

**Board Report**

File #: 2023-0404, **File Type:** Project**Agenda Number:** 20.

**CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE
OCTOBER 19, 2023****SUBJECT: CEQA ADDENDUM FOR THE EAST SAN FERNANDO VALLEY LIGHT RAIL
TRANSIT PROJECT****ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATION****RECOMMENDATION**

AUTHORIZE the Chief Executive Officer to approve the Addendum and adopt its Findings (Attachment A).

ISSUE

The East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor (ESFVTC) Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) has completed Certification by the Board in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Since Certification of the environmental document in December 2020, the project has undergone Preliminary Engineering to further develop the design of the project which has resulted in updates to the project description. The Summary of project description updates is included in the [CEQA Addendum <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/vc2or7j9v0gentbl9kzk4/ESFVTC_EIR-Addendum_v8.pdf?rlkey=cjeh66k0oz7kjjpdjw7y5m1s7&dl=0>](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/vc2or7j9v0gentbl9kzk4/ESFVTC_EIR-Addendum_v8.pdf?rlkey=cjeh66k0oz7kjjpdjw7y5m1s7&dl=0) (Attachment A).

BACKGROUND

In December 2020, the Metro Board certified the Final EIR for the ESFVTC Project, a 9.2-mile light rail project with 14 at-grade stations, from the Metro G Line (Orange) Van Nuys Station at the south, to the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station to the north. The Board also approved a 6.7-mile segment along Van Nuys Boulevard, from the Metro G Line (Orange) Van Nuys Station to an interim terminus station at Van Nuys Boulevard/San Fernando Road, as an initial operating segment (IOS). This segment is known as the ESFV Light Rail Transit Project (Southern Segment), and it includes 11 stations and one Maintenance and Storage Facility (MSF).

Since the Board's certification of the ESFVTC Final EIR in December 2020, the ESFV Light Rail Transit (Southern Segment) project team has refined the project design to accommodate and meet City of Los Angeles standards. A detailed description of the changes to the Project Description is provided in the attached Addendum to the EIR (Attachment A).

DISCUSSION

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Metro, as the CEQA lead agency and proponent for the Project, has completed an Addendum to the EIR and associated technical reports for the updated project elements. The addendum focuses on several potential design elements proposed by the preliminary design and engineering team. Some design elements of note include a refinement in acquisition needs for sites such as traction power substations (TPSS), train control bungalows (TCB), and temporary construction easements (TCE) as well as refinements to traffic and circulation during construction and operations.

The preliminary engineering team identified 4 new properties impacted by TPSS locations that were not previously indicated in the FEIR/EIS. These locations were selected based on a study conducted by Metro to increase the power supply to the LRT from 750 volts of direct current (vdc) to 810 (vdc). The overall total number of TPSS sites decreased from 11 to 10, but the TPSS sites needed to be relocated to accommodate the new power supply spacing requirements. Addresses for the newly identified properties can be found in the addendum.

Additionally, the preliminary engineering team identified 267 temporary construction easements (TCEs) not previously indicated in the FEIR/EIS. These locations could not be previously identified in the FEIR/EIS because the design was not advanced enough at the time a record of decision was provided for the project. These TCEs are for construction activity that will occur on sidewalks and driveways during the construction of the LRT. No long-term operational impacts are associated with the properties. Sharing the locations will help the community to be more informed on how their properties may be impacted once the LRT is under construction in region.

Mitigation measures for construction were identified in the FEIS/EIR to address construction and operational impacts from these above stated impacts. Further detail on additional project elements can be found in the addendum. If the Metro Board concurs with the findings of the Addendum to the EIR, thereby confirming the original CEQA environmental clearance, the Project will continue additional right-of-way acquisitions, utility relocation, and other construction activities. Upon completion of the environmental analysis of the design refinements, the preparation of an Addendum was completed in compliance with CEQA, the Addendum is not required to be circulated for public comment (Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 14 § 15164). Metro did provide presentations and collaborated on the design refinements described in the document with LADOT, LABOE, the CPUC, and DWP.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

This Board action will not have an adverse impact on safety standards for Metro.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Impact to Budget

The source of funds for this work is provided within the Preconstruction Budget for the East San Fernando Valley Light Rail Transit project. Funding sources for this project were approved as part of the Preconstruction Budget. No additional funds are required upon approval of this Addendum.

