



Board Report

File #: 2023-0743, **File Type:** Project

Agenda Number: 12.

**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 14, 2024**

SUBJECT: LOS ANGELES AERIAL RAPID TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION

CONSIDER:

- A. APPROVING the Los Angeles Aerial Rapid Transit Project (“Project”) with Design Option A pursuant to Public Utilities Code (PUC) section 130252;
- B. CERTIFYING, in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) if the Board concludes that it satisfies the requirements of CEQA and reflects the Board’s independent judgment following CEQA Guidelines section 15090;
- C. ADOPTING, in accordance with CEQA, the:
 - 1. Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations setting forth the reasons and benefits of adopting the Final EIR with full knowledge that significant impacts may remain (Attachment A); and
 - 2. Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (Attachment B);
- D. AUTHORIZING the Chief Executive Officer to file a Notice of Determination (Attachment C) with the Los Angeles County Clerk and the State of California Clearinghouse.

ISSUE

Metro is the agency required by the Public Utilities Code to review for approval all plans proposed for public mass transit projects, including fixed guideway projects, in Los Angeles County. Approval of such projects allows Metro to perform its statutory duty to coordinate the efficient operation of public transportation services within the County.

The Project Sponsor, LA Aerial Rapid Transit Technologies LLC (LA ARTT), is proposing the Project,

which would connect Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS) to the Dodger Stadium property via a zero-emission, aerial gondola transit system along Alameda Street. The Project is a public mass transit guideway project, as it would operate at regular, scheduled operating hours and will be open to the general public, and is a fixed guideway. Therefore, Metro is the CEQA Lead Agency for this privately funded Project.

The Final EIR (inclusive of appendices and errata to the Final EIR) is located at <https://www.metro.net/projects/aerial-rapid-transit/> and has completed all necessary steps to be considered for certification by the Board in accordance with CEQA. Metro's approval at this point does not constitute final approval of the project nor does it supersede or eliminate the need for subsequent approvals required by the City of Los Angeles, State Parks Commission, Caltrans, or Metro to construct and operate the proposed Gondola Project.

BACKGROUND

The Project originated from the submission of an Unsolicited Proposal by Aerial Rapid Transit Technology LLC (ARTT) in April 2018 to fund/finance, design, construct, operate, and maintain the Project. The proposal included Metro as the CEQA Lead Agency.

Lead agency, as defined under CEQA, is the public agency that has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project that may have a significant effect on the environment. After evaluating the Project under the unsolicited proposal process, and given the PUC language, Metro determined that there was sufficient merit to move forward with a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with ARTT for the Project and to assume the roles as the Lead Agency.

The MOA between Metro and ARTT was executed in April 2019 and outlined responsibilities for preparing environmental documents, including Metro acting as the CEQA Lead Agency, ARTT fully reimbursing Metro for all staff and consultant time, and that no Metro funds would be used for the Project. Cities and counties are the CEQA lead agencies for private real estate developments, but this is the first time Metro has been a CEQA lead agency for a private transit developer. As CEQA lead agency it is Metro's responsibility to ensure the transparency, adequacy, and objectivity of the Draft and Final EIR, such that the EIR reflects Metro's independent judgment.

The Notice of Preparation (NOP) was released on October 1, 2020, and concluded on November 16, 2020. Project information was made available to the public online through a virtual "open house" accessible throughout the public review period, and an online virtual scoping meeting held on October 22, 2020.

Metro released the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Project on October 17, 2022, for a 60-day public review period ending on December 16, 2022. There were several requests to extend the public review period. Therefore, on November 15, 2022, Metro extended the public review period an additional 30 days for a 90-day public review period ending on January 17, 2023.

