

**Board Report**

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**File #:** 2017-0077, **File Type:** Motion / Motion Response**Agenda Number:** 39.

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**REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
FEBRUARY 23, 2017****SUBJECT: CRENSHAW/LAX TRANSIT CORRIDOR****ACTION: AUTHORIZE STUDIES FOR CENTINELA GRADE SEPARATION****RECOMMENDATION**

AUTHORIZE the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to conduct **feasibility studies and environmental clearance for a grade separation at the Centinela Avenue Light Rail Transit (LRT) crossing in the City of Inglewood.**

**ISSUE**

At the January 26, 2017 Board meeting, a Motion was passed as an amendment to Item #48 (Attachment A) directing the CEO to report back to the Full Board at its February meeting regarding a possible new grade separation at the Centinela Avenue rail crossing of the Crenshaw/LAX Line. This intersection is currently being constructed as a gated, at-grade crossing. The motion stated: "Because of the significantly changed conditions since the approval of the environmental document for the Crenshaw/LAX Line, including increased traffic levels anticipated with the opening of the NFL Stadium - a major new regional attractor - a grade separation at this intersection is essential."

The Motion directed staff to examine how such a grade separation could be constructed without impacting the October 2019 completion date for the Crenshaw/LAX Line. It also directed staff to identify the cost of design and construction of the grade separation, sources of funding and the appropriate environmental clearance needed to proceed to design and construction.

**DISCUSSION****Background**

Between 2009 and 2011, environmental studies for the Crenshaw/LAX Transit Corridor approved an at-grade crossing where the rail line crosses Centinela Avenue in the City of Inglewood. Prior to the decision for the at-grade crossing at Centinela, the environmental studies also considered both an aerial-grade separation as well as a below-grade undercrossing of Centinela Avenue as possible alternatives. The below-grade separation was identified as a design option, or betterment, at the time. Ultimately, the environmental document was cleared without the grade separation at Centinela and the intersection was configured as a gated, at-grade crossing. Following analysis as required by

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the Metro Grade Safety Crossing Policy for Light Rail Transit, Metro determined that the Centinela Avenue grade crossing was safe and applied for approval from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) in 2012. In 2013, the CPUC granted approval for the at-grade crossing but added certain additional design features including additional traffic lanes at the intersection for additional queuing capacity and traffic signal improvements to provide additional traffic capacity and safety.

In early 2015, changes to the Hollywood Park Specific Plan and potential NFL Stadium were considered which ultimately led to the approval by the City of Inglewood for the construction of a 70,000-seat NFL Stadium to be located approximately 1 ½ miles south of the Centinela/Florence intersection. Additional development in the Hollywood Park Project was also approved that will significantly increase regional trip making to this area. As a result of this growth, traffic mitigation measures have been funded by the developers that include a citywide installation of a modern traffic signal priority system. The City of Inglewood, however, has been concerned about the impacts at the Florence/Centinela intersection from potential increases in regional trip-making that could occur; and the impacts to traffic should the original as designed and being constructed at-grade Crenshaw LRT rail crossing be in place. These concerns have been increased by the recent decision to relocate the San Diego Chargers to the Inglewood Stadium, in addition to the earlier decision to relocate the St. Louis Rams, now Los Angeles Rams, to the stadium. As a result of the above, discussions between the City of Inglewood and Metro regarding the grade separation were re-initiated.

### **Design and Construction Scenarios**

The Crenshaw/LAX Transit Project construction is approximately 60% complete and the contractor is scheduled to start laying track in the Centinela area this month (February 2017). The completion date for the project is October 2019. Because of the immediacy of construction in the vicinity of the Centinela crossing, two possible scenarios were developed for adding the grade separation:

- Option 1: Build the Grade Separation Now (As a part of the Current Construction Project)
- Option 2: Build the Grade Separation Later (As a Separate Construction Project)

Among several factors to be considered is a non-negotiable parameter that the Crenshaw/LAX project's targeted revenue service date shall not be put at risk beyond its October 2019 schedule, given Metro's commitment to the corridor communities in Los Angeles and Inglewood to bring this project to conclusion.

Under Option 1, Metro would commence the environmental process. Depending on the identified impacts, a supplemental environmental document would most conservatively be needed to be approved for both CEQA and NEPA. Additionally, the TIFIA loan for the project and the FTA Record of Decision would need to be amended to incorporate this change. The Contractor would be directed to stop work after environmental clearance is approved by Metro and approved by the federal funding partners. Staff estimates that this approach would delay the opening date of the Crenshaw/LAX Project by approximately 8 to 12 months from October 2019 to between June and October 2020 and increase the cost of the Crenshaw/LAX Transit Project by an estimated \$126 million. A significant portion of these costs would be the anticipated delay claims and/or acceleration claims by the contractor due to their need to re-sequence their work and extend construction for a longer period of

time.

