



Board Report

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Agenda Number: 11.

REVISED
PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 14, 2022

SUBJECT: TRANSPORTATION COMMUNICATION NETWORK UPDATE

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE an update regarding the LACMTA Transportation Communication Network (“TCN” or “Project”).

ISSUE

The LACMTA Metro TCN program is intended to create a connected communication system by using outdoor advertising infrastructure on LACMTA property throughout the City of Los Angeles (“City”). The program will also create a revenue stream and allow for the removal of up to approximately 260 older, static billboards. This board report provides an update on the TCN program.

BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Board Action (File# 2021-0062) on March 24, 2021, LACMTA staff and County Counsel negotiated a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the City for LACMTA’s TCN on LACMTA rail right-of-way within the City of Los Angeles. The City Council approved the MOA on December 16, 2021, and it was executed on January 12, 2022.

LACMTA is the Lead Agency for the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) analysis, and the City is a Responsible Agency. On April 18, 2022, LACMTA issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to commence the formal process for the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The NOP included an Initial Study identifying the potentially significant environmental effects to be analyzed in the EIR and listed potential locations of the structures. The locations being studied include 34 freeway-facing and 22 non-freeway-facing TCN structures (see Attachment A).

There were two virtual scoping meetings that were held Thursday, May 19, 2022, at 5:00 pm and Saturday, May 21, 2022, at 10:00 am. Following the scoping sessions, the comment period was open 45 days (versus the required 30 days). In addition to the required public agency notifications, public notifications were placed in the Los Angeles Times, a digital/internet marketing effort was

focused on areas around each location, and 17,247 postcards were mailed to all properties within a 750-foot radius around each location. During the scoping period, LACMTA received six (6) comments/responses from the public and government agencies. The NOP and details of the scoping meetings can be found at the project website:

<https://www.metro.net/projects/transportation-communication-network/>

An ongoing Tribal Consultation process pursuant to AB52 started in May 2022 and is an ongoing process through the continuation of the EIR. LACMTA received comments from the Gabrielino Band of Mission Indians- Kitz Nation and the Gabrielino Band of Mission Indians- Tongva Tribe. A Tribal Consultation was held in mid-July 2022, and another was held in early-August 2022.

The City has discretionary approval power over the Project through its adoption of an enabling ordinance. As part of the Project, the City must amend the City's sign regulations in Chapter I of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (the Zoning Code) to create a mechanism to review and approve the TCN Structures (Zoning Ordinance). The Zoning Ordinance would generally affect the location, design, operations, take-down program and community benefits of the TCN Structures. General digital display and illumination standards would be adopted to support the implementation of the TCN Structures. The Zoning Ordinance, and other potential associated Zoning Code and General and/or Specific Plan amendments would create a new class of signage for the TCN Structures given their unique attributes and intelligent technology. However, due to its inclusion of off-premise advertising, an exception to the City's general ban on new off-premise signs would be needed. On June 28, 2022, the City Council passed the motion to draft the ordinance and is currently in the discussion/drafting process with all parties.

DISCUSSION

The desired outcome is to produce a comprehensive communication network. Real Estate, ITS, Communications and LACMTA's consultant, All Vision, have been collaborating to implement a network of transportation communication digital displays that will promote efficient roadways, increase public transit ridership, improve public safety and provide revenue generation for transportation programs. The TCN will include the following elements:

1. Intelligent Transportation System, Travel Demand and Public Event Management. The TCN will be integrated with LACMTA's Regional Intelligent Information Transportation Systems (RIITS) that works in coordination with all of the major transportation agencies and bus lines such as Caltrans, the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), California Highway Patrol (CHP), Foothill Transit and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works to maximize the capacity and efficiency of the regional transportation network. The additional intelligent technology components will assist LACMTA in increasing the quantity and speed of data collection of real time travel/traffic data, processing and transmission to transit agencies. Real time data collection can support improved traffic signal timing information, micro-transit data and LACMTA vanpool on-demand services. The TCN will improve the bus rider's experience by helping to facilitate transit signal priority, bus Wi-Fi, and bus timing information that can be relayed to riders. The TCN can also support event congestion data for LAX, SoFi Stadium, Dodger Stadium, Hollywood Bowl and other large venues, including travel demand management services for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

2. Public Transit Promotion and LACMTA Communications. The TCN will assist LACMTA's transportation public messaging and ability to broadcast multilingual information in various creative ways to commuters to ensure public safety, maximize throughput of our congested road network, and promote public awareness of travel alternatives based on geography and time periods.

3. Public Safety and Emergency Messaging. The program will be incorporated into the multilingual alert information for the freeway messaging system and major arterial network for the region, including Earthquake Early Warning System information as well as Amber Alerts.

4. Transportation Technology Innovation Initiatives. The program structures will be designed to include live video and security feeds to supplement the limited number of existing cameras on the freeways and street corridors. It will also be designed to support future innovations such as autonomous vehicles, smart energy grids, and high-speed wireless cameras. It can support 5G technology, however, the CEQA analysis does not include 5G technology. If 5G antennas were to be added to the structures in the future, a separate CEQA analysis will be performed.