The Project Sponsor, LA ARTT was originally a subsidiary of ARTT. Under the terms of the MOA, ARTT may assign its rights and obligations under the MOA with Metro's written consent. ARTT proposed to donate LA ARTT and the Project to Zero Emissions Transit ("ZET"), a nonprofit and supporting organization to Climate Resolve, a California nonprofit public benefit corporation. ZET's

purposes include promoting and supporting zero-emissions transportation initiatives and other efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the transportation sector and to mitigate and adapt to changes in weather and climate. ARTT's proposed donation included ARTT's continued support of the Project with financial support and expertise, including maintaining its commitment to both reimburse Metro in its role and its funding for the EIR and other public agency approvals. ARTT will also continue to support and facilitate coordination with the Los Angeles Dodgers on ticketing and data sharing among the Project, Metro, and the Dodgers. After Metro completed its due diligence, Metro, ARTT, and ZET entered into an Assignment and Assumption Agreement, effective September 1, 2023, in which Metro consented to the assignment of ARTT's right and interest to ZET.

Metro released the Final EIR for the Project on December 4, 2023, making the document available on Metro's webpage and the Project's SB 44 website. Hard copies of the Final EIR, with flash drives of the appendices to the Final EIR, are also available at the Central Library, Chinatown Branch Library, Cypress Park Branch Library, and Metros' Dorothy Peyton Brey Library.

After further engagement with stakeholders subsequent to the Final EIR release, Metro prepared errata for the Final EIR. The errata did not alter the EIR's analysis or determinations.

DISCUSSION

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Metro, as the Lead Agency, in consultation with Responsible Agencies the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks), the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA), and the City of Los Angeles (the City) prepared the EIR in accordance with the requirements of the CEQA statute and guidelines, as amended (Public Resources Code, Section 21000-21178 and California Code of Regulations Title 14, Chapter 3 Section 15000-15387). The EIR is intended to assist Metro and the Responsible Agencies in making decisions regarding the approval of the Project.

Project Analyzed Under the EIR

The Project proposes to connect LAUS to Dodger Stadium property and the Elysian Park area via an aerial gondola system. The Project would also include an intermediate station at the southernmost entrance of the Los Angeles State Historic Park. The Project would provide an aerial rapid transit option for visitors to Dodger Stadium, while also providing additional access to the Dodger Stadium property, and the surrounding communities, including Chinatown, Mission Junction, Elysian Park, Solano Canyon, and the Los Angeles State Historic Park, from the regional transit system accessible at LAUS.

The aerial gondola system would traverse approximately 1.2 miles and consist of cables, three passenger stations, a non-passenger junction, towers, and gondola cabins. When complete, the Project would have a maximum capacity of approximately 5,000 people per hour per direction, and the travel time from LAUS to Dodger Stadium would be approximately seven minutes.

The Project would provide pedestrian improvements, including hardscape and landscape improvements, as well as amenities at the Los Angeles State Historic Park. The Project system has the ability to overcome grade and elevation issues between LAUS and Dodger Stadium and provide safe, zero-emission, environmentally friendly, and high-capacity transit connectivity in the Project area that would reduce GHG emissions as a result of reduced vehicular congestion in and around Dodger Stadium and on neighborhood streets, arterial roadways, and freeways. The Project would operate daily to serve existing residents, workers, park users, and visitors to Los Angeles.

Additional detail as to the Project Description is included in Attachment D, Project Description.

Project Objectives

By Section 15124(b) of the CEQA Guidelines, the following objectives were identified in the EIR:

- Expand mobility options for transit riders through a direct connection between LAUS and Dodger Stadium, a regional event center.
- Attract new transit riders to the Metro system through the unique experience of an aerial transit system connecting to Dodger Stadium.
- Improve the Dodger Stadium visitor experience by providing efficient, high-capacity, and faster alternative access to Dodger Stadium.
- Enhance the safety of neighborhoods adjacent to Dodger Stadium by reducing the number of vehicles in the area.
- Reduce transportation-related pollution and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as a result of reduced vehicular congestion in and around Dodger Stadium, on neighborhood streets, arterial roadways, and freeways during game and special event days.
- Increase connectivity of people to the region's public transportation hub at LAUS and the Dodger Stadium property.
- Improve transit rider experience by providing unique scenic views of the Los Angeles area to aerial rapid transit passengers and Dodger fans.
- Bring a world-class aerial transit system to the Los Angeles area.
- Enhance community connectivity by providing first/last mile transit and pedestrian access to areas that have historically been underserved, including the Los Angeles State Historic Park and Elysian Park.
- Identify comparable, affordable, and accessible fare opportunities for community and Los Angeles State Historic Park and Elysian Park access.
- Minimize the Project's environmental footprint through the integration of sustainability and environmentally friendly design features into the materials, construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed Project.
- Provide a sustainable form of transit by operating the ART system with the use of zero-emission electricity with battery storage backup to reduce GHG emissions and improve air quality.
- Maximize the Project's alignment along the public right-of-way and publicly owned property and minimize aerial rights over private properties, considering existing and future adjacent land uses.

Notice of Preparation, Scoping Meeting, and AB52 Consultation

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was prepared and distributed to notify agencies, organizations, and individuals that Metro planned to prepare a Draft EIR and to request input on the environmental analysis to be performed. The 45-day comment period began on October 1, 2020, and concluded on November 16, 2020 (46 days).

Project information was made available to the public online through two primary means: 1) a virtual "open house" website; and 2) an online virtual scoping meeting. The virtual open house was accessible to reviewing parties and the public throughout the 46-day public review period on Metro's project website. The NOP and Project fact sheet were posted on the virtual open house website and were provided in English, Spanish, and Chinese (Simplified). The virtual scoping meeting was held on October 22, 2020, with interpretation provided in English, Spanish, and Cantonese, and project materials provided in English, Spanish, and Chinese (Simplified). It included an overview of the Project, an overview of the CEQA process, and the Project timeline for environmental review. The public was also able to submit questions and comments during the online V meeting. Recordings of the scoping meeting in English, Spanish, and Cantonese, were posted on the Metro website.

A total of 305 comments, composed of 8 agency comments, 20 organization comments, 226 individual comments, and 51 comments during the online virtual scoping meeting, were received in response to the NOP. In addition, an estimated 741 individuals visited the virtual open house, and 75 individuals attended the online virtual scoping meeting. The NOP and the public comments received during the scoping period are included in Appendix A of the Draft EIR. The input received during the NOP period resulted in alterations to the Project. For example, there were initially two options offered for the Project alignment in the NOP. In response to State Park and Chinatown stakeholders, the alignment intermediate Chinatown/State Park Station near the southernmost entrance to the Los Angeles State Historic Park was the one selected to be studied in the Draft EIR. In addition to this significant modification, the Project stations were also redesigned to address public response to the initial design, by reducing the size by 26% and updating the architecture to better reflect the neighboring communities.

As part of the CEQA process, Assembly Bill 52 (2014) requires lead agencies to follow certain procedures to consult with Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the area of a project to identify and address potential adverse impacts on tribal cultural resources. Under AB 52, staff initiated the tribal consultation process in September 2020 and continued through September 2021. Metro received a response from the Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council, Fernandño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians, and the Kizh Nation. Consultations were held as requested via meetings and correspondence in November and December 2020, and April 2021. Metro completed the consultation process with the preparation of responses to comments on the Draft EIR.

Draft EIR Analysis

Below is a list of some of the key determinations that were included in the Draft EIR analysis:

- *No Impacts.* The Draft EIR found that the Project would result in no impacts on Mineral Resources.
- *Impacts Considered Less than Significant.* The Draft EIR found that the Project would result in less than significant impacts with no mitigation required for Aesthetics, Agriculture and Forestry Resources, Air Quality, Energy, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hydrology and Water Quality, Noise (Operational), Population and Housing, Parks and Recreational Facilities, and Wildfire.
- *Impacts Considered Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated.* The Draft EIR found that impacts to Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Land Use and Planning, Public Services, Transportation, Tribal Cultural Resources, and Utilities and Service Systems would be less than significant with mitigation measures incorporated.
- *Impacts Considered Significant and Unavoidable.* Based on the analysis contained in Section 3.0, Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation, of the Draft EIR, the Project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts concerning Noise and Vibration:
 - Construction Noise - Project-level and cumulative noise impacts to noise-sensitive receptors from on-site construction activities.
 - Construction Vibration - Project-level and cumulative human annoyance vibration impacts to adjacent sensitive receptors.

