

**Board Report**

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**File #:** 2017-0130, **File Type:** Motion / Motion Response

**Agenda Number:** 34

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**SYSTEM SAFETY, SECURITY AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE  
MAY 18, 2017**

**SUBJECT: DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES ARTS DISTRICT CONNECTIVITY**

**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

**RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE this report on **Metro's long-term needs at Division 20 in the Downtown Los Angeles Arts District** and the accommodations necessary for a potential future Arts District passenger rail station.

**ISSUE**

At the January 26, 2017 Board meeting, a Motion was passed (Attachment A) directing staff to initiate a holistic assessment of Metro's long-term needs at Division 20. This facility is the maintenance and storage yard for the rail cars serving the Metro Red and Purple Line subway system. The yard is located just south of Union Station in the Arts District adjacent to the Los Angeles River. The Motion stated:

- "MTA's first priority for Division 20 must be to support the Purple Line Extension. However, Metro should do everything possible to extend rail service to the Arts District" and;
- "Work with the City of Los Angeles to develop creative strategies to establish innovative funding mechanisms dedicated to off-set the costs of new stations in the Arts District."

This report provides an overview of projects under development in Division 20 that are required to support the growing Red and Purple Line subway system. In addition, other non-subway transportation projects are identified that are also expanding services into this area. The report provides a framework for a possible Metro rail station in or adjacent to the yard and includes a preliminary discussion of the accommodations necessary to provide for such a station.

**DISCUSSION**

Below is a summary and status update on the various interrelated Metro operations investments planned or considered along the Division 20 Corridor, as further depicted in Attachments B and C.

### **Metro Projects Being Developed Within Division 20**

- **Red/Purple Line Portal & Turnback Facility** - In order to accommodate increased service levels on the Red and Purple Lines, Metro is moving forward with two critical facility improvements: a new turnback facility in the Division 20 yard and a widening of the heavy rail tunnel portal south of the US-101 Freeway. The turnback facility is required to support four-minute service on the Purple Line Extension (PLE) per the project's Full Funding Grant Agreement which effectively requires the ability to support two-minute headways east of the Wilshire Vermont Station where the Red and Purple Lines share tracks. Currently, trains reverse directions at Union Station where the minimum headway that can be achieved is approximately eight minutes on each branch of the Red and Purple Lines (or approximately four minutes along the shared alignment). The priority in designing the turnback facility must be to support Red and Purple Line operations; however, the facility, which is currently proposed to be located between 1st and 3rd Streets, will be designed so as not to preclude potentially serving as a future revenue station serving the Arts District.

Additionally, Metro is proposing to widen the Red and Purple Line tunnel portal and make improvements to tracks southeast of Union Station in order to substantially increase the speed, frequency, and reliability of operations between Union Station and the future turnback facility. The portal widening is also necessary should Metro operate revenue service south of Union Station in the future. Environmental clearance of the Red and Purple Line Core Capacity Improvements Project, as well as procurement of a consultant to prepare final design documents, was approved by the Board on March 23, 2017. The project will be funded, in part, by a \$69.2 million Cap & Trade Grant that Metro received in 2016.

- **MOW/NRV Building** - A new Maintenance of Way/Non-Revenue Vehicle (MOW/NRV) facility is being constructed on the northeast corner of 6th Street and Santa Fe Avenue on property acquired by Metro. The approximately 81,000 square foot facility will replace the space and consolidate the functions currently housed in three buildings within the Division 20 yard just east of the One Santa Fe development, making way for the proposed turnback facility. A design/build contract was awarded in summer 2015 and design is 85% complete. A Design Advisory Working Group consisting of Arts District stakeholders, Metro and the City of Los Angeles, has been providing input throughout design development and a site-specific artwork is being integrated into the project. Building construction is scheduled for completion in 2018.
- **Rail Car Storage & Test Track** - One of the greatest challenges to accommodating the PLE is the capacity to store Metro's growing heavy rail fleet. The Division 20 rail yard has a current storage capacity of 180 heavy rail cars. The current Rail Fleet Management Plan anticipates operating and storing:
  - 162 cars by FY23 to support PLE Section 1;
  - 182 cars by FY26 to support PLE Section 2; and
  - 282 cars by FY35 to support PLE Section 3.

