



Board Report

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Agenda Number: 11.

PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE JANUARY 18, 2023

SUBJECT: METROLINK ANTELOPE VALLEY LINE CAPITAL AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION

CONSIDER:

- A. EXECUTING a Funding Agreement (FA) with the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) in the amount of \$16,563,581 for final design services for the Antelope Valley Line - Capital and Service Improvements Project (Project) to a 60% design level; and
- B. AUTHORIZING the CEO or their designee to negotiate and execute all agreements necessary to implement the Project.

ISSUE

Metro has programmed funds and delegated to SCRRA the responsibility to complete the final design phase of the Project. A FA is required for SCRRA to award contracts for final design plus other engineering supporting functions and maintain the schedule to deliver the Project in Fiscal Year (FY) 2027.

BACKGROUND

In 2020, Metro in partnership with SCRRA, was successful in receiving \$107,050,000 in State Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) funds for the Project, leveraging \$113,800,000 in North County Measure M Multi-Year Subregional Program (MSP) funds. The Project funding is for the construction of four capital improvement projects on the Metrolink Antelope Valley Line (AVL), which will enable additional commuter rail capacity, leading to 30-minute bi-directional service to Santa Clarita and 60-minute bi-directional service to Lancaster by 2028.

Consistent with the 2020 TIRCP program schedule, Metro has completed preliminary engineering and environmental clearance for the Project ahead of schedule. In December 2021 the Metro Board certified the final environmental impact report for the Project in accordance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements and adopted a finding that the Project is statutorily exempt under CEQA. On December 8, 2021, the Notice of Exemption was filed with the Los Angeles

County Clerk's office.

Since the completion of the environmental phase of the Project, Metro and SCRRA have worked in close partnership to develop the scope of work and roles and responsibilities for the final design phase of the Project. As part of the Metro Board's approval of the environmental documents in December 2021, the Board directed SCRRA to take the lead to advance the Project through the final design phase. Subject to Metro Board approval of Recommendations A and B, SCRRA will complete the design procurement and expeditiously award final design contracts for the Project, including bid documents to support construction and pre-construction right-of-way acquisition activities.

DISCUSSION

The three capital projects to be funded for final design as part of the Project FA are as follows:

- 1) **Balboa Double Track.** The Balboa Double Track Extension will extend the existing Sylmar siding approximately 6,300 feet north from Balboa Boulevard to Sierra Highway.
- 2) **Canyon to Santa Clarita Double Track.** The Canyon Siding Extension will extend the existing Saugus Siding by adding approximately 8,400 feet of new track between Soledad Canyon Road and Golden Oak Road with optional platform-to-platform pedestrian undercrossing configuration options.
- 3) **Lancaster Terminal Improvements.** The Lancaster terminal improvements will include expansion of the existing yard with two new 500-foot-long and one 1,000-foot-long train storage tracks and provisions for fueling, plus a center platform with pedestrian underpass options.

Note - a fourth project, **Brighton to McGinley Double Track** was also environmentally cleared by Metro and is currently designed to the 90% level as part of the larger Brighton to Roxford Double Track project. This project will be advanced separately by Metro.

Project Benefits

The Metrolink AVL is a critical lifeline service for residents in the Santa Clarita and Antelope Valleys which are geographically isolated from the greater Los Angeles area, especially when the bottlenecked Interstate 5 / State Route 14 interchange is congested or closed. More frequent Metrolink service from Los Angeles to Santa Clarita and Lancaster will lead to a doubling of service levels on the AVL by 2028. This additional service throughout the day, in both directions, will lead to a significant increase in mobility options for some of the most disadvantaged communities in Los Angeles County. Elimination of automobile trips will lead to reduced congestion on the SR-14 freeway plus greenhouse gas reduction benefits, as quantified through the previous environmental efforts.

Metrolink SCORE Program

With the transition of the Project from Metro to SCRRA, SCRRA has incorporated the Project into the larger Southern California Optimized Rail Expansion (SCORE) Phase 1A Program. SCORE is SCRRA's \$10 Billion capital improvement program consisting of grade crossing, track, signal, and

station improvements, providing capacity for more frequent service, to be implemented prior to the 2028 Olympic Games.

TIRCP and Measure M Funding

To meet grant funding and Project schedule requirements, final design activities must commence in early 2023. As part of the overall TIRCP grant application, \$113,800,000 in North County Measure M Multi-Year Subregional Program (MSP) funds was committed as local match. Because the TIRCP funding for the Project is for right-of-way and construction only, the MSP funds must be drawn down first for the final design phase of the Project.

NCTC and Metro Board Programming Actions and Project Budget

To date, both the North Los Angeles County Transportation Coalition (NCTC) and Metro Boards have approved and programmed \$19,624,000 of Measure M Transit Program MSP funds in FY20 to FY25 for Project environmental and design activities. The amount of \$3,060,419 was spent on preliminary engineering and environmental clearance, leaving a balance of \$16,563,581 available for final design. The \$16,563,581 of already programmed and available MSP funds is sufficient to initiate the final design phase of the Project to the 60% design level. See Attachment A for the TIRCP grant funding plus the programming of MSP funds for the Project. Recommendation A will execute the FA between Metro and SCRRA and enable SCRRA to award contracts with design firms for the final design to the 60% design level, anticipated to occur in February 2023.

