



Board Report

File #: 2019-0759, **File Type:** Project

Agenda Number: 6.

PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 20, 2019

SUBJECT: SEPULVEDA TRANSIT CORRIDOR FEASIBILITY STUDY

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE Sepulveda Transit Corridor Feasibility Study.

ISSUE

On November 30, 2017, Metro awarded a contract to conduct a technical feasibility study of alternatives for the Sepulveda Transit Corridor (Project). The study was completed in November 2019 and is now available for Board consideration and to inform future phases of the Project.

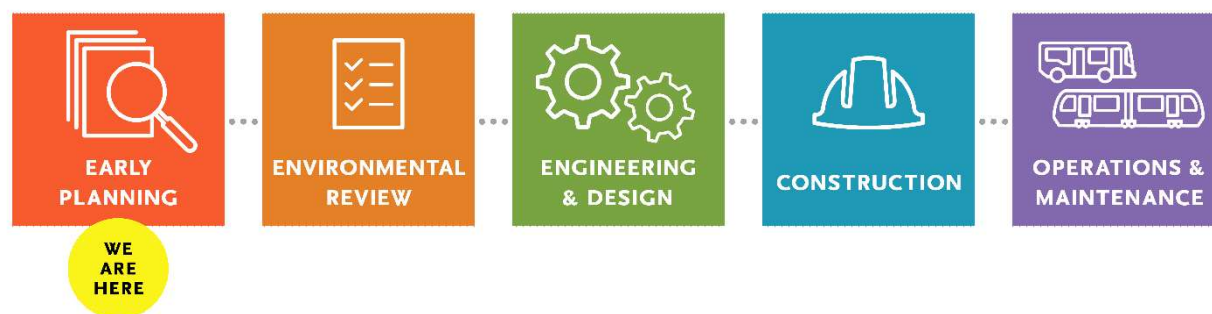
BACKGROUND

The Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project will provide an essential transportation link across the Santa Monica Mountains, connecting the heavy concentration of households in the San Fernando Valley with major employment and activity centers on the Westside, including the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX).

The Project is included in Metro's 2009 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and was accelerated by the Measure M expenditure plan approved in 2016. The Measure M Expenditure Plan identified funding for a transit project in the Sepulveda Corridor in two phases. The first phase, Valley-Westside, has \$5.7 billion in identified funding and a target opening year of FY 2033. The second phase, Westside-LAX, has \$3.8 billion in identified funding and a target opening year of FY 2057.

Figure 1 below shows the current Project status along the overall project development process. The Project concludes the early planning phase with the completion of the feasibility study.

Figure 1: Project Development Process - Current Status



DISCUSSION

The Project Study Area encompasses approximately 60 square miles on both sides of the I-405 freeway and is split into the two phases identified in Measure M: Valley-Westside and Westside-LAX. More than 400,000 people pass through the Study Area every day to commute to work, school, and other destinations; yet, there are few travel options for people to move between the San Fernando Valley and the Westside aside from the highly congested I-405 freeway. The Project's feasibility study alternatives were developed in response to the mobility needs for the two areas of the corridor.

The purpose of the Project is to provide high-quality transit service that effectively serves a large and growing travel market between the San Fernando Valley and the Westside, including the LAX area.

