

**Board Report**

File #: 2021-0025, **File Type:** Informational Report**Agenda Number:** 14.

**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
MARCH 17, 2021****SUBJECT: COUNTYWIDE PLANNING MAJOR PROJECT STATUS REPORT****ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE****RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE monthly report on the Major Capital Projects in the environmental planning phase by the Chief Planning Officer.

DISCUSSION

- **East San Fernando Valley LRT**

The Metro Board certified the EIR on December 3, 2020 and the FTA issued the Record of Decision on January 29, 2021. With the CEQA document certified and the Record of Decision issued by the FTA for the NEPA document, the Project is environmentally cleared. With this significant Project milestone completed, Program Management has initiated the process of right-of-way acquisitions, potholing, and utility relocations for the Initial Project Segment on Van Nuys Boulevard between the Metro Orange Line and San Fernando Road. The Project's draft 30%/60% design drawings are currently being circulated for comment and review with Metro departments.

On December 3, 2020, the Board directed that further study be conducted for the 2.5-mile segment of the project in the Metro-owned Antelope Valley Railroad Right-of-Way. Staff, in coordination with the City of San Fernando, City of Los Angeles and the Southern California Regional Rail Authority, is finalizing a scope of work and schedule for this section of the alignment with special attention to railroad grade crossings. An overview of that work was presented to the Planning & Programming Committee at its February 2021 meeting.

- **West Santa Ana Branch Corridor**

The West Santa Ana Branch (WSAB) project is finalizing the second Administrative Draft EIS/R incorporating the first round of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) comments on the Administrative Draft submitted in late November 2020. The second Administrative Draft is scheduled to be submitted on March 16, 2021. Staff continues to coordinate with various third

parties as necessary including Union Pacific Railroad, cities, Caltrans, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and various utility providers.

Staff is planning to engage key stakeholders before the release of the Draft Environmental document to outline draft environmental review and comment process. The project continues to advance field survey work and verification of existing utilities identified as part of the 15% design.

- **Green Line to Torrance LRT Extension**

The EIR scoping period is proceeding for a 45-day review period which started on January 29 and extends through March 15 with virtual scoping meetings held on February 23 (Agency), 24 and 27, 2021.

The scoping meetings were well attended with over 200 participants on Wednesday, February 24, and over 100 participants on Saturday, February 27. The comments received during the scoping meetings included direction on environmental topics to be studied during the DEIR phase, concerns regarding the alternatives under evaluation, and design features that should be included for consideration (i.e. pedestrian/bicycle access, soundwalls, grade separations, and extended aerial/trench configurations). Comments received are being documented and will be considered and evaluated during the project development process of the project.

- **Eastside Corridor LRT Extension**

Meetings with all corridor cities to solicit input on the Draft Advanced Conceptual Engineering in their respective jurisdictions have been completed.

- City of Whittier (November 18)
- City of Pico Rivera (December 15)
- City of Santa Fe Springs (December 21)
- City of Commerce (January 20)
- City of Montebello (February 11)

Subsequent meetings were held per the cities' requests to either provide an overview of the Draft Advanced Conceptual Engineering to elected officials or discuss specific project elements within the city's respective jurisdictions. Formal comments on the Draft Advanced Conceptual Engineering were submitted by all Cities.

- City of Whittier City Council Ad-hoc (January 7).
- City of Pico Rivera - City-led Rio Hondo Bridge Improvement Project (January 19)
- Washington Coalition (February 4)
- City of Pico Rivera - Right-of-Way needs (February 11)
- City of Commerce - Follow-up (March 4)

Ongoing monthly updates to the Washington Coalition will continue to keep corridor cities current

with project milestones and outreach. The next meeting is on April 1, 2021.

A Community Based Organization (CBO) strategy is being developed for the project in collaboration with the Race and Equity and Community Relations Departments. The strategy's objectives are to work with CBOs and stakeholders that understand the corridor communities to help guide the project's outreach approach and identify ways to solicit project input from CBOs. Metro staff is also closely working with the Metro Board staff to optimize the strategy.

Contract modifications for the environmental and engineering consultants were executed in February. Both consultant teams are advancing the project per the Board's decisions to focus on the Washington Alternative and CEQA only. The engineering consultants have been tasked with refining the Draft Advanced Conceptual Engineering based on comments and evaluating cost-saving opportunities along the alignment.

- **Sepulveda Transit Corridor**

Metro's internal review of private sector PDA proposals has been completed and proposed recommendations for contract award were brought to the Board for review in February. The official recommendation for contract award will occur at the March Board meeting.

The PDA procurement blackout period has ended and PDA concepts have been disclosed. Once approved by the Board, the environmental scoping period can proceed. The environmental review process will be presented to the Board in April and will be formally initiated through public scoping meetings in fall 2021.

- **NoHo to Pasadena Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)**

The NoHo to Pasadena BRT Draft EIR comment period began on October 26 and concluded on December 28. Staff received nearly 500 comments with the majority of them indicating general support for the project. Currently the most challenging issues include community concerns over parking loss along Olive Avenue in Burbank and other comments pertaining to the Eagle Rock section of the project.

In Eagle Rock, most comments favor routing the BRT along Colorado Boulevard rather than on the SR-134 freeway. However, the community has expressed concerns over impacts to the existing buffered bike lanes, medians, traffic, and parking. Several comments have expressed support for a new BRT concept on Colorado Boulevard referred to as the "Beautiful Boulevard", which was developed by a local community group. Staff is currently examining this concept and how its key elements compare to the existing alternatives analyzed in the DEIR.

As of February, staff has begun re-engaging with key stakeholders to work through these remaining issues. In Eagle Rock specifically, two stakeholder roundtables are being planned for mid-March to discuss BRT design concepts on Colorado Boulevard in an effort to strike a balance between some of the competing priorities expressed by community members. The primary goal of this additional stakeholder outreach is to help inform the next step in the process, which is to

develop a recommended Proposed Project. Key details contained in the Proposed Project will include a final project alignment, station locations, and a specific BRT configuration along each segment of the alignment (i.e. center-running, side-running, or curb-running bus lanes). Staff is also planning on conducting an additional community meeting to present and discuss the ultimate Proposed Project prior to presenting it to the Metro Board for approval.

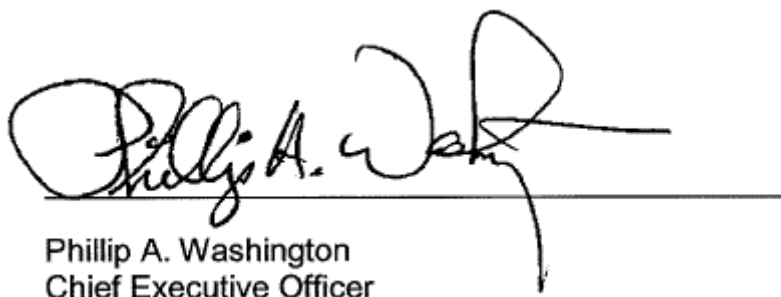
Staff currently intends to return to the Metro Board in May 2021 with two recommendations, including 1) selecting the Proposed Project and 2) approving the Project's Title VI Service Equity Analysis. If the Board approves both recommendations, staff will begin work on the Final EIR and advance the selected BRT design.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Countywide Planning Monthly Major Projects - March 2021

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