

**Board Report**

File #: 2022-0314, **File Type:** Agreement**Agenda Number:** 10.

**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
JUNE 15, 2022****SUBJECT: AMEND THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE SAN GABRIEL VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS FOR THE SAN GABRIEL VALLEY TRANSIT FEASIBILITY STUDY****ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATION****RECOMMENDATION**

AUTHORIZE the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to amend the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) dated February 1, 2021, with the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG) for the San Gabriel Valley Transit Feasibility Study (Study), authorizing the SGVCOG to proceed with next steps of the study with a not-to-exceed amount of \$1,800,000, bringing the total funding to \$3,300,000.

ISSUE

On February 1, 2021, Metro executed an MOU with SGVCOG to lead a study to identify short- and long-term transit solutions for the San Gabriel Valley. The SGVCOG secured professional services to conduct the study, of which the first phase is nearing completion. As stated in the MOU's Scope of Work, an amendment was anticipated to authorize the study's second phase. Additional funding of \$1,800,000 is needed to proceed with the second phase of tasks, bringing the total funding to \$3,300,000. A letter of support from the SGVCOG was sent on February 16, 2022 (Attachment A) to program funding for the second phase of the feasibility study.

BACKGROUND

In February 2020, the Board approved (#2020-0027) the withdrawal of the SR 60 and Combined Alternatives from the Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 project for a number of reasons. At the time, Metro staff recognized that mobility challenges would continue to exist along the SR 60 Freeway corridor and within the San Gabriel Valley, with a need to connect to Metro's regional transit network. Staff proposed a feasibility study independent from the Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 project to evaluate other options to serve the needs of the San Gabriel Valley.

Subsequently, the Board directed staff (#2020-0172) to prepare a feasibility study and develop high-quality transit service options in the San Gabriel Valley subregion, including a Funding Plan encompassing Measure R and Measure M funding. The Board also directed staff to commit \$635.5 million of Measure R funding for improvements to be identified in the study and consistent with the

funding years (expected completion in 2035-2037) in the Measure R Expenditure Plan. Project staff returned in May 2020 with an update to the Board, at which time a Board Motion #2020-0368 (Attachment B) was approved that directed the SGVCOG to lead the study on short- and long-term transit solutions.

DISCUSSION

In September 2020, Metro Board approved the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 budget, which included the \$1,500,000 funding for the first tasks of the study, SGVCOG staff and administrative costs. The SGVCOG executed a contract in May 2021 for professional services to conduct technical planning and outreach work as scoped. Since then, the Project team has made significant progress and is concluding several milestones.

Building on work conducted in this corridor as part of the Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 environmental work, the team re-evaluated and re-defined the purpose and need for mobility options in the San Gabriel Valley subregion. The study area covers 375 square miles, bordered by the City of Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley to the west, San Bernardino County to the east, the San Gabriel Mountains to the north, and the Gateway cities and Orange County to the south. This area (Attachment C) includes 31 cities and unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County. It is home to a diverse population of 2 million residents (19 percent of LA County's total population), including communities defined as Metro's Equity Focus Communities (EFCs). Census tracts with EFCs, for example, are located throughout the San Gabriel Valley, including communities located near Pasadena, Alhambra, Rosemead, Montebello, El Monte, South El Monte, Baldwin Park, Azusa, Covina, and Pomona.

An early task identified traveler needs and transportation options based on land use patterns, major attractors and generators, projected growth, socio-demographic information, and existing and planned transportation facilities and services. These factors included ridership demographics (residents, commuters, visitors), implementation horizons needed to meet growth projections (short-term projects, long-term vision for the area), promising corridors of travel (north-south, east-west), short- and long-term capacity needs as reflected in mode options (bus service, enhanced or BRT services, LRT, HRT), and service potential (integration of existing services, development of new services).