Development and Screening of Valley-Westside Alternatives

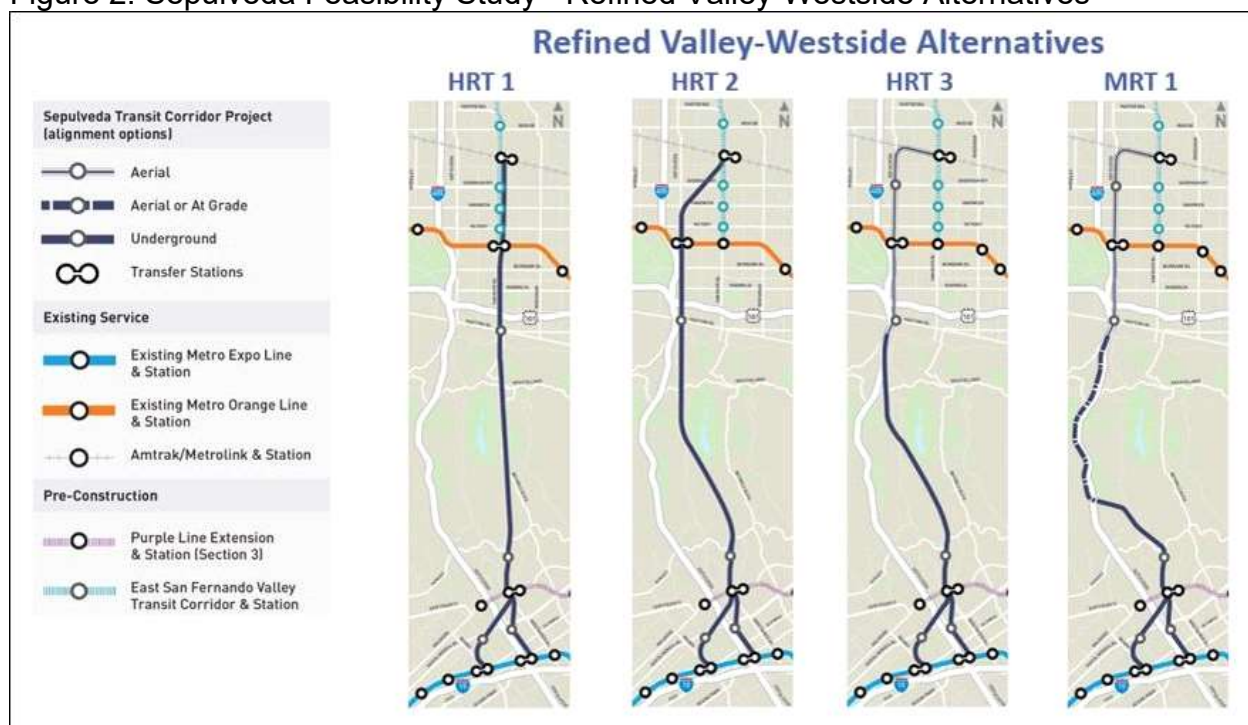
The Project aims to serve the different travel markets within the Study Area by connecting key activity centers and by connecting major existing or planned transit between the San Fernando Valley and the Westside (such as the planned East San Fernando Valley (ESFV) Light Rail Transit Line, the Orange Line, the Expo Line, and the future Purple Line extension). The Santa Monica Mountains present technical and physical challenges to make those connections. A review of various transit technologies was conducted to examine options for either tunneling underneath the mountains or for going over the mountains through the Sepulveda Pass. The analysis resulted in the selection of four transit modes for the development of the initial transit concepts for Valley-Westside: heavy rail transit (HRT), light rail transit (LRT), and monorail or rubber-tire transit (MRT). The initial Valley-Westside transit concepts also considered design configurations that included at grade (or street-running), aerial (or elevated), and below grade (tunnel).

Passenger ridership forecasts for the initial Valley-Westside concepts revealed that demand on the Sepulveda Corridor would be substantial enough to cause all initial concepts to increase the ridership demand on the ESFV LRT Line near or beyond its capacity. The over-capacity conditions would be most severe for the initial LRT concepts that proposed extending the planned ESFV LRT Line through the Santa Monica Mountains and into the Westside. To serve the capacity issues on the ESFV LRT Line caused by the initial HRT and MRT concepts, the initial alignments were extended further north to include a connection at the Metrolink Van Nuys station, thereby potentially mitigating the overcrowding on the ESFV LRT Line.

The refined Valley-Westside alternatives have varying characteristics: HRT 1 and 2 each measure

about 13 miles in length and each have seven underground stations; HRT 3 and MRT 1 each measure nearly 15 miles and each include four underground stations and four aerial stations. All Valley-Westside alternatives include connections to Metrolink, the planned ESFV LRT line, the Orange Line, the future Purple Line extension, and the Expo Line. Figure 2 below provides a map of the refined Valley-Westside alternatives.

Figure 2: Sepulveda Feasibility Study - Refined Valley-Westside Alternatives



Source: Sepulveda Mobility Partners, 2019

A maintenance and storage facility (MSF) will be required for any of the alternatives under consideration. Three potential MSF sites were identified for the Valley-Westside alternatives. Additional MSF sites may be identified during the environmental review phase.