With Board approval of the Addendum, the CEQA process for minor project updates will be complete. It is anticipated that FTA will complete a Re-evaluation for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in November 2023, confirming that the original NEPA certification and ROD are sufficient for the minor updates to the project.

EQUITY PLATFORM

Board certification of the Project is consistent with the goals and objectives outlined in the Metro Equity Platform Framework in that the Project alignment is located in a disadvantaged, underserved community where access to premium transit service is limited. There is a high concentration of minority communities residing in the Project study area, including a significant concentration of Hispanic or Latino 71.7% (35% higher than the average for the City of Los Angeles and 24% higher than the County). Approximately 17.5% of the households in the study area are below the poverty level, which is 0.2% higher than the City and 3.5% higher than the County. The Project will provide residents with a direct connection to the Metro G Line as well as with Metrolink's Ventura and Antelope Valley Lines. The alignment will provide residents with premium transit service to access employment, health, and educational opportunities, which otherwise would be difficult to reach. The FLM Project component will promote equity and sustainability by connecting underserved neighborhoods to the Metro transit network. The community was included in the process of identifying the pedestrian, bicycling, landscaping, and other FLM enhancements that are included in the FLM Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The Project is consistent with the Metro Vision 2028 Strategic Plan goals by addressing key transportation challenges in the Project area, including growing travel demand, travel times, traffic congestion and limited connections to the regional rail system.

- The Project is aligned with Vision 2028 Goal #1 - Provide High Quality Mobility Options That Will Enable People to Spend Less Time Traveling. It will provide a high quality mobility option that will improve travel time, mobility, transit access, and connectivity to Metro's regional transit system. The Project area experiences heavy traffic congestion, slow speeds, and unreliable travel times along its major streets during peak travel periods. These conditions are expected to worsen over time. By 2040, the Project is expected to reduce travel time for transit

passengers from 48 minutes to approximately 30 minutes between the Metro G Line (Orange) Station and the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station. The ESFV Transit Corridor traverses several densely populated environmental justice communities. Many residents of these communities are transit-dependent. The Project is a major transit investment that will enhance mobility, access, and connectivity for ESFV communities and will reduce dependence on the automobile.

- The Project also supports Goal #3 - Enhance Communities through Mobility and Enhanced Access to Opportunity. It will connect communities in the San Fernando Valley to the regional Metro rail network.
- This Project will expand access to jobs, major activity centers, including educational and medical facilities, and recreational opportunities within the Project area and throughout the Los Angeles region.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board could elect not to approve the Addendum and minor project changes, however, this action is not recommended as it would jeopardize the feasibility of the Project and delay the project schedule. The Board awarded a contract for Phase I Preconstruction Services of the progressive design-build contract in February 2023. Delaying the Project would delay this effort and could impact securing a Full Funding Grant Agreement through the Federal Transit Administration Expedited Project Delivery pilot program.

NEXT STEPS

Upon Board approval, Project staff will work with the FTA to ensure the timely completion of the NEPA Re-evaluation and application for the FFGA.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - CEQA Addendum

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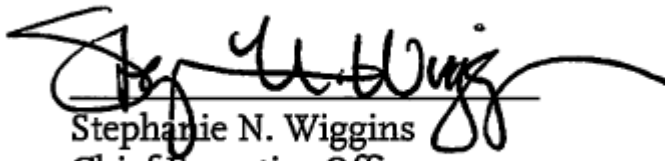
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