Inclusive of SCRRA agency costs, program management consultant, contingencies and third-party agreements, the total anticipated cost for the final design phase and supporting functions of the Project exceeds the \$16,563,581 of previously programmed funds authorized for design activities. The actual full final design and supporting engineering activities budget for the Project is estimated at \$33,107,189.

Future NCTC and Metro Board Programming Actions

At the next NCTC quarterly Board meeting, scheduled to occur in April 2023, the NCTC will approve additional Measure M Transit Program MSP funds in the amount of approximately \$17 million to fund the full final design of the Project. See Attachment B for NCTC's commitment and intent to program additional funds for the remainder of the 100% final design of the Project in April 2023. As part of the annual update to the Metro Board on the North County Subregion Measure M MSP, staff intends to bring a concurrent action to program additional funds and adjust the cash flow for the budget for the final design to the 100% design level.

Funding Agreement and Scope of Work for Final Design and PS&E

The FA between Metro and SCRRA will establish roles and responsibilities, terms and conditions, and project budget and schedule for SCRRA to receive \$16,563,581 in Measure M MSP funds for the Project to the 60% design level. SCRRA will take an action item to concurrently approve the FA at the SCRRA Board meeting on January 27, 2023. SCRRA is leading the design services procurement effort and intends to award contracts to the 60% design level in February 2023. Metro will be the key funding stakeholder and will be at all Project Development Team (PDT) meetings and involved in all design decisions.

The Scope of Work (SOW) includes engineering consulting services for the final design, some

environmental studies to support the final design (Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan - MMRP), program management consultants, SCRRA agency costs, right-of-way acquisition services, third-party support, bid support, and contingencies, to the 60% design level. The Project is anticipated to start in February 2023, with the final design complete in mid-2025.

Staff will provide updates to the Board on a regular basis regarding design elements, schedule, cost impacts, and stakeholder interaction. Towards the end of the final design phase of the Project, Metro will return to the Board with an updated construction funding plan and to commit remaining MSP funds for construction.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

The final design for the Project will be done to the latest SCRRA, California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and other regulatory agency safety standards and requirements.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The project team does not anticipate an impact to the FY23 adopted budget. The Chief Planning Officer or designee and respective Project and Cost Center Managers will be responsible for programming funds and budgets for future years under project 474502.

EQUITY PLATFORM

The proposed funding agreement will facilitate final design services for the Project that is anticipated to serve many marginalized communities upon completion. 32% of potential riders along the AVL corridor live in SB 535 Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) census tracts. 58% of the potential riders along the AVL corridor live in AB 1550 Low-Income Communities census tracts. An additional 6% live in Low-Income Buffer census tracts. Of the 11 cities and communities of Los Angeles County that this project will provide increased service to, nine are Equity Focus Communities. The Project will serve North LA County, which is very ethnically diverse, more so than other regions in the Metrolink system. The AVL has the highest percentage of African American riders (19%). Overall, 73% of Metrolink North LA County riders are non-Caucasian versus 66% systemwide. The AVL has the lowest percentage of riders with annual household income over \$50,000 at 65% as compared to the systemwide average of 80%. The increase in ridership will reduce congestion and air pollution in adjacent disadvantaged communities along the high volume I-5 and SR-14 highways.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Recommendation A supports strategic plan goals 1, 3 and 4. The FA supports Metro's partnership with SCRRA and NCTC to improve service reliability and mobility, provide better transit connections throughout the network, and implement the following specific strategic plan goals:

- Goal 1.2: Improve LA County's overall transit network and assets;
- Goal 3.3: Genuine public and community engagement to achieve better mobility outcomes for the

people of LA County; and

- Goal 4.1: Metro will work with partners to build trust and make decisions that support the goals of the Strategic Plan

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board could choose not to approve the authorization to execute the FA with SCRRA. This is not recommended since SCRRA is currently in the procurement process and \$107,050,000 in State TIRCP funds would be at risk if the two agencies do not stay on schedule to complete construction by 2028. Another alternative is for Metro to complete the final design phase of the Project instead of SCRRA. This is not advised since the Metro Board previously directed SCRRA to lead and complete the final design phase.

NEXT STEPS

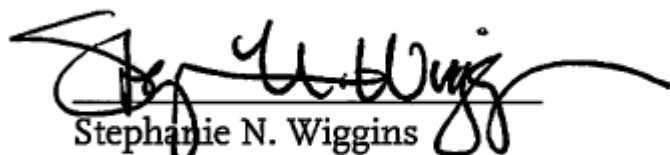
Subject to Board approval, the CEO or their designee will negotiate and execute the FA with SCRRA so that SCRRA can award the contracts for the final design to the 60% level, anticipated to occur in February 2023. Staff anticipates returning to the Board in April 2023 to request programming of additional Measure M MSP funds for the final design phase of the Project to the 100% design level. The FA between Metro and SCRRA will be amended as additional MSP funds are made available by the Metro Board. Staff will return to the Board with periodic updates on the final design, funding, schedule, etc.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - TIRCP Grant and Programming of Funds for AVL Capital and Service Improvements
Attachment B - NCTC Letter of Intent to Commit Additional MSP Funds in April 2023

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