The Feasibility Study Executive Summary (Attachment A) describes the four refined Valley-Westside alternatives and potential MSF sites in greater detail.

Development and Screening of Westside-LAX Concepts

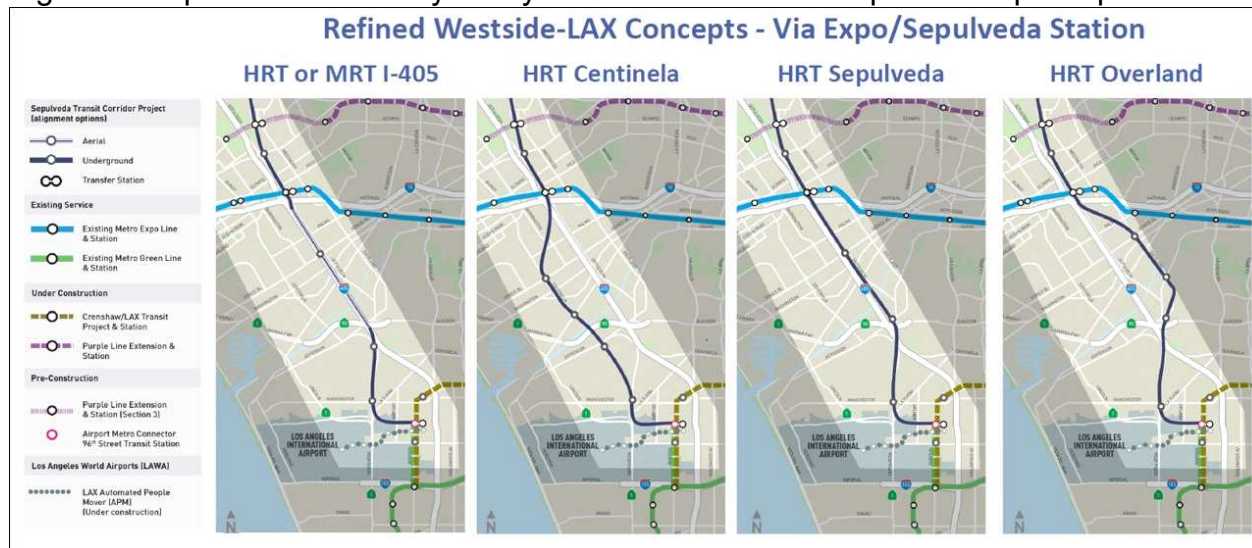
The Westside-LAX concepts were developed primarily as extensions of the refined Valley-Westside alternatives. The extensions would begin from the Expo/Bundy Station or the Expo/Sepulveda Station. Figure 3 shows the Westside-LAX concepts that extend from the Expo/Sepulveda Station, and Figure 4 shows the Westside-LAX concepts that extend from the Expo/Bundy Station.

The Westside-LAX concepts generally follow the major north-south roadways within the southern part of the Study Area. The Airport Metro Connector (AMC) 96th Street Transit Station on the future Crenshaw/LAX was identified as the logical endpoint and connection for all Westside-LAX concepts.

At this location, the Project could connect with the Crenshaw/LAX and Green Lines, the future LAX automated people mover, and multiple local bus lines serving this intermodal transfer facility.

The Westside-LAX concepts have varying characteristics: the alignments range in length from about 8 to 10 miles and include four to six stations each. All but one of the stations along I-405 would be underground.

Figure 3: Sepulveda Feasibility Study - Westside-LAX Concepts Via Expo/Sepulveda Station



Source: Sepulveda Mobility Partners, 2019

Figure 4: Sepulveda Feasibility Study - Westside-LAX Concepts Via Expo/Bundy Station



Source: Sepulveda Mobility Partners, 2019

More information on the six Westside-LAX concepts can also be found in Attachment A.

Consistency with Metro's Equity Platform Framework

To help address disparities in access to opportunity across Los Angeles County, the Metro Board adopted the Equity Platform policy framework in February 2018 and a working definition of Equity Focus Communities (EFC) in June 2019. The Sepulveda Transit Corridor is consistent with the Metro Equity Platform in that the alternatives help address accessibility for residential and employment centers, support for transit-oriented communities policies, support for first/last-mile connections, and investment in disadvantaged communities. In addition, ridership estimates suggest that a large share of the ridership demand would include low-income riders. Going forward, the Project will use the working definition of EFC along with other metrics as appropriate to guide analyses and to conduct robust community engagement.