Under the Option 2 Scenario, the Contractor would be allowed to complete work on the at-grade crossing at Centinela without delay to the scheduled October 2019 completion date for the overall Crenshaw/LAX Transit Project. During 2017 and 2018 a separate grade separation project would be taken through the environmental clearance process and afterwards, contract documents would be put out to bid for construction as a separate, stand-alone project. As no federal funds are anticipated to be used for this separate project, only CEQA clearance would be needed. The selected Contractor would then be given access to the Centinela portion of the tracks between the Fairview Heights Station and the Downtown Inglewood/La Brea Station, where they would build the grade separated structure.

Construction Staging- Prior to construction of the grade-separation, a diversion around the construction site would need to be created. There are two possible methods to do this. The first would involve construction of a “shoe-fly” temporary track in the westbound lanes of Florence Avenue so that trains could be diverted around the construction site for a period that could range from 10 to 24 months, depending upon the type of grade separation to be constructed, after which rail service could resume on the mainline tracks using the grade-separation.

A second option would be to implement a bus bridge instead of constructing a “shoe-fly” track. The bus bridge would operate between the Downtown Inglewood/La Brea Station and the Fairview Heights Station during the period of the construction of the grade separation. Rail transit riders would transfer from the rail cars to buses to travel between these two stations. Both of these construction staging options would be evaluated during the design and environmental planning phase.

In order to not delay the opening of the Crenshaw/LAX Line, Option 2 is recommended as the preferred Design & Construction Scenario.

### **Cost & Schedule for Environmental Clearance & Construction**

The schedule for environmental clearance, design and construction of the Centinela grade separation is shown in Attachment B. Metro staff can begin the development of a feasibility study relatively quickly to determine which of the two grade separation options (an aerial-grade separation or as a below-grade undercrossing) would be most feasible considering cost, the number and types of environmental impacts, and construction schedule.

Once an alternative is selected, a scope of work from which technical studies and the level of environmental clearance effort shall be determined. Staff will then commence the environmental clearance process, identify any necessary mitigation measures (if any), and at the conclusion of the process present to the Board the environmental document and any mitigation measures monitoring for adoption. Estimated cost of the environmental study is \$400,000 and would take approximately one year to complete.

A task order would be issued under Contract #PS20111, CEQA/NEPA Environmental Services and Support.

Additional funding will be required once the environmental studies are completed and the costs of the

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grade separation are determined. These costs are currently projected to range between \$100 million and \$150 million, depending upon whether the grade separation is in an aerial configuration or in an undercrossing configuration.

It is currently estimated that an aerial-grade separation could be constructed and put into service between September 2020 and February 2021. An undercrossing would be more difficult to construct due to excavation requirements and underground utilities in Centinela Avenue that would need to be modified or reconstructed. The undercrossing is estimated to add 8-14 months to the above schedule. These figures are preliminary and will be refined during the design and environmental phase.

### **Sources of Funding**

While the total project costs are yet to be determined through the environmental studies, staff is exploring a range of non-federal funding sources to support Option 2 as the preferred Design & Construction Scenario. These sources would be necessary to accelerate the delivery of the projects under CEQA-only environmental clearance. Staff has preliminarily identified eight potential, non-federal funding sources eligible for the Centinela Avenue Grade Separation project. These sources include state Cap and Trade competitive grant funds; state formula STIP funds; locally-controlled discretionary funds (Measure M South Bay Subregional Programs and Inglewood local return funds); and Metro-controlled funds (Prop A and C). Over the coming months Metro staff will analyze the viability of these sources- singularly or in combination- based on several factors. These include prior commitments (capital and/or operating uses), timing, and predictability (i.e. competitive versus formula).

### **DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT**

These studies will have no impact on the safety of our passengers or employees.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

With Board approval, Countywide Planning & Development will transfer \$100,000 from Cost Center 4010, Project 405529 to Cost Center 4350, Project 405406 to initiate the necessary preliminary design and environmental clearance. Since these are multi-year projects, the cost center manager and Chief Planning Office will be responsible for budgeting in future years.

#### Impact to Budget

The sources of funds for these studies are Proposition A, C and TDA Administration funds. The Proposition A, C and TDA Administration funds are not eligible for Metro bus and rail operating and capital expenditures.

### **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

The Board could elect not to authorize the environmental clearance of the Centinela grade separation. This alternative is not recommended as the anticipated higher levels of regional

tripmaking into this area would not be served.

**NEXT STEPS**

With Board authorization, both environmental planning and preliminary design efforts will be initiated. Upon completion of the work, staff will return to the Board for approval to proceed with the design and construction bidding of the Centinela grade separation.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - January 26, 2017 Board Motion

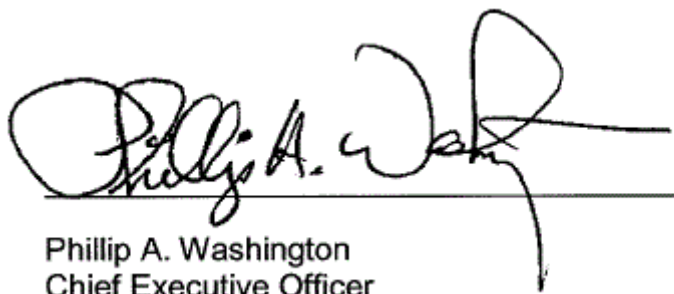
Attachment B - Centinela Grade Separation Proposed Schedule

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