



Board Report

File #: 2020-0045, **File Type:** Agreement

Agenda Number: 45.

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
JANUARY 16, 2020**

SUBJECT: BRIDGE HOUSING AT VAN NUYS STATION

ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION

Direct the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to:

- A. Enter into a no-fee lease agreement with the City of Los Angeles (COLA) with a term ending August 15, 2023 for temporary bridge housing on a portion of the Van Nuys Orange Line Station parking lot;
- B. Re-inventory Metro-owned properties to identify other opportunities for the City of Los Angeles's A Bridge Home Program (ABH) facilities and report back to the March 2020 Executive Management Committee;
- C. Conclude the project is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code Sections 21080.27 and 21080, Subdivision (b)(4), and CEQA Guidelines Section 15269, Subdivision (c); and
- D. Authorize Metro staff to file a Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk.

ISSUE

In April 2018, the Los Angeles Mayor and City Council declared a shelter crisis in the City of Los Angeles. According to the 2019 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Point-in-Time Count released by Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), 36,300 homeless individuals reside in the City of Los Angeles, 27,221 of who are unsheltered.

In May 2018, Metro prepared an inventory of Metro-owned property that may be suitable for temporary homeless housing. Among other properties, Metro's assessment identified a portion of the Metro parking lot at the Van Nuys Orange Line Station on 14333 Aetna Street (Site) as viable.

Board action is required to authorize the CEO to enter into a no-fee lease with the City of Los Angeles for an ABH facility on the Site.

BACKGROUND

A Bridge Home

To respond to the homeless crisis and the immediate need for shelter, the Mayor and Los Angeles City Council allocated \$39 million in their Fiscal Year 2018-19 and 2019-20 budgets to establish temporary crisis and bridge housing facilities, with the goal of adding 750 to 1,500 new beds citywide. In addition, \$54 million has been committed within the City of Los Angeles' Homeless Emergency Aid Program allocation from the State of California to construct and operate ABH facilities. The Mayor's deadline to construct, complete, and open all ABH sites is June 2020. Each site will operate for a minimum of three years to support the development of supportive permanent housing for ABH residents.

On May 29, 2019 a Los Angeles City Council Motion (Council File 19-0563) instructed City staff to evaluate and report on the feasibility of using a portion of the Van Nuys Orange Line Station parking lot for establishing an ABH facility. City agencies determined that the Site is suitable for such purpose. The Site will include bridge housing facilities including storage for residents, personal hygiene and laundry facilities, supportive and community engagement services, and 24-hour security. LAHSA will identify a service provider to operate the facility.

As per the terms of the proposed lease, COLA will return the Site to Metro, restored to its original condition, by August 15, 2023.

Van Nuys Orange Line Station Parking Lot

The Van Nuys parking location is large, flat, and currently underutilized for parking. A portion of the parking lot is currently leased by an automotive dealer. The dealer can maintain its current lease area and will share a driveway with ABH.

DISCUSSION

Findings

Metro Capital Projects

Metro Program Management has confirmed that the Site will not be required for the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor (ESFVTC) or the Sepulveda Transit Corridor projects prior to August 15, 2023. See below for discussion on the Metro Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit Improvements Project (MOL Improvements).

Operations

The Site is adjacent to the MOL dedicated busway, as well as the MOL Van Nuys station. Standard protections for Metro operating right-of-way are currently in place and will continue to be maintained. As part of the lease terms, COLA will provide site security and maintenance plans for Metro review and approval no later than 60 days prior to commencement of operations.

Parking

The ABH facility is expected to occupy approximately 100 parking spaces. Currently, there is sufficient space to accommodate transit riders, the automotive dealership and the ABH facility.

The North Hollywood Joint Development (NoHo JD) project is scheduled to break ground in 2022. If a determination is made to reduce parking at North Hollywood during the NoHo JD construction, some parking may be diverted to the Van Nuys station. However, with revisions to the automotive dealership lease, Metro staff believes there is sufficient parking space at Van Nuys to absorb potential NoHo overflow and accommodate MOL Improvements.

To accommodate the ABH facility, the parking lot will require minor traffic flow modifications and removal of a few parking spaces. That can be accomplished by Metro restriping a portion of the parking lot with the cost estimated not to exceed \$30,000.

Joint Development

The Site has been identified as a potential joint development location, but any joint development would not take place until after the design is complete for adjacent transportation projects such as the ESFVTC and the MOL Improvement's projects. No new development would break ground prior to August 15, 2023.

ABH California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Exemption

Metro staff have reviewed and considered the November 19, 2019 City of Los Angeles Public Works: Engineering Staff Report for the "Crisis and Bridge Housing Facility at 14333 Aetna (19-0563) CEQA Notice of Exemption (NOE)" ("Staff Report") and associated documents. Metro adopts the determinations made by the City of Los Angeles City Council when it approved the project at its November 27, 2019 meeting, in reliance on the Staff Report and other documents contained on the City's website related to the project.

