



Board Report

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**AD HOC CONGESTION, HIGHWAY AND ROADS COMMITTEE
PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 14, 2018**

SUBJECT: I-710 SOUTH EIR/EIS PROJECT

ACTION: ADOPT LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

RECOMMENDATION

ADOPT Alternative 5C as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the I-710 South Corridor Project to advance into the Final Environmental Document.

BONIN AMENDMENT that Staff returns to the Board for approval of a list of the green-lighted early action projects with a corresponding analysis of:

- a) Safety benefits;
- b) Mobility enhancements;
- c) Air quality improvements; and
- d) Displacement avoidance strategy commitments.

KUEHL AMENDMENT: would like to see a program that uses Metro's Local Hire and Project Labor Agreement

FASANA AMENDMENT: need ExpressLanes on the 710 and report back on how to dedicate more lanes to Zero Emission vehicles.

ISSUE

The Draft Environmental Document (DED) for the I-710 South Corridor Project was re-circulated for public review on June 21, 2017. The Project alternatives (illustrated in Attachment A) evaluated in the Recirculated Draft Environmental Report/Supplemental Draft Environmental Statement (RDEIR/SDEIS) were revised to reflect community and agency input received during the first circulation of the DED in 2012 and Metro Board Motion 22.1 (2015), which added primarily non-freeway improvements to the Project and several mitigation and policy considerations. The RDEIR/SDEIS was circulated for 90 days and received close to 2,300 comments (188 individual entries). Based on public input and a performance evaluation of the two build Project alternatives (Attachment B), including benefits and financial feasibility, it is the recommendation of staff to proceed with Alternative 5C as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) to advance to the Final

Environmental Document.

DISCUSSION

Background

The environmental studies for the I-710 South Corridor Project started in 2008 to address significant traffic congestion and safety issues resulting from increasing traffic volumes and infrastructure deficiencies. Metro, in partnership with Caltrans, Gateway Cities Council of Governments (GCCOG), Port of Los Angeles, Port of Long Beach, Southern California Association of Governments and the I-5 Joint Powers Authority (collectively, the Funding Partners) completed project scoping, alternatives analysis and other technical work in early 2011, leading to the preparation of the environmental document and preliminary engineering for the I-710 Corridor Project. The development of the DED was guided by a public outreach framework (see Attachment C), focused on series of advisory committees formed to allow for significant public input at every step of the technical analysis process.

A Draft EIR/EIS circulated on June 28, 2012 evaluated four build alternatives, three of which included a grade-separated freight corridor. Close to 3,000 comments were received as part of this initial circulation.

In early 2013, the Project Team, consisting of Metro, Caltrans and the GCCOG, decided that re-evaluation of the Project Alternatives and re-circulation of the Draft EIR/EIS were necessary to address: 1) changes in the Port's growth forecast scenarios and initial assumptions made about the future distribution of truck trips in Southern California; 2) significant right of way requirements, for the original design, identified in the DED that could potentially make the project infeasible; and 3) a proposal by the Coalition for Environmental Health and Justice (CEHAJ) for consideration of a new alternative to be added to those considered in the DED.

In early 2014, the Project Team began working with the various I-710 advisory committees to present the work accomplished to date (traffic forecasting and alternatives development) and to further refine the preliminary build alternatives and geometric concepts. By mid-2014, the following two build alternatives were presented to the I-710 advisory committees for inclusion in the RDEIR/SDEIS (Attachment A):

Alternative 5C - widen I-710 to 5 mixed flow lanes in each direction plus improvements at I-710/I-405 (including truck by-pass lanes), I-710/SR-91, I-710/I-5 and every local interchange between Ocean Blvd. and SR-60. The cost of Alternative 5C is estimated at \$6 billion. This alternative includes provisions for encouraging use of clean technology trucks.

Alternative 7 - two dedicated lanes (in each direction) for clean technology trucks from Ocean Blvd. in Long Beach to the intermodal railroad yards in Commerce/Vernon, plus improvements at I-710/I-405, I-710/SR-91, I-710/I-5 and every local interchange between Ocean Blvd. and SR-60. The cost of Alternative 7 is estimated at \$10 billion.

