



Board Report

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Agenda Number: 9.

PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 16, 2022

**SUBJECT: EAST SAN FERNANDO VALLEY TRANSIT CORRIDOR PROJECT (ESFVTC)
SUPPLEMENTAL ANALYSIS OF PHASE 2 CORRIDOR
FROM VAN NUYS BOULEVARD/SAN FERNANDO ROAD TO SYLMAR/SAN
FERNANDO STATION**

ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION

CONSIDER:

- A. RECEIVING AND FILING update on Phase 1 of the ESFVTC Shared ROW Study; and
- B. AUTHORIZING the Chief Executive Officer to execute Modification No. 2 for Optional Phase 2 of Task Order No. PS80628-5433000 to Mott MacDonald for professional services for Supplemental Analysis on the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor (ESFVTC) from Sylmar/San Fernando to Van Nuys Boulevard (Shared ROW Study) in the amount of \$1,463,005, increasing the task order value from \$343,218 to \$1,806,223, and extending the period of performance from December 30, 2022, to June 30, 2024.

ISSUE

This item provides an update on the ESFVTC Shared ROW Study and outlines the additional analysis and coordination that would be conducted in the next phase of the work, pending authorization by the Metro Board.

BACKGROUND

At the December 2020 meeting, the Metro Board certified the Final EIS/EIR for the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor Project, a 9.2-mile light rail project from the Metro G Line (Orange) Van Nuys Station at the south, to the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station to the north (Legistar File [2020-0024 <https://boardagendas.metro.net/board-report/2020-0024/>](https://boardagendas.metro.net/board-report/2020-0024/)). The Board also approved an initial operating segment (IOS) as the 6.7-mile segment along Van Nuys Boulevard from the Metro G Line (Orange) Van Nuys Station to an interim terminus station at Van Nuys/San Fernando Road. To address the remaining 2.5-mile segment not included in the IOS, the Board also approved Motion 10.1 (Attachment A), instructing staff to prepare a plan to further evaluate the

remaining segment, which is within the Metro-owned Antelope Valley Line (AVL) corridor shared right-of-way (ROW), from Van Nuys/San Fernando Road to the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station. See Attachment B for maps of the 9.2-mile ESFVTC Final EIS/EIR alignment and of the ESFV Shared ROW Study area.

This analysis was requested in response to comments received from Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA or Metrolink) and the City of San Fernando on the ESFVTC Final EIS/EIR. Given the concurrent development of SCRRA's SCORE program and other related projects and services that would share the ROW in this corridor, comments received were primarily related to updating the project's definition to include a four-track scenario (two Light Rail tracks and two commuter rail/freight tracks) versus the three-track scenario assumed in the ESFVTC EIS/EIR (two Light Rail tracks and one commuter rail/freight track). The comments also requested that additional traffic, safety, and ROW analyses be conducted along the Shared ROW based on the four-track scenario.

At the February 2021 Metro Board meeting, staff presented a plan for completing the required studies, as requested in Motion 10.1. Staff procured this study through Metro's Countywide Planning bench and released the competitive Task Order Request for Proposals (RFP) in September 2021. The Metro Board awarded the task order for work to commence on Phase 1 at the March 2022 meeting.

This update includes an overview of the work conducted to date in the study, including coordination with Metrolink and City of San Fernando to address their comments and concerns with the proposed light rail project within the existing AVL corridor Shared ROW. It also outlines the analysis to be conducted during the next phase of work, pending authorization by the Board.

Upon completion of this study, staff will provide a recommendation based on analysis and evaluation to be conducted on three potential scenarios as follows:

- **Full-Build:**
 - Assume completion of SCRRA double track between Van Nuys Boulevard and Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station (two commuter rail/freight tracks) within the 2.5-mile Shared ROW segment.
 - Build two additional LRT tracks for a total of four tracks in the 2.5-mile Shared ROW of the AVL corridor from Van Nuys Boulevard to Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station.
- **ESFV Initial Operating Segment (IOS) With New Connection:**
 - Assume completion of SCRRA double track between Van Nuys Boulevard and Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station (two commuter rail/freight tracks) within the 2.5-mile Shared ROW segment.
 - Create a new transfer connection between the ESFV Light Rail and Metrolink services at Van Nuys/San Fernando.
 - This concept would not include an extension of ESFV Light Rail beyond the Van Nuys/San Fernando Light Rail station.
- **FRA-Compliant Light Rail:**
 - Use of FRA Tier-III Compliant standards for Light Rail along the Shared ROW.

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- This concept will be further developed as the study advances, in coordination with SCRRRA.

DISCUSSION

The work conducted during the initial phase of this study was intended to set the groundwork for the more detailed analysis and conceptual design that would be conducted during Phase 2.

