Metro staff to coordinate with the North County Subregion on local funding options that could be leveraged to secure discretionary grant funding to deliver Scenarios 1 through 3. Metro staff will develop for the North County Transportation Coalition's consideration in October 2019 a funding source and cash flow proposal that would support competitive grant proposals to

secure state and/or federal funding.

Metro staff will report back to the Board on the progress of this effort during the November/December 2019 Board cycle.

#### Discretionary Grant Strategy

Metro staff will continue to coordinate with Metrolink staff to develop a comprehensive discretionary grant strategy that will pursue state and federal funding opportunities to leverage limited local resources to fully construct the four projects in Scenarios 1 through 3 of the AVL Study, as approved through Motion 5.1.

The most promising - and imminent - discretionary grant opportunity to fund the elements of Motion 5.1 is the 2020 Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) administered by the California State Transportation Agency. The TIRCP provides funding for rail capital projects that expand, enhance, or improve existing rail systems and connectivity to existing and future transit systems, including the high-speed rail system. This program was the major source of funding for Metrolink's SCORE program and the Link US project. The capital projects to be delivered through Motion 5.1 will all be eligible for funding in the TIRCP.

The TIRCP also provides an opportunity to fund the pilot program for the AVL using diesel, electric, battery electric, or hybrid multiple unit train technology as identified in the motion.

Staff will work with Metrolink and other stakeholders to develop a competitive grant application for the 2020 TIRCP grant competition that will encompass the capital projects and pilot program approved through Motion 5.1. Project applications for this next funding cycle are due in January 2020, and the amount of funding expected to be available statewide is between \$400 million and \$500 million.

Additionally, the AVL capital improvements are also eligible to be funded through the Senate Bill 1 (SB 1) Solutions for Congested Corridors Program (SCCP) administered by the California Transportation Commission (CTC). This program is funded at \$250 million per year through SB 1 funds and awards grants for construction only to projects that provide transportation, environmental, and community access improvements to reduce congestion throughout the state. The major eligibility criterion for this program is that the project must be part of a completed Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Planning Study - in this case, the study would have to encompass Interstate 5 and State Route 14 to support an application.

While the NCMITS is helpful in this regard, an updated and augmented Multimodal Corridor Study for Interstate 5 and State Route 14 that meets the requirements of the CTC for the SCCP will allow for Metro to apply for limited SCCP funding in future cycles to implement the projects composing the approved AVL priorities set forth in Motion 5.1.

The SCCP is currently scheduled to provide funding opportunities in two-year cycles, with the next round of funding to be awarded in calendar year 2020. This program is currently in the process of updating its guidelines in advance of the next Call for Projects anticipated in mid-2020.

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Metro staff will continue to coordinate with Metrolink on additional opportunities to apply for funding from additional state and federal programs, including but not limited to the following:

- Local Partnership Program (LPP) - administered by the CTC;
- Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) - administered by the Federal Railroad Administration; and
- Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) - administered by the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT).

Based on the existing criteria for the USDOT Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) and the CTC Trade Corridor Enhancement Program (TCEP), staff does not consider these competitions to be viable options for Metro and Metrolink to secure discretionary grant funding for the AVL projects. Staff will continue to monitor these programs to determine if updated criteria for future cycles provide new opportunities to seek funding for this program.

### Equity Platform

The implementation of Motion 5.1 will employ the Equity Platform Pillar III “Focus and Deliver” by planning resources to invest strategically in high quality mobility options for Los Angeles County, including the additional transit options available for many communities-including those designated as disadvantaged ones-along the Metrolink AVL corridor.

### FINANCIAL IMPACT

The financial impact associated with implementing Motion 5.1 will be further refined and reported upon in the November/December 2019 Board cycle.

### Impact to Budget

This report has no financial impact.

### IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The AVL improvements adopted by the Board through Motion 5.1 will support multiple Strategic Plan goals, including the following:

- **Goal #1: Provide high-quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling / Goal #3 Enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity**
  - By supporting the delivery of infrastructure and service improvements designed to augment and enhance existing Metrolink service on the AVL, Motion 5.1 when implemented will directly serve the movement of people by rail transit to and from communities and employment opportunities along the rail corridor. Metrolink AVL service provides commuters with a high-quality transit alternative to driving on Interstate 5 and State Route 14, and once implemented, Motion 5.1 will allow these commuters to

have faster, safer, more reliable and more frequent rail service.

- **Goal #4: Transform LA County through regional collaboration and national leadership**
  - Motion 5.1 calls for Metro to collaborate with its regional partners in Metrolink, subregional governments, and local jurisdictions to develop an improved level of service on the AVL through infrastructure improvements and service augmentation. Creating a strong incentive for commuters to switch from using single-occupancy car trips to faster rail transit opportunities on the AVL afforded by Motion 5.1 will provide a transformative change in congestion reduction, emission reduction, and economic vitality for Los Angeles County. As part of Motion 5.1, Metro staff will also collaborate with the California State Transportation Agency and the federal government to deliver the funding necessary to deliver the projects necessary to provide improved Metrolink service on the AVL.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Staff will continue to collaborate with Metrolink, regional partners, and CalSTA to develop a competitive grant application for the 2020 TIRCP grant competition that will potentially provide funding necessary to implement Motion 5.1. Staff will also examine other funding opportunities at the state and federal level to provide funding for these projects and report back to the Board during the November/December 2019 Board cycle.

Staff will also coordinate with stakeholders to develop a rail multiple unit pilot program responsive to the motion and will investigate additional state and federal grant opportunities beyond TIRCP to provide funding necessary to implement this program.

Staff will report back to the Board in the November/December 2019 Board cycle with more details on the project development plans, cash flow considerations and financial assumptions for constructing the projects and operating the service envisioned in Motion 5.1.

Staff will also work with the North County Subregion to develop local funding plans to support the grant applications necessary to deliver the projects and service as approved in Motion 5.1.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - Motion 5.1: July 2019 motion

Attachment B - Motion 47: July 2017 motion

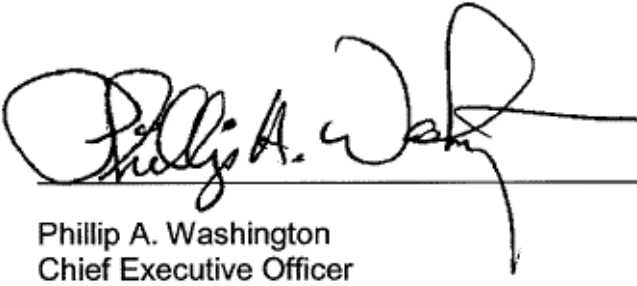
Attachment C - Item 5: July 2019 Board Report on the Metrolink Antelope Valley Study

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