



## Board Report

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### PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE OCTOBER 19, 2022

**SUBJECT: RAIL TO RIVER ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR - SEGMENT B**

**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE the update on funding and next steps for the Rail to River Active Transportation Corridor - Segment B Project.

#### **ISSUE**

At the August 2022 Board meeting, staff was directed to return to the Board in October with a funding plan to further develop the Rail to River Active Transportation Corridor - Segment B Project, including environmental clearance, design, and construction.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Rail to River Segment B project (Segment B) is the eastern segment of the longer Rail to River Active Transportation Corridor. The western segment, Segment A, is currently in construction, measures approximately six (6) miles in length, and connects the Metro K Line to the Metro A (Blue) Line. Segment B extends the corridor four (4) miles east from the Metro A Line to the Los Angeles River and traverses a small segment of unincorporated Los Angeles County and the Cities of Huntington Park, Maywood, and Bell. Combined, the two segments span approximately ten (10) miles and represent a significant addition to the regional active transportation network.

In 2017, the Board adopted Randolph Street as the Locally Preferred Alternative for Segment B (Legistar File #2017-0089). Segment B was envisioned to share a segment of the railroad right-of-way (ROW) in the median of Randolph Street with the Union Pacific Railroad and the future West Santa Ana Branch (WSAB) Light Rail Transit Project. It was later determined that the existing railroad ROW could not accommodate Segment B. Consequently, Metro conducted a Supplemental Alternatives Analysis (SAA), which recommended a Randolph Street alignment within the street ROW. In August 2022, the Board approved this recommendation (Legistar File #2022-0129) and the need for coordination with related projects. At that same meeting, staff was also directed to return in October with a funding plan for Segment B.

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## **DISCUSSION**

In addition to the Rail to River Segment B project, Metro is contributing to the funding of two other related active transportation projects on Randolph Street through grants made to local cities from the Metro Active Transport (MAT) Program: the MAT Slauson First/Last Mile (FLM) project (to the LA County Department of Public Works or LACDPW) and the MAT Randolph Corridor project (to the City of Commerce in partnership with LACDPW and the cities of Huntington Park and Bell). The MAT Program was established through Measure M as a competitive discretionary funding program available to Los Angeles County municipalities for projects that improve and grow the active transportation network and expand the reach of transit.

Although these related projects are distinct and separate efforts from Segment B, they share similarities in goals and objectives, scope, and project limits. Furthermore, Randolph Street is anticipated to undergo significant changes with the implementation of these two projects and the future WSAB. Therefore, any design or future work on Segment B would need to be closely coordinated to ensure that all the transportation improvements work to achieve their respective goals and outcomes.

As described in the SAA, the planning-level cost estimates for Segment B on Randolph ranges from \$3.4 million to \$6.3 million and assumes post-WSAB street conditions. However, the cost estimates do not necessarily reflect the active transportation improvements from the MAT projects, although there is potential for economies of scope. The Rail to River Segment B project is anticipated to further contribute to the transformation of Randolph Street as a high-quality active transportation corridor through complementary active transportation improvements. In addition, as Grantor of the MAT projects, Metro's role is to ensure that these other related projects are implemented as planned.

In 2017 when the Board adopted Randolph Street as the LPA for Segment B, the project also was approved for advancement into the Environmental Review/Clearance and Preliminary Design phase following preliminary engineering for Segment A. Given that Segment A is now in construction, that staff has completed the Supplemental Alternatives Analysis for Segment B and that the Board has reaffirmed Randolph Street as the LPA, Metro staff will now advance the Segment B project into the next phase of environmental review. Metro will continue to design the project in support of a CEQA exemption and to prepare the project for funding eligibility.

### **Potential Funding Sources**

Design of Segment B will be developed separately but in coordination with the two related MAT projects and the local jurisdictions. It will also need to be coordinated with the design of the adjacent WSAB Station and the FLM Plan that will be developed in support of that station. As such, it is difficult to determine a funding plan until the project design, and cost estimates are further developed in relation to these other actions and necessary input from the cities. As Segment B would be built on city streets, Metro would need to work with the cities to further define final design, construction, and operation responsibilities.

