



Board Report

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**REVISED**  
**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE**  
**FEBRUARY 16, 2022**

**SUBJECT: EASTSIDE TRANSIT CORRIDOR PHASE 2**

**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

**RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE the project status update on the Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 Project.

**SOLIS AMENDMENT:** Report back in April 2022 with the following:

- A. Innovative ways to help streamline the preconstruction-related work, including advancing engineering and utility-related work, among other strategies.
- B. Funding plans and assumptions for the two IOS alternatives being proposed; the plans should focus on a local funding strategy and a combined local and federal funding strategy.
- C. Strategies to streamline environmental review, including seeking a NEPA waiver, having NEPA authority delegated to the state, and seeking an abbreviated NEPA.
- D. An Alternative Delivery plan that will provide project schedule efficiencies which will reduce the overall preconstruction timeline.
- E. An accelerated project schedule for the two IOS alternatives and the entire project segment.

**HAHN AMENDMENT:** Report back in April 2022 with the following:

- A. Which specific grants, state and federal funding programs the eastside transit corridor project is applying for;
- B. The competitiveness and priority of this project related to our other Metro projects also in the pipeline for these opportunities;
- C. Any other Measure R and Measure M funding that might be available through future amendment or borrowing; and

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D. Any opportunities for low and no-cost financing through federal or private sources.

In addition to those four things, engage relevant municipal agencies and Community-Based Organizations along the project corridor, as well as the Washington Boulevard Coalition, for their input and feedback on all strategies being considered.

## **ISSUE**

This is an update to the Board on the Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 Project (Project) status. Key updates include a project update and preliminary determination of the Initial Operating Segments (IOS).

## **BACKGROUND**

At its October 25, 2018, meeting (Item #2018-0303) the Board approved reinitiating the environmental review process for the Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 Project. This included environmental analysis for the SR 60 Alternative (planned parallel or along the SR 60 freeway), Washington Alternative (planned along Washington Boulevard), and the Combined Alternative (combination of the Washington and SR 60 Alternative).

Following the study and community input on the three project alternatives, at its February 27, 2020, meeting, the Board approved the withdrawal of the SR 60 and Combined Alternatives from the Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 environmental study. The Board also approved proceeding with a focused California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) environmental study for the Washington Alternative (Item #2020-0027).

Further study of alternatives to the withdrawal SR 60 Alternative were designated to be undertaken by the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, which has initiated separate feasibility studies to evaluate other alternatives to serve the San Gabriel Valley.

The project alignment is approximately 9.0 miles that travels south along Atlantic Boulevard in an underground segment between the current Metro L (Gold) Line terminus station at Pomona Boulevard/Atlantic Boulevard and the Citadel Outlets in Commerce. The route then proceeds east along Washington Boulevard via aerial and at-grade configurations ending at Lambert Road in the city of Whittier. Proposed stations along this route that are being considered include:

- Relocated Atlantic/Pomona Boulevard station
- Atlantic/Whittier Boulevard station in East Los Angeles.
- Commerce/Citadel station in Commerce.
- Greenwood Avenue station in Montebello
- Rosemead Boulevard station in Pico Rivera.
- Norwalk Boulevard station serving unincorporated Los Nietos, Whittier, and Santa Fe Springs, and
- Lambert Road station in Whittier.

According to Measure M and Metro’s Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) financial forecast, the Project has a \$3 billion (2015\$) allocation of funding comprised of Measure M and other local and state. Measure M funding becomes available in two cycles as follows:

Measure M Expenditure Plan (Initial Year of Funding)	Opening Year	LRTP Funding Allocation (2015\$)
FY 2029	2035	\$3 billion
FY 2053	2057	\$3 billion

The second funding cycle is designated for the second alignment, however since the SR 60 was withdrawn, the results of the San Gabriel Valley Transit Feasibility Study (Study) may determine an alignment. The Study is being led by the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments.