The Project would result in significant and unavoidable noise and vibration impacts only during the construction phase of the Project (anticipated to be two years), not during its operation.

Project Alternatives and Design and Use Options Evaluated in the EIR

Consistent with the requirements of CEQA, the EIR analyzed the following three alternatives:

- *No Project Alternative.* The No Project Alternative provides a comparison between the environmental impacts of implementing the Project in contrast to the result of not approving, or denying, the Project. Under this alternative, the Project would not occur, and the environment would remain in its existing condition. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would avoid potentially significant impacts to all environmental considerations and would have no impact. However, none of the benefits of the Project, including environmental benefits to air quality, energy, GHG emissions, hydrology, and water resources would be realized.
- *Spring Street Alignment Alternative.* The Spring Street Alignment Alternative would provide access between Dodger Stadium, the surrounding communities, and the regional transit system accessible at LAUS. The Spring Street Alignment Alternative would include three stations, a non-passenger junction, and four cable-supporting towers at various locations along the alignment. Although the Spring Street Alignment Alternative would be consistent with the Project Objectives, it would require a larger footprint than the Project within the Los Angeles State Historic Park. As such, the Spring Street Alignment Alternative would not meet

the following objective to the same extent as the Project, and therefore, is considered to be only partially consistent with Objective 11 to “Minimize the Project’s environmental footprint through the integration of sustainability and environmentally friendly design features into the materials, construction, operations, and maintenance of the proposed Project.”

- *Transportation Systems Management Alternative.* Under the Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Alternative, the Project would not be constructed, and instead, the existing Union Station Dodger Stadium Express service would be enhanced to determine if the DSE could increase the capacity of the Dodger Stadium Express similar to that of the Project. In order to meet service frequencies similar to the Project, a minimum of 6 buses loading simultaneously would be required, which cannot be physically accommodated in the existing location for the Union Station Dodger Stadium Express, and an off-site loading facility would need to be constructed to accommodate the new level of bus activity. Furthermore, the existing Dodger Stadium Express service operates up to 8 buses per hour, while the TSM Alternative would require 77 buses per hour. The TSM Alternative was identified as the “environmentally superior alternative” among the alternatives evaluated in the Draft EIR because it would avoid the Project’s significant and unavoidable impact with respect to construction noise and vibration without the need for mitigation and would reduce the range of impacts to the greatest extent. However, the TSM Alternative would not meet the majority of the Project’s Objectives in full or in part, such as providing a full-time, direct transit connection between LAUS and the Dodger Stadium property via a high-capacity aerial gondola system and improving connectivity for the surrounding communities by linking to the Los Angeles State Historic Park, Elysian Park, and the region’s rapidly growing regional transit system at LAUS.

As part of its consideration of the Project, the Board may determine whether the Alternatives are feasible, which would include an evaluation of whether and how each Alternative fulfills the Project objectives described above. The No Project Alternative would be unable to meet any of the Project objectives. The Spring Street Alignment Alternative would be consistent with the Project objectives but would require a larger footprint than the Project within the Los Angeles State Historic Park and is therefore only partially consistent with Objective 11. The TSM Alternative would not meet the majority of the Project’s objectives in full or in part.

Five design and use options were considered in the Draft EIR to explore potential variations to various Project components in response to public comments and stakeholder feedback. The five design and use options do not result in materially different impacts than the Project. It is proposed to approve Design Option A, which would shift the alignment between the Broadway Junction and Dodger Stadium further west from 451 E. Savoy Street so that the Project would not be over any single-family residential property. This shift would result in the alignment crossing over a small portion of property owned by Cathedral High School.