Through community and stakeholder outreach sessions, and based on the outlined parameters, the SGVCOG and its technical team developed 15 concepts and alternatives that included north-south and east-west options, new services as well as enhanced existing services, and a variety of modes (enhanced bus, bus rapid transit, LRT, or some combination). The team identified and solicited input from the SR 60 corridor cities, key stakeholders, and communities in this area and used this feedback to screen the 15 concepts. Three were identified as the most promising solutions for the subregion.

At the writing of this report, the SGVCOG and its technical and outreach teams are identifying cost and ridership estimates for the three solutions and anticipate completing the first phase of this study in June. With an amended MOU and authorization to proceed, the team would be positioned to proceed with the second phase beginning July 1, 2022. The next steps of the study, for which this

MOU amendment is recommended, will be to develop conceptual engineering, urban design concepts and graphics, evaluate long-term solutions for transportation investment, and finalize the feasibility report.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The proposed action allocates up to \$1,800,000 in FY23. Authorization for this study to proceed without delay is subject to the identification and approval of funding in the FY23 budget. Since this is a multi-year program, the Metro Project Manager, Cost Center Manager, and Chief Planning Officer will be responsible for budgeting in future fiscal years as needed.

Impact to Budget

The FY23 budget includes \$1,800,000 in Cost Center 4310 for Project #460233. The source of funds is Measure R 35% Transit Capital, which is not eligible for Bus or Rail Operations.

EQUITY PLATFORM

The Board action to amend the MOU is not anticipated to have equity impacts. As equity goals are a priority for Metro, Metro project staff is working closely with the SGVCOG to provide technical support and guidance to attain equitable goals to the extent possible. In its initial tasks, the study considered EFCs in the definition of the study area, and has identified the following communities within the SGV subregion in which EFCs are concentrated: Pasadena, Azusa (both along I-210), Alhambra, San Gabriel, Rosemead, El Monte, South El Monte, Baldwin Park, Covina, Pomona (along I-10), Monterey Park, Montebello, and Industry (along SR-60). Within the study area, 14 percent of census tracts are defined as EFCs.

To address EFC needs, one of the goals for the study is to create accessible transit services for the SVG by focusing on communities relying on transit, with the explicit objective of emphasizing services in areas with high concentrations of EFCs. To this end, each concept was screened using qualitative and quantitative indicators of expected benefits to EFCs.

In conducting outreach activities, the SGVCOG has hosted various presentations and workshops and provided one-on-one briefings for its member cities to raise awareness about this study and to solicit input from EFCs. The COG has hosted two general public and community workshops, the invitations and contents for which have been provided in Chinese, Spanish, and English. Translation services were available during the workshops, and verbal and written comments from the public were accepted in native language. All outreach to date has been conducted remotely using online meeting platforms, telephone, and interactive website. The COG anticipates that the next phases of the study will include digital platforms, but will also incorporate in-person workshops for EFCs as the Project alternatives are further refined.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

This action supports the Metro Vision 2028 Strategic Plan. Specifically, the project supports Goals #1 and #3 of the Strategic Plan: Goal #1. Provide high-quality mobility options that enable people to

spend less time traveling and Goal #3. Enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity. By continuing efforts that provide high-quality mobility options in partnership with the SGVCOG, enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to transit, and address mobility challenges in San Gabriel Valley, Metro is continuing to work towards equitable and accessible transit services, reduce travel times and roadway congestion, and enhance connections to the regional transit network.

NEXT STEPS

If approved, the Metro CEO will execute the amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding with SGVCOG. The MOU will only be amended to increase the funding authorization and no other terms.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Letter from San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments Request for Additional Funding dated February 16, 2022.

Attachment B - Board Motion 2020-0368

Attachment C -Study Area Map

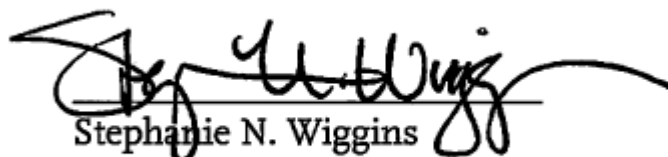
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