**DISCUSSION**

Alignment Configuration Updates

Refinements to the Draft Advanced Conceptual Engineering (ACE) resulted in design options that examined cost-saving opportunities and optimized the project design further. This effort led to the introduction of station options for the relocated Atlantic Boulevard station and an at-grade station and segment in the City of Montebello, where it currently traverses in an aerial configuration. Several factors were considered based on engineering and past community and stakeholder input. These design options were shared with the public at the November 2021 meetings before carrying these options forward for further evaluation in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

With the underground segment beginning near Atlantic and Pomona, opportunities to reevaluate station options for the existing station and the current underground design were developed. An open underground station concept was proposed that could provide several community benefits such as but not limited to First/Last mile connections, ease of access to the station platform, proximity to the existing parking structure, natural air ventilation and minimize construction impacts in the immediate area. This station concept was shared with the community and stakeholders, expressing general concerns about construction impacts and business disruption, and displacement. The community is interested in learning about the impacts of both station options through the Draft EIR. Prior to the anticipated release of the Draft EIR in late spring of this year, public meetings will be scheduled to discuss general construction activities for the proposed project.

An at-grade configuration through the city of Montebello that includes an at-grade Greenwood station was also introduced. The city of Montebello staff and decision makers support this design option. Additionally, Metro’s grade separation policy preliminary findings indicate that at-grade operation should be feasible at Greenwood Avenue. The current baseline project includes an aerial segment that is approximately 1.6 miles, including the Greenwood Station, of which 0.8 miles would be analyzed as an at-grade configuration. This would extend the at-grade configuration from approximately 4.4 miles to 5.2 miles. 0.8 miles will remain aerial not to disrupt active BNSF tracks. Both design options, aerial and at-grade configurations, will be carried forward for environmental analysis in the Draft EIR.

### Initial Operating Segments Analysis

The IOS options were developed based on the following criteria:

- Adhere to the Project Objectives by extending Metro's L (Gold) Line from the existing terminus Atlantic Station further east to provide connectivity to the rail network.
- Include a Maintenance Storage Facility that can accommodate the full build-out of the project.
- Provide an IOS terminus that would serve as an interim end-of-line station, including tail tracks, parking and systems facilities.
- Allow for the full build-out of the selected project alternative.

Based on the evaluation, staff will be further studying the two IOS options and design options in the Draft EIR. Furthermore, the Draft EIR will environmentally clear the full project alignment from Atlantic Boulevard to the City of Whittier.

- IOS 1 - Commerce
- IOS 2 - Greenwood

Attachment A shows the two IOS options being evaluated in the Draft EIR.

IOS-1 Commerce would extend the Metro L (Gold) Line approximately 3.2 miles from the current terminus at Atlantic Boulevard to an underground terminal station at the Commerce/Citadel station in the city of Commerce with connections to the Commerce MSF site option.

IOS-2 Greenwood would extend the Metro L (Gold) Line approximately 4.6 miles east from the current terminus at Atlantic Boulevard to an aerial or at-grade terminal station at the Greenwood station in the city of Montebello.

To support the operations of the IOS and the Project, the following two (2) MSF site options have been identified. The sites would accommodate approximately 100 to 120 light rail vehicles (LRVs) to service the Project and the combined east-west corridor for full regional service with the opening of the Regional Connector. The options sites are in the cities of Commerce and Montebello.

- Commerce MSF site option: located in the city of Commerce site is approximately 22 acres in size, which includes aerial yard lead tracks. The facility would accommodate storage for approximately 100 LRVs. This MSF site option could serve IOS-1 and IOS-2.
- Montebello MSF site option: located in the city of Montebello site is approximately 31.3 acres in size, which includes either aerial or at-grade wye junction for the yard lead tracks depending on which design option is selected in the City of Montebello. The facility would accommodate storage for approximately 120 LRVs. This MSF site option could serve IOS-2 only.

The Commerce and Montebello MSF site options meet the size requirements and have consistent surrounding land use patterns of commercial and industrial uses. Both options will be evaluated further for environmental impacts through Draft EIR. A Title VI analysis will also be conducted prior to

the selection of the preferred MSF. Only one MSF site option would be constructed when the Board selects the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA).

The Draft EIR will study the entire Project and the two IOS with design options and is anticipated to be released late spring of this year. The IOS options could help streamline the Project in advance of the Measure M Expenditure Plan, consistent with the Twenty-Eight by '28 Initiative.

Planning staff and consultant teams are actively seeking federal funding opportunities for the project. Should federal funding become available to fund project elements or the build out of the full project alignment, staff would reinstate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis after the selection of the LPA to streamline federal reviews.