Staff recommends the Board approve the Project with Design Option A and adopt the Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations provided in Attachment A - Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations.

Community Outreach During Draft EIR Public Review Period and Pre-Final EIR Release

During the Draft EIR public review period, Metro held a total of eight public meetings immediately preceding, during, and immediately following, the 90-day Draft EIR public review period, including two community information sessions before the release of the Draft EIR. Following the release of the Draft EIR for public review, Metro held two informational workshops (one virtual and one in person), and four public hearings (two virtual and two in-person). All informational workshops and public hearings offered Spanish, Cantonese, and Mandarin interpretation. The final two public hearings also offered Taishanese interpretation. Metro also provided materials in English, Spanish, Chinese (Traditional), and Chinese (Simplified), both as printed materials at the in-person public meetings and electronically on Metro’s project webpage and the SB 44 website.

An estimated 715 attendees participated in the eight public meetings. Metro received 1,132 comments during the Draft EIR public review period via U.S. mail, the project email address, voicemail, and written and/or oral comments submitted at the four public hearings. Appendix A, Public Outreach Report, of the Final EIR, includes a detailed discussion of the Draft EIR public review period. Appendix B, Public Hearing Transcripts, and Appendix C, Public Comments on the Draft EIR, of the Final EIR, include copies of all public comments received on the Draft EIR. Section 6.0, Responses to Comments, of the Final EIR includes responses to all comments received on the Draft EIR.

Prior to the release of the Final EIR, Metro hosted two pre-Final EIR release public meetings to provide an update on the proposed Project, with one held virtually via Zoom webinar on November 30, 2023, and one held in person in the Project area at Metro Headquarters on December 2, 2023. Project materials and information were provided at both the in-person meeting and on Metro’s website in English, Spanish, Chinese (Traditional), and Chinese (Simplified). Interpretation was provided in English, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Taishanese.

A summary of concerns expressed during the EIR process, as well as a summary of the responses contained in the Final EIR, are included in the table below:

Key Comment Topics	Summary of Response in FEIR
The Project as public transportation/ eligible for SB44	The Project would be open to the general public for service at regular, scheduled operating times and it meets all requirements for sustainable projects under SB44
Ridership model	Model developed specifically for games/events at Dodger Stadium; Metro retained a separate firm to do a peer review which concluded that the model was appropriate;

Metro as the Lead Agency	PUC requires “all plans proposed for the design, construction, and implementation of public mass transit systems or projects” to be submitted to Metro for approval.
Visual Impacts	Aesthetic impacts of the Project are considered less than significant. There are no designated scenic vistas or resources and light/glare and shading impacts were less than significant under CEQA definitions. Existing and simulated views as well as shading diagrams are contained in Appendix C to the Draft EIR. The Project has committed to having components that will be inspired by adjacent neighborhood culture and history and to create opportunities to showcase local artists. The color schemes will be neutral and complementary with their surrounding area.
LA State Historic Park impacts	Project Station will have a footprint of 2,195 square feet of the total 32-acre park with approximately 60,000 additional square feet of aerial clearance 26 - 53 feet above the ground; the Project would need to obtain an amendment to the General Plan. The project will provide additional amenities to Park.
Homeless Housing/Community Development Impacts	The project does not prevent community development projects along the proposed route. At N. Alameda and Main Streets, the proposed project would utilize a portion of the site constrained by Metro’s Railroad Right of Way. At N. Alameda and Alpine Streets, the proposed project would have a minimal impact on space currently designated as recreational space to support the development.
Improper segmentation for future development of Dodger Stadium property	The Project does not include other development and no applicant has applied for other development