5. Revenue Generation for Transportation Projects. The digital displays in the TCN will allow off-site advertising. Revenue generated by this program will be utilized by LACMTA and the City to fund transportation programs.

Takedowns

The TCN could result in the removal of up to approximately 260 antiquated (and in some cases dilapidated) static billboard faces currently located throughout the County of LA (190 in the City of LA at 82 locations). Many of these locations have grandfathered legal status even though they are situated in residential zones and do not currently satisfy state and federal guidelines for outdoor advertising structures. The new modernized digital signs in the TCN will not be in residential zones and will comply with all current requisite federal, state and city guidelines. No structures will be placed in or within 200-feet of residential zones or will be oriented facing residential zones within a 200-foot distance.

EIR/Community Outreach

The Draft EIR was released on September 8 9, 2022 and includes the following technical reports:

- Lighting Study
- Air Quality, Energy, and Greenhouse Gas Modeling Analysis
- Biological Resources Report
- Architectural Historical Resources Report
- Geology and Soils Evaluation
- Hazards Technical Report

- Noise Analysis
- Transportation and Safety Review
- Tribal Cultural Resources Report

The report can be found at website: <https://www.metro.net/projects/transportation-communication-network/>

The community outreach program will conduct thorough and meaningful outreach to City of Los Angeles residents and businesses. This ensures that residents, business owners, neighborhood groups, and others have adequate and comprehensive opportunities to understand the program, ask questions about it, and provide their feedback.

All Vision, in partnership with LACMTA will coordinate two LACMTA led virtual community meetings tentatively scheduled for October 5 6 & 6 7, 2022, to explain the TCN program and the benefits to the community and City. This includes mailing to 17,247 mailboxes consisting of residents, property owners, and business owners within a 750 feet radius around each location.

All Vision, in partnership with LACMTA, will also deploy representatives to provide a presentation to the following groups:

L Neighborhood Councils:

- Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Coalition (LANCC)
- Westside Regional Alliance of Councils (WRAC)
- Valley Alliance of Neighborhood Councils (VANC)
- South LA Alliance of Neighborhood Councils (SLAANC)

Business Organizations:

- The Valley Industry & Commerce Association (VICA)
- Central City Association (CCA)

Community Based Organizations (CBOs):

- Community Coalition
- Pacoima Beautiful

Transportation Organizations:

- MoveLA
- Los Angeles Walks
- Transit Center
- TransformCA.

Labor:

- Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Council

In addition to soliciting feedback virtually through surveys, All Vision will engage in a digital outreach effort that utilizes social media, search, and geo-fenced targeting to provide opportunities for feedback and to ensure awareness of virtual and in-person community meetings.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The TCN will generate additional revenue. No capital expenditure by LACMTA is required. LACMTA's consultant, AllVision, is responsible for the upfront costs of the CEQA process, which will then be reimbursed from the future revenue stream, if the network is approved.

The number of structures is uncertain until the CEQA process is completed. Rough order of magnitude revenue estimates is between \$300-\$500 million over the initial 20-year term.

Impact to Budget

There is no impact to the Budget.

EQUITY PLATFORM

Communities have struggled with the blight of static billboards, which more often plague underserved communities and communities of color. TCN will help readjust this imbalance as it is taking down approximately 260 of static billboards countywide. Within the City of Los Angeles, 82 static billboard locations will be taken down, of which 47 (57%) are in Equity Focus Communities (EFCs). Of the 56 locations being studied in the EIR, 17 (30%) are in EFCs.

The MOA stipulates that the use of funds by the City be directed toward improving transportation, including projects that are consistent with LACMTA Vision 2028 Plan and complement existing City goals. The MOA also notes that projects may include those that promote pedestrian and cyclist safety in the general vicinity of transit stops and that benefit bus riders in the City, with a focus on low-income, persons of color in LACMTA's defined EFCs. Bus ridership in Los Angeles is disproportionately poor (median income of under \$18,000), Latinx, Black, or Indigenous, and essential service workers.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The TCN will yield enhanced communication and support, as well as revenues, resulting in:

- Goal 1: High quality mobility options for all
- Goal 3: Enhancing communities and lives
- Goal 4: Transform La County through collaboration and leadership.

NEXT STEPS

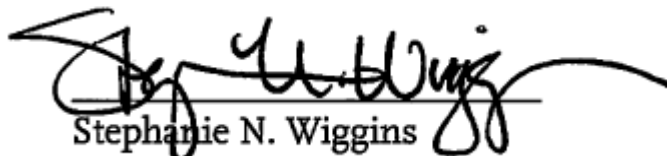
Upon conclusion of the 45-day public comment period, a Final EIR will be prepared to be presented to the Board for consideration of certification.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Billboard Locations from DEIR

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