With the passage of Measure M, Sections 2 and 3 are slated to be delivered as early as FY24, accelerating the need for expanded storage capacity in the yard. Additionally, as service increases on the Red and Purple Lines and the heavy rail fleet expands, it will become

increasingly difficult to undertake rail car testing operations on the mainline, which is the practice today. Instead, Metro will require a controlled environment - ideally a straight run of at least 2,800 feet in the vicinity of Division 20 - in order to test cars when accepting new and returning rail cars to service following maintenance. The ability to do so will become increasingly problematic under current circumstances. Given the limited Metro-owned right-of-way in and around Division 20 and the spatial demands associated with additional rail car storage and test track facility, additional property acquisition will be necessary.

- **Emergency Security Operations Center** - Metro is developing a new, approximately 80,000 square foot, three-story Emergency Security Operations Center (ESOC) at 410 Center Street on property already owned by Metro. The new facility will serve as the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) and central location for Metro security operations, radio dispatch and emergency coordination. Metro is also planning to integrate Rail and Bus Operations Centers into the facility in the future. This will be a secured facility for authorized personnel only. Site planning and initial design have been completed and final design, which will include development of site-specific artwork, will be completed in 2017. The construction of the ESOC is anticipated to begin in 2018 with completion by 2021. The ESOC is funded, in part, by a \$112.7 million Prop 1B 2010-2011 California Transit Security Grant.

### **Other Planned Transportation Projects Adjacent to Division 20**

In addition to the Metro operational projects directly impacting the Division 20 Corridor discussed above, there are other transportation planning efforts that could directly impact future access to the Arts District. These efforts must also be coordinated as upcoming implementation and investments decisions are considered in this area.

- **Link Union Station/High Speed Rail Coordination** - Link Union Station (Link US), formerly known as the "Los Angeles Union Station Run Through Tracks" or the "Southern California Regional Interconnector Project (SCRIP)", is designed to meet the long-term regional rail needs at Union Station by converting the station from a "single-ended" terminal to a "through" terminal. By extending regional rail tracks south over the US-101 Freeway (and then continuing east before connecting with the existing mainline tracks along the west bank of the Los Angeles River), the project will increase capacity at Union Station, reduce dwell times and allow for greater flexibility for Metrolink and Amtrak operations. Link US will also include a new expanded passenger concourse with retail and passenger amenities. In addition, as part of the planning for the Link US project, Metro continues to work closely with the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) on options that accommodate High Speed Rail at Union Station. Preliminary design, engineering and environmental clearance is underway for Link US, with a new Draft Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) expected to be released in summer 2017. A Final EIS/EIR will be prepared, with an expected Record of Decision/EIR Certification in late 2017.
- **West Santa Ana Branch Transit Corridor Project** - The West Santa Ana Transit Corridor Project is a proposed light rail transit line that would run from Artesia to Union Station in Downtown Los Angeles, in part, on former Pacific Electric Railway right-of-way now owned by

Metro. In September 2016, the Metro Board awarded a contract to complete the environmental clearance for the project and a contract to conduct community outreach, efforts which are now underway. The next phase of study will more closely examine new stations identified during the Technical Refinement Study (not previously identified in the SCAG Alternatives Analysis Study), including in the Arts District, Metro Blue Line transfer stations, and potential stations between Arts District and Pacific/Vernon Station, depending on the northern alignment option. Although the alternatives under consideration do not directly impact the already constrained Division 20 property, potential alignments under study may present additional opportunities to increase rail transit access in the Arts District.