Range of Alternatives and Design Options	EIR included No Project alternative and enhanced Dodger Stadium Express. The enhanced Dodger Stadium Express would require an increase from 8 bus trips per hour to 77 bus trips in order to match the gondola capacity.
Signage and Lighting	No digital signage on the exterior of cabins; Project lighting is low-level for security and wayfinding
Parking, Funding, and Community Benefits	These are not EIR topics, however, in the interest of transparency were responded to in the Final EIR. More information is provided in the Additional Project Information section below.
Visual Impacts	

Additional Project Information

Although not required under CEQA, the following additional work was done in response to comments and questions raised during the public comment period:

Parking: A comprehensive station area parking study was conducted for the Alameda Station adjacent to Union Station and the Chinatown/State Park Station at the southernmost entrance of the Los Angeles State Historic Park. The study evaluated existing parking conditions in the study area and the proposed Project’s potential to affect parking conditions around the Alameda Station and Chinatown/State Park Station. The methodology for the parking study was developed in coordination with Metro’s Parking Management group and LADOT. The parking study determined there would be an adequate supply of parking in the study area after accounting for the peak demand of the proposed Project. The parking study recommends that the proposed Project prepare, in collaboration with the City, and with robust feedback from community stakeholders, a parking management plan prior to commencing operations. The City would implement any on-street parking management strategies identified.

Transportation Peer Review: Metro independently retained Stantec to peer review the Draft EIR Transportation section, Appendix N to the Draft EIR (Ridership Model Development), and the Non-CEQA Transportation Assessment prepared by Fehr & Peers. Stantec is an international engineering firm with extensive expertise in transportation planning and implementation. Stantec reviewed the model inputs and data sources and concluded that the model input sources are credible, defensible, and appropriate for use in the analysis, that they agreed with the ridership forecasts in the Draft EIR, that the methodology and assumptions used to calculate Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) appear conservative and logical and that the Non-CEQA Transportation Assessment was appropriate and reasonable.

Community Benefits: In addition to improved air quality and accessible and affordable fares to residents and employees of businesses in the adjacent communities, LA ARTT has committed to local job creation, workforce training, and small business support and partnerships. LA ARTT is also looking at several improvements along the alignment to enhance pedestrian safety and provide active transportation connectivity. More detail is

contained in Attachment E. LA ARTT will be providing a Community Access Plan that allows residents, employees, and businesses located close to the proposed Project (see Attachment F) to ride the gondola using their Metro system access pass or individual fare to also utilize the system at no additional cost, outside of game and event-day periods. In addition, Dodger fans with a game ticket will ride the gondola for free. It is anticipated that the City of Los Angeles, Caltrans, and State Parks entitlement and permitting processes will continue to help define potential community benefits.

Costs and Financial Analysis: The Project's capital costs to construct are estimated at \$385 - \$500 million and assume prevailing wages pursuant to a Project Labor Agreement. The primary source of capital funding for the Project is bond financing, serviced by revenue from the Project. The primary sources of revenue for the Project are farebox revenues and naming rights sponsorship revenue. Annual operations and maintenance costs are projected at approximately \$8 - 10 million per year (including capital reserve funds) and assume prevailing wages. Operation and maintenance costs are proposed to be fully funded out of Project revenues. The Project is not seeking Metro funding. No public sources of funding have been sought or committed to the Project.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Metro is reimbursed for all of its time and consultant costs through advanced deposits made by ARTT. About 10 to 12 Metro staff from Countywide Planning and Development, Community Relations, and County Counsel have worked on the Project on an as-needed basis. Staff hours billed on this Project from June 2019 to November 2023 total slightly over 3,340 hours. When the Metro costs incurred reach 75% of the deposit amount, ARTT makes an additional deposit. As of November 2023, Metro has billed approximately \$960,000 to ARTT to reimburse Metro staff time and consultants, and ARTT has provided Metro with \$1,100,000 in deposits. ARTT has met its obligations under the MOA to reimburse Metro for its expenses in connection with the Project. In addition, it has committed all funds needed to complete the Project's environmental review and entitlement process. No Metro funding will be used for the Project. If the Project continues to move forward, Metro time will continue to be reimbursed.