Both Project alternatives include programs to address issues not directly related to the freeway. These include: Near Zero/Zero Emission Truck Technology Deployment Program, Community

Benefits Grant Program, Congestion Relief Program and a Transit Enhancements Program. Detailed descriptions of these programs are provided in Attachment D.

In October 2015, and after extensive coordination and collaboration with a variety of stakeholders, the Board approved Motion 22.1. This Motion directed staff to evaluate additional scope elements under Alternatives 5C and 7 in the Project EIR/EIS. This work was completed in mid-2016 and the Project Team began the preparation of the Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental DEIS (RDEIR/SDEIS).

The RDEIR/SDEIS was released for public review on June 21, 2017. The review period was extended to 90 days. Three public hearings were held in Long Beach, Commerce, and Paramount for comprehensive coverage of the entire 19 mile corridor. Two additional community meetings were held in East Los Angeles and Long Beach during the circulation period at the request of local jurisdictions. Approximately, 2,300 comments including written comments, formal letters, emails, speaker/comment cards, verbal testimonies, and online submittals were received on the RDEIR/SDEIS by Caltrans prior to the close of the public comment period on October 23, 2017. The two most cited concerns in the comments were the need for zero emissions trucks and the need to reduce/eliminate right of way impacts. All comments received during the public comment period will be addressed in the I-710 South Final EIR/EIS.

During the environmental process, the Project Team held more than 350 meetings and/or briefings with the I-710 advisory committees (see Attachment C), community groups/organizations, members of the public and elected officials.

Considerations

In developing a recommendation for a Locally Preferred Alternative, the Project Team considered: 1) input gathered from public comments and I-710 advisory committees; 2) how well each alternative addresses the purpose and need of the Project; 3) the technical and financial feasibility (affordability); 4) environmental impacts and; 5) ability to deliver community benefits in the short term.

Findings

A detailed performance evaluation of the two build Project alternatives has been completed. A summary of the results of this evaluation is provided in Attachment B. Based on this evaluation, the Project Team identified Alternative 5C as the recommended Locally Preferred Alternative because it would clearly accomplish the purpose and need of the project, offers a significant number of benefits, and has significantly less impacts than Alternative 7. Even though full funding for Alternative 5C is not currently available, Metro and Caltrans have adequate funding to support accelerated implementation of initial stages (early action projects) while additional funding becomes available. Alternative 5C can be easily constructed in stages that have independent utility, whereas the majority of the benefits of Alternative 7 are associated with a proposed Freight Corridor that cannot be constructed in stages that would have independent utility.

The Locally Preferred Alternative recommendation was vetted through the various I-710 advisory

committees between December 2017 and January 2018. The I-710 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) voted to recommend Alternative 5C as the Locally Preferred Alternative, with a note that Metro will work with the corridor cities regarding viable design refinements and to maximize the air quality benefits including the I-710 NZE/ZE Truck Program. The I-710 Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC) did not have consensus on one particular alternative; instead they approved two separate recommendations: 1) Support moving forward with Alternative 5C as the Locally Preferred Alternative and 2) Not moving forward with the selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative until all elements of Motion 22.1 are completed and incorporated into the EIR/EIS analysis. The Project Development Team presented documentation supporting satisfaction of all requirements of Motion 22.1 applicable to the environmental process. Some Motion 22.1 requirements, by their own nature, will need to be addressed in future phases of project development. For example, a requirement for a Project Labor Agreement will be addressed in the construction phase. The I-710 Project Committee (PC) received a presentation on the Project Development Team's recommendation as well as the recommendations from the TAC and CAC. The PC voted to receive and file the reports and did not make a recommendation on a Locally Preferred Alternative. A meeting of the I-710 Executive Committee was planned in early February but was cancelled due to lack of quorum. Following the structure for review process defined at the outset of the environmental phase of this project, the recommendation for the Locally Preferred Alternative is being presented to the Board for adoption.