- **Active Transportation Improvements** - The Connect US Action Plan is a community-driven public improvement plan that prioritizes pedestrian and bicyclist connections to and from Union Station, the 1st St/Central Regional Connector Station, and the surrounding historic and culturally significant communities, including projects within the Arts District. Metro received a federal TIGER grant in 2015 that includes streetscape improvements and a bike facility from Union Station to the Arts District along Center Street and Santa Fe Avenue adjacent to a number of existing and planned Metro facilities. In March 2017, the City of Los Angeles received an Active Transportation Program Cycle 3 grant application which would fund design and construction of additional Arts District improvements identified in the Connect US Action Plan.

Additionally, Metro presented the Los Angeles River Bike Path Gap Closure Feasibility Study to the Board in September 2016 which assessed the design, engineering, safety, cost, and other feasibility aspects of closing the eight-mile gap in the Los Angeles River Bike Path between Elysian Valley and the City of Vernon (including along the Arts District/Division 20 Corridor) to create a continuous 31-mile path. Staff is currently initiating work with a consultant team for the project approval/environmental documentation phase which is expected to commence in mid-2017. The project will begin an alternatives assessment to arrive at a preferred alternative in 2020. The project is funded under Measure M and is expected to be implemented in 5-7 years.

The City of Los Angeles is currently developing the 12-acre Sixth Street Park, Arts, River and Connectivity Improvements which will be located under and adjacent to the new Sixth Street Viaduct. The space will connect Boyle Heights, the Arts District and the Los Angeles River. The Sixth Street Viaduct is currently under construction and is scheduled to be completed in 2020. The proposed Sixth Street Station location is located immediately adjacent to this major park and active transportation improvement.

### **Challenges and Opportunities for Development of an Arts District Rail Station**

Similar to most rail maintenance facilities, Metro's Division 20 land holdings are not arrayed in a simple, rectangular, space-efficient configuration. The right-of-way has very restricted tails at both ends - specifically, the northern tail from the heavy rail portal south to 1st and 3rd Streets, and the southern tail from 4th Street to south of 6th Street. These segments are severely restricted by private property to the west, much of which has been recently developed, and by BNSF right-of-way and the Los Angeles River to the east. Furthermore, passenger rail service requires two dedicated tracks that are separated from the non-revenue storage tracks in the yard. This requires that any new rail

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passenger service would need to displace existing or planned storage, turnback and test tracks, further exacerbating the shortage of land for basic rail yard maintenance and storage functions. A summary of key passenger station issues include the following:

- **Number of Stations** - Planning studies to date have not identified an acceptable solution to operate stations at both 3rd Street and 6th Street. The preferred location for a 3rd Street Station is immediately adjacent to the One Santa Fe development and the SCI-ARC School of Architecture. The preferred location for a 6th Street Station is immediately south of the new 6th Street Bridge (currently under construction by the City of Los Angeles). Operating both of these stations would require branching the revenue tracks in two directions within the yard. Efficient rail service operation dictates a single, continuous set of rail tracks that would serve both a turnback facility and the future passenger station. This would not be possible with the two stations in the preferred locations for each that have been identified. Concepts for moving the 3rd Street Station to the river side of the yard so that it would be “in-line” with a second station at 6th Street have raised cost, safety and security concerns as they would require aerial skybridges to access a remote station location in the center of a high security storage yard.
- **Right-of-Way for a New Station** - Division 20 currently is not large enough to accommodate all of the planned growth in storage needs for the expansion of Metro Purple and Red Line service. There is a shortage of land which must be addressed to serve currently projected needs. A new rail station will put further demands to identify additional right-of-way beyond current operational needs. Current storage capacities in the yard must be expanded from the current fleet size of 180 heavy rail cars to as many as 282 cars by the time Section 3 of the Purple Line opens. Measure M calls for acceleration of the opening of Section 3 from 2035 to 2024. Furthermore, a new test track is required that will add to the above right-of-way needs. Dedicating portions of the existing yard for new passenger rail service will remove existing storage capacity as any new service cannot be co-mingled with storage tracks. Additional right-of-way would need to be identified that is immediately contiguous to the existing yard. As shown in Attachment B, development in recent years has removed much of the available land that was previously anticipated to be available for rail yard expansion.
- **Planning for a New Station** - To date, planning for potential new Red and Purple Line transit station in Division 20 has sought to “not preclude” the opportunity for stations at either 3rd Street or 6th Street, while allowing immediate rail yard needs to proceed which are required to meet conditions of the federal funding agreements and schedules for the Metro Purple Line Westside Section 1, 2 and 3 Extensions. The planning for possible future stations in the yard was initially focused on the 3rd Street area, in accordance with plans developed in the Westside Purple Line Extension EIS/EIR, which was completed in 2012. Those plans did not identify a station, but envisioned a possible future conversion of the planned turnback facility into a passenger station in the vicinity of 3rd/Street adjacent to the One Santa Fe and SCI-ARC projects. Since that time, growth in the Arts District has accelerated and many of the new projects are being developed south of 3rd Street in the areas between 4th Street and 7th Street. This has resulted in heightened interest in the development of a 6th Street Station, either in addition to or instead of a 3rd Street Station. As shown in Attachment D, the current design for the planned portal and turnback facility would provide for a possible future station at 3rd Street while not precluding a possible future station at 6th Street. The following presents the current status of planning for