Although Rail to River Segment B construction is not currently funded, there are several potential funding sources that Segment B could seek in coordination and cooperation with the Cities. Metro has committed to complete and fund the activities required for environmental clearance. Further

project development, such as final design, would be needed to define the project better and assist with determining grant funding needs and eligibility. The following are potential funding sources for the design and construction of Segment B. Funding may also be needed for a local match share, and the sources of those funds must be eligible to be spent on the proposed improvements to city-owned streets.

- *Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Program:* The RAISE Program, formerly known as BUILD/TIGER, provides grant funding to projects that can meet criteria for safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, economic competitiveness, state of good repair, innovation, and partnership.
- *Active Transportation Program (ATP):* The ATP Program considers projects that would increase the proportion of trips accomplished by biking and walking, increasing safety and mobility for non-motorized users, enhancing public health, and ensuring that disadvantaged communities fully share in the benefits of the program.
- *California Natural Urban Greening Grant Program:* This program can fund projects that plant trees to sequester and store carbon, reduce building energy use by planting trees to shade buildings, or reduce commute vehicle-miles-traveled by construction bicycle paths, bicycle lanes, or pedestrian facilities as part of the project.
- *Measure W:* The Safe, Clean Water Program through Measure W emphasizes capturing, treating, and recycling stormwater. It emphasizes the protection of coastal waters, modernization of water system infrastructure, protection of public health, and resilience to the effects of a changing climate.
- *Measure M Metro Active Transport Program (MAT):* The MAT Program is a competitive discretionary funding program for active transportation in LA County. Project solicitation for Cycle 2 is anticipated to occur in the next fiscal year (FY2024).
- *Local Return:* Active transportation improvements are generally eligible under local return.

Staff will continue to explore other grants as the project advances through environmental clearance and design and as funding opportunities arise.

## **EQUITY PLATFORM**

The Rail to River Segment B project is anticipated to benefit marginalized communities by investing in and advancing active transportation improvements in historically underserved, low-income communities of color. Based on the 2019 Equity Focus Community (EFC) criteria and thresholds, the majority (85%) of the project area qualifies as an EFC. The surrounding study areas are represented by 98% communities of color, compared to 73.5% for Los Angeles County. The low-income population (those earning an annual income of less than \$41,500) within the study area is 28.3%, compared to 17% for Los Angeles County. Additionally, due to all of the outreach efforts conducted to date, the key stakeholders and communities along the corridor have consistently expressed their preference for active transportation improvements along Randolph Street.

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## **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

The Rail to River Segment B project will achieve bike and pedestrian improvements, connect to transit, and grow and expand active transportation in South LA and Southeast LA County. The project supports the following goals outlined in the Metro Vision 2028 Strategic Plan:

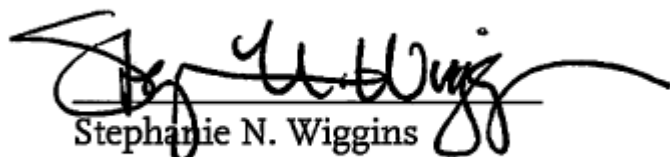
- Strategic Goal #1: Provide high-quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling;
- Strategic Goal #2: Enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity; and
- Strategic Goal #3: Provide responsive, accountable, and trustworthy governance within the Metro organization

## **NEXT STEPS**

Metro staff will continue advancing the Segment B project into the next phase of environmental review, which includes design work in support of potential future grant applications. It is anticipated that this project would be exempted under the state environmental process and/or excluded under the federal process. Metro will also coordinate on the related projects and provide technical and grant support to the cities as needed to support the implementation of active transportation improvements on Randolph Street. The Board had previously authorized the advancement of the Segment B Randolph alternative into the environmental review and early design phase in 2017 (Legistar 2017-0089). Based on the 2017 Board approval, staff will move forward and initiate the process of securing the technical support needed for environmental clearance and associated design for Segment B.

Prepared by: Jacqueline Su, Senior Transportation Planner, Countywide Planning & Development, (213) 922-2847  
Martha Butler, Senior Director, Countywide Planning & Development, (213) 922-7651  
Cory Zelmer, DEO, Countywide Planning & Development, (213) 922-1079  
Allison Yoh, EO, Countywide Planning & Development, (213) 922-7510  
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