### Preliminary Cost Estimates

Preliminary cost estimates were developed at 15% design level to support the environmental and planning process. The design follows Metro Rail Design Criteria (MRDC) and the federal, state, local policies and procedures. Table 1 outlines cost ranges for the Project and IOS, including the Commerce or Montebello MSF options. The cost estimates follow a uniform approach to develop baseline costs for light rail projects. Planning staff continues to work closely with the consultant teams and Program Management to refine the cost estimates as the design advances. It is anticipated that as the design advances, the cost estimates are subject to change. The recently introduced open underground station at Atlantic and Pomona is not included in this cost estimate but will be added prior to the selection of the LPA. Additionally, these preliminary costs consider the MSF site that would serve the regional connector, which exceeds the project's capacity needs; therefore, staff and the consulting teams are seeking federal funding opportunities for elements, such as, the MSF options that may be eligible for federal funding.

Table 1.

	<b>Cost Estimate Range</b>
Project	\$6.1 - \$6.5
IOS Commerce (Commerce MSF)	\$4.5 - \$5.0
IOS Greenwood (Commerce or Montebello MSF)	\$5.1 - \$5.3

### EQUITY PLATFORM

The project team is introducing the IOSs to the Metro Board. No action is anticipated until all alternatives have been evaluated through Draft EIR and Title VI analysis. Similar to the full project alignment, the IOSs aim to provide a more reliable and high-quality transit alternative to the communities of the eastern Los Angeles County that will help solve the mobility challenges and needs of the area's residents and businesses.

There are 119,759 persons living in the census tracts that are within 0.5 miles of the stations along the full alignment. Of those persons, 49 percent report as people of color and 51 percent report as White only (non-Hispanic or Latino) according to the 2015-2019 ACS 5-Year population estimates. In

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addition, 34 percent of the total population is either a student (21 percent) or senior (13 percent). The Project includes six (6) Equity Focused Communities (EFC) while the IOSs has two (2) to three (3) EFCs depending on the IOS. Both IOS will serve and benefit the East Los Angeles Community and the cities of Commerce and Montebello depending on the IOS. Around 9 percent of people are transit-dependent and 16.4 percent below the poverty level. The median household income is \$59,420 annually and the average household size is 3.6 persons per household. Environmental and temporary construction impacts are being evaluated in the Draft EIR.

Community meetings are scheduled in March to inform the public of the proposed project's IOS and general construction activities. The project team is working with eight (8) local Community Based Organizations (CBO) to discuss project milestones and enhance our outreach methods. This partnership has become very valuable due to the CBOs insight on the community's concerns and perspectives. The project team shares project information in a draft form to gather input from the CBOs to shape the messaging and communication approaches favorable to the community.

As a result of this partnership, we have simplified the language in all our meeting materials, included bilingual PowerPoint (PPT) presentations rather than having a separate PPT, easier to understand design drawings and more importantly, remind the public of the project goals that align with the values our partnership developed. The project team will implement the same approach for the upcoming community meetings and continue partnering with CBOs.

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

The Project supports the goals outlined in the Metro Vision 2028 Strategic Plan. More specifically, the Project supports Goal #3 - *Enhance Communities through Mobility and Enhanced Access to Opportunity*, as it will connect communities to the regional Metro rail network, which will expand access to jobs, major activity centers, including educational and medical institutions, and recreational opportunities within the Project area and across the Los Angeles region.

### **NEXT STEPS**

The next milestone for the project is the anticipated release of the Draft EIR in spring 2022 that would be followed by Public Hearings to be conducted during the formal Public Comment Period. In fall 2022, staff would present a review of all public comments and recommendation to the Board for the adoption of a Locally Preferred Alternative for the project. Community and stakeholder meetings are ongoing and will continue leading up to and including the public circulation and comment period for the Draft EIR. Planning staff and consultant teams will continue to actively seek federal funding opportunities for the build out of project or project elements.

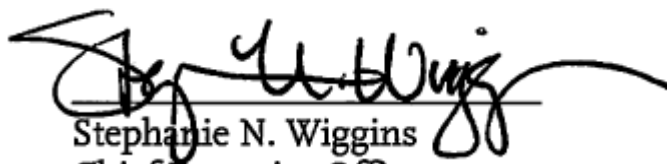
### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 Initial Operating Segment Map

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Prepared by: Jenny Cristales-Cevallos, Senior Manager, Countywide Planning & Development, (213) 418-3026  
Dolores Roybal Saltarelli, DEO, Countywide Planning & Development, (213) 922-3024  
David Mieger, SEO, Countywide Planning & Development, (213) 922-3040

Reviewed by: James de la Loza, Chief Planning Officer, (213) 922-2920



Stephanie N. Wiggins  
Chief Executive Officer