these two stations:

- **3rd Street Station, Related Improvements** - The current design for the turnback facility non-revenue station platforms are being designed with sufficient width to accommodate conversion to passenger platforms. Access from the station platforms would need to be secured through the One Santa Fe project to access Santa Fe Avenue and 3rd Street.

The design of this turnback facility/station is not ideal for passenger service as the One Santa Fe project would limit the length of track that could be provided south of the station platforms which is necessary to allow for high speed operation of trains into and out of the station. However, the land for this station and turnback facility would be available upon completion of the new MOW/NRV facility at 6th/Santa Fe which would allow demolition of existing, older structures at 3rd Street which would free up room for the station and turnback facility. While the 3rd Street Station planning would allow for a relatively straightforward conversion to a passenger station, the plans to date have not identified sufficient right-of-way to provide the necessary rail car storage and test track needs.

- **6th Street Station, Related Improvements** - In order to provide for a future station at 6th Street, a new turnback facility would need to be constructed at the eastern edge of the Metro rail yard so that some trains could be turned back to Union Station and others could continue through to the 6th Street Station. New passenger service tracks would need to be constructed that would displace existing storage tracks over a distance of approximately one mile, extending from the subway portal at the northern end of the yard to the new station at 6th Street. In addition, the Metro-owned land at 6th Street is currently used by two existing tail tracks that would need to remain should a new station be constructed. The new station would require a minimum of two passenger-serving tracks in addition to the two tail tracks, resulting in a total of four tracks south of 6th Street plus a passenger platform. This platform would require vertical elevators, stairs and escalators as Red Line and Purple Line trains do not allow at-grade pedestrian crossings of their tracks. Finally, tail tracks would need to be constructed south of the new 6th Street Station to allow for end of line train queuing and turnback.

For the above reasons, a rail station at 6th Street would be more costly than a station at 3rd Street and would require a greater amount of additional right-of-way. It would, however, have the potential to provide higher speed operation than 3rd Street due to improved turnback facility design and it would provide excellent access to the growing Arts District and River Gateway improvements being implemented in the adjacent Arts District community.

- **Funding for a New Station** - Notably, neither the 2009 Long Range Financial Plan nor the Measure R or Measure M Countywide Ballot Measures for transit improvements, has identified any funding for a new rail station in the Division 20 Yard. As such, new sources of funding would need to be identified for stations in the Division 20 yard. As well, funding for the development and operating costs associated with expanded service of the Red and Purple lines have also not been included in the above financial documents. Among other elements, comprehensive cost estimates for any new service must assume operation with heavy rail trains; associated stations would therefore have to include vertical circulation to access the station including elevators, stairs, escalators and emergency access. Heavy rail stations must accommodate 450 foot long

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platforms and tail tracks beyond the platform to turnback trains, much longer than what is required for light rail stations. In short, cost estimates cannot be made for the station alone, and must be evaluated with the construct of a system improvement, and the priorities that would need to align with other investments slated for the area.