The project is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.27. The no-fee lease agreement is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.27, Subdivisions (a)(1)(C) and (b)(2).

The project is also statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080, Subdivision (b)(4), and CEQA Guidelines Section 15269, Subdivision (c).

Considerations

MOL Improvements

The MOL will be completed using various construction contracts. The contract for the Van Nuys section is planned to include a grade separation (GS) with an aerial station at Van Nuys Blvd, and approach ramps on the west and east end of the station, together with the use of a laydown area located to the south of the existing MOL alignment.

The approach ramps at each end of the aerial structure are planned to be built using a Mechanically Stabilized Earth (MSE) wall system. The system requires constructing MSE wall panels on both sides of each approach ramp and importing and compacting a large quantity of fill material between the walls. The Site is adjacent to the east MSE wall as shown on Attachment A and will be needed for the MOL Improvements project.

From fall 2022 to spring 2025, the GS construction will require:

- Relocating the busway and Van Nuys station to an adjacent street;
- Closing the existing busway, station and a portion of the parking lot (including the Site) in the diversion area;
- Setting up construction staging and laydown area at the Van Nuys parking lot; and
- Constructing aerial structure/station and MSE wall system.

Leasing the Site for an ABH facility will impact certain construction work on Metro's MOL Improvements project. The bid documents will dictate that the contractor may not utilize the Site until after August 15, 2023. Dictating means and methods of the design-build contract may result in higher Metro costs and risks which cannot be quantified at this time. The proposed lease terms include COLA indemnifying Metro against all liabilities and damages if the Site isn't restored to its pre-lease condition and vacated by August 15, 2023. The proposed lease terms also include that COLA may holdover on a month-to-month basis, subject to site availability, and if no additional costs will be incurred by Metro as a result of the holdover.

The GS is located in an industrial/commercial-zoned area and was determined to be statutorily exempt under CEQA as such. The MOL Improvements contractor will have the right to construct around and adjacent to the Site and will provide any required construction mitigations for industrial/commercial uses. The proposed lease terms will include that COLA defend, indemnify and hold Metro harmless for any costs or damages Metro incurs as a result of COLA's use of the Site for residential purposes. Likewise, the lease terms will include language specifying that the City is not liable for damages that are not the result of its use and occupancy of the site.

Although leasing the Site for an ABH facility will result in potential risk to budget and schedule, Program Management believes that the MOL Improvements can still be completed by the Measure M targeted date of 2025.

Homelessness

The ABH program will deploy teams of outreach workers to engage homeless who live around the ABH sites to ensure that people moving into ABH are already residents of the neighborhood. ABH team will consult with Metro's homeless outreach team for assistance in determining eligible participants for the program. As the new ABH site opens its doors, COLA homeless outreach teams will work to restore spaces that were previously encampment sites into open and clear public spaces. This effort will benefit Metro customers as it will reduce the encampment sites around the Van Nuys station.

Equity Platform

Use of Metro's property for ABH facilities meets the Equity Platform Pillar II - Listen and Learn by actively engaging members of the homeless community, as well as Pillar III - Focus and Deliver, to provide needed solutions for the homeless.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

There are potential safety issues with having a residential development close to a dedicated busway,

however, many Metro stations and rights of way are adjacent to residential improvements. Metro staff will work with COLA to ensure proper fencing and segregation between operational areas and the ABH facility.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Adoption of the COLA lease will require parking operations to restripe the remaining existing lot, estimated at \$30,000.

Depending on the impact to parking for the NoHo JD project, there may be some reduction in lease revenue from revising the lease with the automotive dealership in a way that will allow the ABH facility to stay through August 15, 2023.

The financial impact to the MOL Improvements construction bids is unknown. Keeping bid requirements to a minimum results in the best financial outcome for construction contracts. It is not possible to determine the impact to bids of incorporating the condition not to use the Site until August 15, 2023.

Impact to Budget

The minor restriping of the parking lot can be done under existing budget cost center 3046, project 308001.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Recommendation supports Strategic Plan goal #3 of enhancing communities and lives by providing shelter and supportive services for homeless.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board could choose not to authorize the CEO to execute the lease. This is not recommended as homelessness continue to be a challenging issue that requires housing and supportive services.

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval, the CEO will execute the no-cost lease, and staff will review Metro's real estate holdings to determine if any additional properties can be utilized for ABH facilities and will file a Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk

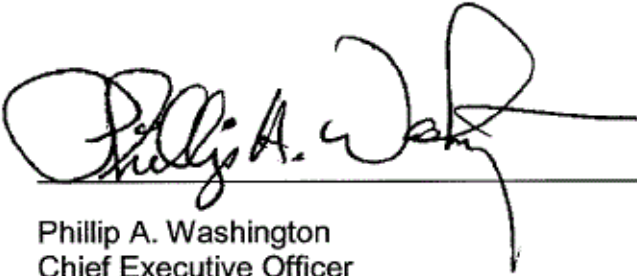
ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - MOL Improvements

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