Public Outreach and Agency Coordination

Metro engaged in a robust public outreach process for this Feasibility Study, guided by Metro's Equity Platform. Metro designed a wide range of opportunities for feedback in an inclusive and transparent way and provided multiple forums in-person and online for bilingual English and Spanish community engagement. This included engaging stakeholders at a variety of events and locations in the Valley and on the Westside, reaching thousands of stakeholders in person. Metro also conducted significant outreach with many public agencies that have jurisdiction throughout the Study Area. Coordination with these agencies allowed concerns to be identified early in the process.

Public Meetings

Metro hosted three rounds of public meetings (for a total of 10 individual public meetings) as part of the public outreach efforts for the study. Meetings were held to coincide with the introduction, refinement, and evaluation of the transit concepts. All materials were available in English and Spanish, and interpreters were available to translate and assist with submission of comments.

To promote each round of public meetings, Metro distributed thousands of take-ones with information about the meetings in English and Spanish on bus routes that operate in the Study Area. Electronic versions of each meeting notice, with a link to a Spanish translation, were distributed via e-blast to all contacts included in the Project database, and a targeted social media campaign using Metro's Facebook account was conducted to promote the Project video and to share meeting notices. Support was also requested from elected offices, cities, public facilities, and other key stakeholders to promote public meetings through their own communication tools.

Additionally, targeted outreach in Spanish based on a careful analysis of Spanish speakers with limited English proficiency in the Study Area was conducted to encourage attendance of Spanish speakers.

Outreach at Community Events

Many factors may prevent in-person attendance at public meetings; therefore, the outreach was conducted at places where community stakeholders already gather. This included making announcements and presentations at community meetings, such as neighborhood councils and homeowners associations. In addition, the outreach team staffed information booths at approximately

20 free or low-cost community festivals that drew thousands of diverse attendees throughout the Study Area.

Public Agency Meetings

Metro coordinated with many public agencies that have jurisdiction throughout the Study Area, holding both multi-agency briefings and individual meetings. This effort was designed to present information on the Project concepts, to discuss relevant issues related to each agency's jurisdiction, and proactively consult with these agencies prior to formal agency consultation, which is a prerequisite under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental review process.

Additional outreach information is available on the Project website.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

This item does not impact the safety of Metro's customers or employees.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This item does not impact the Metro budget.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project will support the first goal of the Vision 2028 Metro Strategic Plan by providing high-quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling. Travel times for the Feasibility Study alternatives are less than 30 minutes for Valley-Westside (from the Ventura County Metrolink Line in the north to the Expo Line in the south), and less than 40 minutes for Valley-Westside-LAX (from Metrolink to the Crenshaw/LAX Line). This performance is highly competitive with travel by car on the I-405 freeway.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

No decisions are required at this time.

NEXT STEPS

The next steps for the Project include awarding the PDA and the environmental contracts and selecting the alternatives for environmental clearance. Attachment B provides a general overview of the Project timeline through the start of the environmental review phase. To allow the Board to consider the full range of alternatives that may enter into the environmental process, Metro will seek Board selection of Project alternatives to be studied in the environmental process in June/July 2020. Robust public outreach to all stakeholders, particularly Equity Focus Communities, will continue to be a critical element of the Project as it advances. A separate community outreach contract will be awarded in summer 2020 to support the environmental review process.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Feasibility Study Executive Summary

Attachment B - Project Timeline

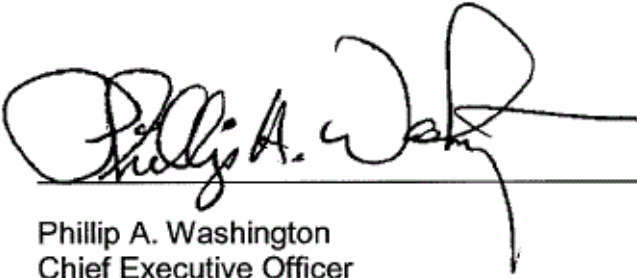
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