Caltrans is the lead agency responsible for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Under CEQA, Caltrans will certify that the I-710 South Project complies with the requirements of CEQA, prepare Facts and Findings, and if necessary, prepare a Statement of Overriding Considerations (SOC) for impacts that cannot be mitigated below a level of significance; and certify that the Findings and SOC have been considered prior to project approval. Caltrans will then file a CEQA Notice of Determination (NOD) with the State Clearinghouse that will identify whether the I-710 South will have significant impacts, if mitigation measures were included as conditions of project approval, findings were made, and an SOC was adopted.

Under NEPA assignment, Caltrans, as lead agency, will document and explain its decision regarding the selected Preferred Alternative, the project impacts, and mitigation measures in a Record of Decision (ROD).

In Spring of 2018, the Project Team will work with the cities along the I-710 Corridor to identify initial construction stages ("early action projects") based on independent utility, benefits, costs and impacts as well as to define integrated (roadway improvements and program elements) packages based on funding availability. A Final EIR/EIS is expected by summer 2018.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

The recommended Locally Preferred Alternative for the I-710 South Corridor EIR/EIS will have no impact on the safety of Metro's patrons or employees or the general public.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

For FY18, \$7,925,000 has been budgeted in Highway Program Cost Center 4720, Project 462316, (I-

710 South EIR/EIS), Task 5.2.100, Account 50316 (Services Professional/Technical). Since this is a multi-year project, the Project Manager, the Cost Center Manager and the Senior Executive Officer, Program Management - Highway Program will be responsible for budgeting the remaining costs in future fiscal years.

Impact to Budget

The source of funds for this project is Measure R Highway Capital (20%) Funds from the I-710 South and/or Early Action Projects. These funds are not eligible for bus and rail operating and capital expenditures.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board may elect not to adopt a Locally Preferred Alternative and/or proceed with completing the environmental document for the Project. This alternative is not recommended as it would be contrary to prior Board directions and Metro's intent to proceed with implementation of much needed improvements along the I-710 Corridor.

NEXT STEPS

The Locally Preferred Alternative will be forwarded to Caltrans for consideration and adoption as the Preferred Alternative. Upon adoption of the Preferred Alternative by Caltrans, the Project Team will:

- 1) Secure additional funds to complete the Final EIR/EIS. Staff is working to finalize the scope of work and cost estimate to complete this work and will request Board authorization in April 2018 to amend the existing professional services contracts supporting this project.
- 2) Coordinate with regional partners and local and State air agencies to refine and enhance the I-710 Zero and Near Zero Emissions Truck Program.
- 3) Identify initial construction stages ("early action projects") based on independent utility, benefits, costs and impacts and defining integrated packages (Roadway Improvements, and Programmatic Features) based on funding availability
- 4) Prepare a Final EIR/EIS to address all comments received during the public review process in accordance with NEPA and CEQA guidelines and mandates. It is anticipated the Final EIR/EIS will be signed by summer 2018 and that Caltrans will certify the project by filing the NOD and ROD.
- 5) Prepare scope of work and estimates for the release of Request for Proposals for Final Design on selected early action projects.

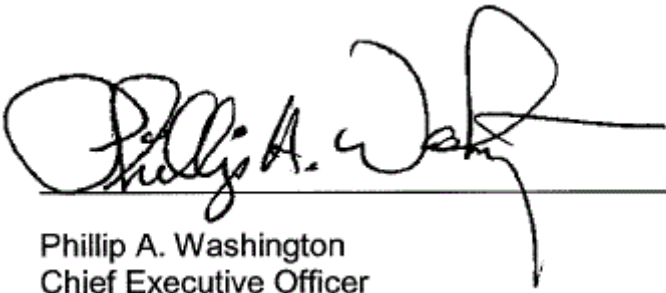
Staff will report back to the Metro Board of Directors in September 2018 to adopt the final environmental document.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Project Alternatives
Attachment B - Alternatives Evaluation Matrix
Attachment C - Community Participation Framework
Attachment D - Program Descriptions

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