

**Board Report**

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**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE  
JUNE 16, 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**

This month's Major Project Status Report provides the regular update for Metro's four Pillar Projects and the North Hollywood to Pasadena Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project. This report also includes new updates on recent developments for a project that has reached critical milestones recently: Crenshaw Northern Extension.

- **West Santa Ana Branch Corridor (WSAB)**

Metro staff is working on submitting the third and final round of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIS/EIR) to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The third administrative will be submitted to FTA on June 9, 2021. FTA is currently expected to authorize public circulation of the Draft EIS/EIR by mid-July 2021.

In April, the Project team conducted two Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) meetings, to share the latest details on the project alternatives, environmental process and next steps, including the anticipated release of the Draft EIS/EIR this summer. The SWG provides feedback from a community perspective and serves as a communication liaison/ambassador. The participants include business, community, education, environmental justice and faith-based organizations.

Public outreach will be conducted this spring and summer during the release of the Draft EIS/EIR, including the official 45-day comment period. Both in-person open houses and virtual public-hearings are being contemplated at this time. The date and time of these meetings will be finalized by end of this month. To enhance project awareness and access to the latest updates, several multi-media tools will be launched to inform users about the project corridor and environmental process. Communications Toolkits also will be shared with community leaders to support their engagement with constituents, and presentations and project updates are available by request.

The project continues to advance field survey work and verification of existing utilities identified as part of the 15% design. 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.

- **Green Line to Torrance LRT Extension**

Staff is in the process of evaluating the 700 comments have been received during the scoping period. Comments received will be a part of the environmental process. The majority of comments received were generally supportive of the project, however many included specific concerns regarding the two alternatives under consideration. These concerns included alignment configuration and potential impacts such as noise, vibration, property acquisition, safety, and changes to aesthetics/community character that need to be further evaluated. Based on scoping comments, the project team will move forward with the Draft EIR and conceptual design of the alternatives under evaluation.

The project team and BNSF Railroad are having on-going discussions to better understand their daily operations and accommodating an extension of the Green Line (C Line) under consideration. BNSF has certain requirements to maintain their existing and future needs along the ROW. The discussions are providing both teams with a better understanding of what is needed to accommodate BNSF's requirements and are being taken under consideration as the initial designs of the alternatives are being developed.

Initial Risk workshops for the project were conducted on May 3 and 5 with a final discussion on June 7. The workshops provide an opportunity to understand and monitor potential risks for the project across multiple disciplines; these risks are also monetized for project cost estimations. The workshops will be held on an on-going basis during the project development to address and minimize risks as the project progresses.

Community outreach will be ongoing and project updates will be shared as the environmental process progresses. On May 26, the project team conducted a visual site visit of both alternatives under consideration to better understand comments received during the scoping process. Targeted stakeholder meetings will be scheduled to discuss community concerns and project opportunities throughout the study area. Coordination will continue as well with Caltrans and BNSF to understand current and future operational needs for both entities and alternatives under evaluation. Potholing activities are being scheduled with both Caltrans and BNSF to identify the location of existing utilities on both alternatives to better inform the conceptual design process.

- **Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2**

The Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 project team is nearing completion of the Community-Based Organization (CBO) Outreach Strategy based on input received from Community Relations and Race and Equity Departments, Board offices, and key stakeholders.

Metro staff received feedback from the following key stakeholders:

- o Leaders from the East Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce and the Whittier Boulevard Merchants Association (March 30)
- o East Los Angeles Small Business Roundtable (March 31)
- o Washington Coalition (April 1 and May 6)
- o Health Innovation Community Partnership (April 2)

The CBO Outreach strategy will follow the guidance of the Equity Platform and the CBO Partnering Strategy. Next steps involve the development of participatory criteria and scope of work with assistance from the project team's outreach consultant. The CBO Outreach Strategy is anticipated to be implemented this summer, prior to commencing community engagement for the Eastside Transit Corridor 2.

The environmental and engineering consultant teams are advancing the project with an anticipated release of the Draft EIR in spring 2022. The engineering consultant continues to further evaluate station locations, maintenance storage facility sites, and design variations along the alignment. Additionally, feasibility analysis progresses on an at-grade configuration in the City of Montebello and the I-605 crossing.

- **Sepulveda Transit Corridor**

On April 14, 2021, Metro staff notified the Board of the five Valley-Westside alternatives entering into the environmental process for the Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project. These five alternatives collectively represent the concepts advanced by the Sepulveda Transit Corridor Feasibility Study and the Pre-Development Agreement (PDA) process. Staff is preparing for the environmental scoping period in fall 2021. Following the March 2021 contract award of two PDA teams, Program Management continues working to execute the Notice to Proceed with the teams. A virtual community meeting on June 8, 2021, will update the community of project activities since the publication of the Feasibility Study and provide an overview of the upcoming environmental process.

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

Following Board approval of the Proposed Project in May 2021, this Project is now in the Final EIR phase. Since the release of the Draft EIR and through public input and community engagement, staff had developed a refined Proposed Project that was presented to the public at a community meeting held on April 1, 2021. A total of 369 people attended the meeting and were given the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on the Proposed Project. Most of the questions and comments pertained to the Eagle Rock segment of the project. Overall, the feedback received from participants leaned slightly in favor of the Proposed Project in Eagle Rock, with those opposed expressing concerns over traffic congestion and spillover onto adjacent neighborhood streets, resulting from the loss of travel lanes. Based on the feedback received from the public and key stakeholders, staff updated the recommended Proposed Project to include two center-running BRT design options for Colorado Boulevard in Eagle Rock - one which converts a travel lane in each direction to a bus lane

and the other which retains all travel lanes but reduces parking and median space to accommodate bus lanes.

The refined Proposed Project was approved by the Metro Board on May 27, 2021. Staff will begin preparing a Final EIR and will continue coordinating with the cities and conduct additional community outreach in the months ahead.

- **Countywide Planning Dashboard**

While this report focuses on the four Major Capital (“Pillar”) Projects, there are six other Measure M projects, five non-Measure M projects, and four Strategy & Policy initiatives. For an update on these other 15 projects, please refer to Attachment A of this report, which provides the Countywide Planning Dashboard.

Of note, the following project reached important milestones this month as highlighted below:

- **Crenshaw Northern Extension**

The Crenshaw Northern Extension project completed public scoping on May 28, as part of the environmental review process. Approximately 421 participants attended three virtual meetings, during which staff presented scoping and project objectives and walked participants through the environmental review process for the three alignments being studied.

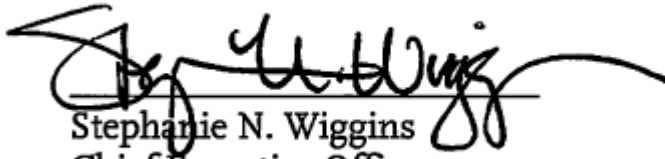
Approximately 390 public comments (virtual speaker, email, or voice mail) were received. This study will evaluate three potential alignments to extend the Crenshaw/LAX line north from the E (Expo) Line with connections to the D (Purple) and B (Red) Lines and five of our busiest bus lines, with a potential terminus at the Hollywood Bowl. A Post-Scoping Alternatives Report will be prepared (anticipated in fall 2021) documenting all the comments heard; that information will be used to help further refine the alternatives.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - Countywide Planning Monthly Major Projects - June 2021

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