I. Work Conducted During the Initial Study Phase

Transportation Data Collection

To establish a baseline set of data for subsequent analyses included in this study, traffic data were collected for “Existing Conditions” and “Future with Proposed Project” scenarios in the vicinity of the six grade crossings along the Shared ROW. These data included:

- Peak Hour Turning Movement Counts
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Counts (AM and PM peak hour)
- Roadway Average Daily Traffic (ADT) Data

Existing data was normalized to account for changes to traffic patterns resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, while the future year was confirmed as 2040 for consistency with the ESFVTC Environmental document. These data served as direct inputs for the grade crossing analyses conducted during this initial study phase and would be utilized to support the additional analyses that would be conducted during Phase 2 of this study, pending Board authorization.

Grade Crossing Analysis

A preliminary grade crossing analysis was conducted to understand whether grade separation would need to be considered with a four-track scenario (two Light Rail tracks and two commuter rail/freight tracks) along the Shared ROW. This analysis studied six railroad crossings within a 2.5-mile segment of the Shared ROW:

ESFV Shared ROW Study Crossings - Existing Conditions

Number	Street Crossing	Existing Conditions
1	Hubbard Avenue	• High vehicle volumes • Longest gate-down time (next to Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station)
2	Maclay Avenue	• Adjacent to Downtown San Fernando and Civic Center • High pedestrian volume
3	Brand Boulevard	• Adjacent to City of San Fernando Police Department, Downtown San Fernando, and San Fernando Middle School • High pedestrian volumes
4	Jesse/Wolfskill Street	• Southeast terminus of Mission City Trail in ROW. San Fernando Road Bike Path continues outside of ROW. • Lowest vehicle and pedestrian volumes among the six grade crossings
5	Paxton Street	• High vehicle volumes • Adjacent to SR-118 freeway ramps • Adjacent to large trip generators (e.g., Costco)
6	Van Nuys Boulevard	• High vehicle and pedestrian volumes • Highest bicyclist volume among the six crossings • Terminus of ESFV LRT Project

To assess the need for grade separation, staff utilized Metro’s Grade Crossing Safety Policy for Light Rail Transit. Additionally, as requested by Metrolink, staff applied the SCRRRA Grade Crossing Evaluation Criteria. These policies define a stepwise method and a series of evaluation criteria to identify potential grade-separation(s) to ensure safety and to minimize impacts on the traffic operations of the grade crossings and nearby intersections.

- Metro’s policy includes up to three steps, known as “Milestones”. The first of these steps (Milestone 1) identifies conditions under which grade separations may be required. The application of the Milestone 1 analysis did not indicate a clear requirement, but that grade separation may need to be studied further based on additional considerations. Phase 2 of this study therefore will analyze each crossing in further detail in subsequent step(s) of the Milestone process.
- The Metrolink analysis begins with an Initial Factors Form, which sets a threshold of potential factors that might drive the need for grade separation. The application of this initial Metrolink step found that, due to the number of potential factors that might require a grade crossing, additional analysis is needed at all six crossings.

As this was the initial step for both Metro’s and SCRRRA’s grade crossing analyses, more detailed engineering and safety analysis would need to be conducted during Phase 2 of this study to identify locations along the Shared ROW, if any, that merit consideration for grade separation.

Alignment Review

To understand ROW requirements and other implications of a four-track, at-grade configuration, staff

reviewed previous project designs along this segment, including ESFVTC 15%/30% design drawings and the Brighton to Roxford Double Track Project plans. The analysis considered potential ROW impacts and other modifications to previous design plans and preliminarily found the following:

- **ROW Implications - General**
 - Compared to the ROW impacts identified in the ESFVTC Final EIS/EIR, additional ROW impacts are preliminarily anticipated.
 - This additional ROW is required due to shifting the active train warning devices, increases to tangent lengths, and to meet horizontal clearance requirements associated with adding a fourth track in the Shared ROW.
- **Mission City Bike Trail** (from Jessie/Wolfskill St. to Hubbard Ave.)
 - The Mission City Bike Trail, which is within the Shared ROW, would need to be relocated outside of the ROW to accommodate the second commuter rail/freight track (i.e., the additional fourth track) and to avoid further ROW impacts.

Upon Board authorization, Phase 2 includes further study and design to refine these preliminary analyses and findings. Staff will continue coordinating with stakeholders, as described below, and with the East San Fernando Valley Light Rail Project team during Phase 2 of this study.

Stakeholder Coordination During Phase 1 and Phase 2 of this Study

During Phase 1 of this study, staff provided targeted updates to staff from cities, city council staff (City of San Fernando and City of Los Angeles districts 2, 6, and 7), and Metro Board staff. Metro staff held two technical meetings with City of San Fernando and Metrolink to share progress and incorporate input for the Phase 1 work.

Staff will continue technical coordination with SCRRA, City of San Fernando, and City of Los Angeles, as well as targeted updates for other area staff, during Phase 2 of this study. Staff will also continue to be responsive to requests for information and updates to local stakeholder groups. Upon completion of the study, additional engagement opportunities could be revisited at that time.