## **NEXT STEPS**

In order to fully identify and plan for all of Metro's long-term needs in and around Division 20, including accommodation of future Arts District station access, Metro is currently proceeding with the following planning efforts:

### 1. Prepare Integrated Space Plan (Summer/Fall 2017)

Metro has initiated work on additional plans to identify the physical size, alignment and configuration of a 6th Street Station that could be implemented in lieu of a 3rd Street Station. These plans will consider adjacent properties and real estate developments and transit oriented development opportunities that may be possible. Although a top priority of these physical designs is ensuring that Metro's operating commitments for the PLE are satisfied, such plans will also need to identify opportunities to enhance connectivity and access throughout the Arts District and to ensure that transportation facility improvements are designed in a manner that is responsive to the existing urban fabric and the neighboring community.

### 2. Identify Real Estate/Right-of-Way Needs (Fall 2017)

It is clear that all of the transportation infrastructure needs cannot be fully accommodated with the existing Metro-owned right-of-way and property, and that additional property will be needed for either revenue station concept. The integrated space plan described above will inform potential property acquisition needs.

### 3. Long Range Transportation Plan (2017-2018)

An Arts District Station will be included in the evaluation and planning process that is currently going forward to update Metro's Long Range Transportation Plan. No Arts District Station is currently included in this plan, and any new facilities need to be evaluated for possible incorporation by the Board into this plan. The current growth in the Arts District will be considered as a part of systemwide considerations of planning options to serve regional growth. Providing better transit linkages to the Arts District will be included in these assessments.

### 4. Funding and Implementation (Now and Beyond)

During the period when the additional rail service and station feasibility planning is underway and property acquisition needs are defined, we will confer with the City, property owners and stakeholders to identify creative strategies such as an Enhanced Infrastructure Finance District (EIFD) which could offset costs of a potential new Arts District Rail Station. Currently Metro is not authorized to establish such a district, however, the City of Los Angeles could implement such a district with the support of

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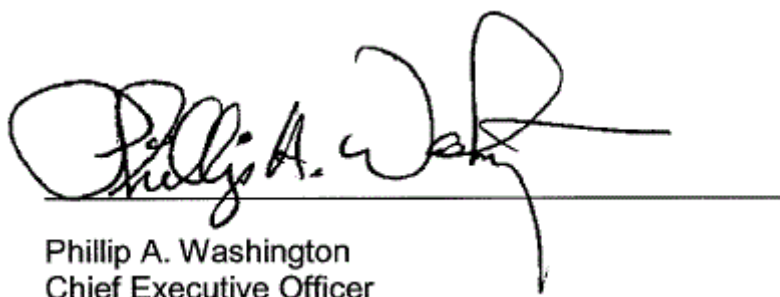
local property owners and new development projects. Also during this time, there are a number of capital and operating costs that would need to be vetted in addition to any cost estimates specific to a new station. That said, another opportunity to further study innovative funding mechanisms for station-related investment is through Metro's Transit Oriented Development Planning Grant Program which is slated to release a call for Round 5 applications in May 2017. In addition to funding transit-supportive regulatory plans, the Round 5 program will include a pilot program to provide funds to local jurisdictions to perform initial feasibility analyses for forming financing districts that can generate resources for public infrastructure including transportation improvements.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment A - January 2017 Board Motion, Item 41
- Attachment B - Division 20 Current Transportation & Contiguous Projects
- Attachment C - Current Division 20 Metro Projects
- Attachment D - Station Development Scenarios

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