II. Phase 2 Analysis

To address requests for additional analysis, refined designs for ROW evaluation and to continue addressing City and SCRRA concerns, Phase 2 of this study will evaluate the feasibility of additional alternatives not considered in the environmental document. This includes evaluation of the following scenarios (as described previously in this report):

- **Full-Build:** two Light Rail tracks and two commuter rail/freight tracks
- **ESFV Initial Operating Segment (IOS) With New Connection**
- **FRA-Compliant Light Rail**

The following tasks are included in Phase 2 of this study, in response to comments from City of San Fernando and Metrolink on the ESFVTC Final EIS/EIR:

1. Alternatives Definition, building on alignment review conducted in Phase 1

2. Transportation Benefits/Systems Performance Analysis
3. Grade Crossing and Corridor Safety Study
4. Constraints Analysis
5. Right-of-way Assessment, Alignment Design and Refinement
6. Safety Assessment for Corridor Motorists, Bicyclists, and Pedestrians
7. Vehicle Counts and Traffic Circulation Plan
8. Alternatives Analysis and Structural Type Considerations
9. Conceptual Drawings and Cost Estimates

Phase 2 will include high-level cost estimates based on a conceptual (5%) design level for up to three scenarios along this 2.5-mile segment of the Shared ROW.

Any changes to the project definition for this segment, if different from what the Metro Board certified as part of the ESFVTC EIS/EIR, could require supplemental environmental review to previous environmental documents for the East San Fernando Valley Light Rail Project, AVL Capacity and Service Improvements Program, and Brighton to Roxford Double Track Project.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

Authorization of the task order modification for the ESFV Supplemental Analysis from Sylmar/San Fernando to Van Nuys Boulevard will not impact the safety of Metro's customers or employees, as this study is in the planning process phase and no capital or operational impacts result from this Board action.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Impact to Budget

The FY23 budget contains \$1,555,904 in Cost Center 4370, Project 465521 for professional services of Phase 2. Since this is a multi-year task order, the Cost Center Manager and Chief Planning Officer will be responsible for budgeting in future years.

The source of funds for this action is State Transportation Improvement (STIP) funds. These funds are not eligible for bus and rail operations.

EQUITY SECTION

The study area communities of Pacoima, Sylmar, and City of San Fernando were identified as Equity Focus Communities (EFCs) in prior analyses, and equity assessments will be reevaluated as appropriate as the study evolves. Additionally, Metrolink's 2018 Origin-Destination Study (Metrolink, 2019) found that Antelope Valley Line riders overall have the lowest median income (\$74,091) and automobile availability (71%) in the entire Metrolink system. This supports the understanding of study area communities as vulnerable/marginalized and transit-dependent. Furthermore, existing traffic and safety conditions along the Shared ROW present a potential burden to these communities, as highlighted by the City of San Fernando in their Final EIS/EIR comment letter.

This study will assess travel time, frequency, and connectivity between different modes, which could enhance transit access and mobility options for study area communities. The study is intended to identify existing harms to EFCs stemming from existing traffic and safety conditions along this Shared ROW and to assess how the study scenarios would affect these conditions in the future. The design and analysis of each scenario will be developed with specific

consideration to EFCs, vulnerable/marginalized communities, and transit riders. The study's final report will include an assessment of safety and mobility for each study scenario, with specific consideration to EFCs, vulnerable/marginalized communities, and transit riders along the Shared ROW. This assessment will be based on the design and analysis to be conducted during Phase 2 of this study. Furthermore, the study will recommend strategies to avoid and/or minimize potential harms and impacts towards these communities, while maximizing mobility benefits.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

This study supports the following strategic plan goals identified in Vision 2028:

- 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.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board could decide to not authorize this task order modification at this time. This is not recommended as it would delay completion of this Metro Board-directed study. Conducting this study is necessary to address SCRRA's and City of San Fernando's comments on the ESFVTC EIS/EIR and to determine a feasible path forward to address the mobility needs within this transportation corridor.

NEXT STEPS

Upon Board approval, staff will execute Modification No. 2 for Optional Phase 2 to Task Order No. PS80628-5433000 with Mott MacDonald to initiate the work.

Upon completion of this study, staff will provide a recommendation to the Metro Board based on analysis and evaluation to be conducted on the three potential scenarios within the Shared ROW.

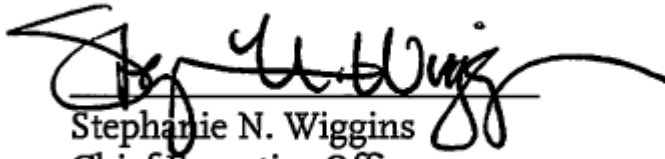
Should findings and recommendations result in changes to the project definition from what the Board certified as part of the ESFVTC EIS/EIR, staff would provide recommendations on next steps for any required updates to the environmental documents for this effort and related Metro projects.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A - Metro Board Motion 10.1 (December 2020)
- Attachment B - ESFV Maps
- Attachment C - Procurement Summary
- Attachment D - DEOD Summary
- Attachment E - Contract Modification/Change Order Log

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