Impact to Budget

There is no impact on the Budget.

EQUITY PLATFORM

A major purpose of the Project is to reduce congestion from existing vehicle trips in connection with Dodger games and special events at the Stadium, leading to reduced GHG emissions and improved air quality. By taking vehicles off the road, the proposed Project would reduce VMT, providing GHG emissions benefits and increased access in the area between LAUS and Dodger Stadium. The Project would increase transit access in a community burdened by pollution, offering emissions reduction benefits for an area that includes disadvantaged communities identified by CalEnviroScreen 4.0 as in the top 90 - 100 percent of California communities burdened by pollution. The Project can also provide additional access to recreation and parks. In addition to benefiting the immediate area along the alignment, these reductions in VMT and GHG emissions would further the objectives to reduce carbon emissions to benefit the region.

The Project would provide a daily, high-capacity aerial rapid transit connection between the regional transit system at LAUS, Dodger Stadium, Los Angeles State Historic Park, Elysian Park, and surrounding communities via the intermediate Chinatown/State Park Station. The ability to use the vast majority of the Park would not be affected by the Project. The Project has been designed to provide additional benefits to the Los Angeles State Historic Park, including pedestrian improvements between Metro's L Line (Gold) and the park, and integration of the Chinatown/State Park Station into the southern boundary of the park with hardscape and landscape enhancements, a mobility hub, and other park amenities including concessions, restrooms, and a breezeway connecting the concessions and restrooms. The Community Access IPlan will allow residents and employees located within the Community Access Plan Area (see Attachment F) to utilize their Metro system access pass or individual fare to also utilize the system at no additional cost, outside of game and event-day periods. This will increase convenience for first/last mile connections for nearby residents and employees. Some communities within the Community Access Fare area, including William Mead Homes, have families with a median household income of <\$20,000 per year.

The Project will not displace housing, prevent planned housing, or preclude the development of future uses, including housing, grocery stores, and/or healthcare facilities in the surrounding communities.

The Project partnered with several community organizations for successful information sharing and feedback. As a privately proposed project, there was no requirement for the Project to utilize Metro's Community Based Organization partnering strategy, but the Project Sponsor adopted the goals and spirit of the policy.

Project commitments above what is required by CEQA are contained in Attachment E. The entitlement and permitting process will continue to help define potential community benefits.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The proposed Project aligns with Strategic Plan Goal 1: Provide high-quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling without utilizing Metro funding. The Project has the potential to provide an efficient mobility alternative for people to travel to Dodger Stadium car-free.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board could choose to approve another project alternative analyzed in the EIR. This is not recommended for the reasons discussed above in "Alternatives and Design and Use Options." The proposed Project best meets the Project Objectives while minimizing environmental impacts. Alternatively, the Board could choose to disapprove and reject both build alternatives and TSM, and instead approve the No Project alternative, in which case there would be no need at this time to certify the EIR, adopt findings and the mitigation and monitoring report, or file a notice of determination. This is not advised since the rejection of all build alternatives and failure to certify the EIR might impede the Project Sponsor's ability to obtain required approvals from other government agencies and would not advance Metro's Strategic Plan Goal 1 to provide high-quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling without utilizing Metro funding.

NEXT STEPS

Metro Board's certification of the EIR and approval of the Project would provide the environmental clearance as needed to seek the potential discretionary entitlements, reviews, and approvals required for the implementation of the Project. The Project Sponsor would commence the public processes for these additional discretionary entitlements, reviews, and approvals from the City of Los Angeles, California State Parks, and the California Department of Transportation, each of which includes additional community outreach and engagement. Metro's involvement in that process would be minimal and related to its real estate rights for Union Station and the A-line. The MOA remains in effect, including reimbursement of Metro time and expenses, until all Metro/LAART transaction documents are completed (including rights at Union Station)

The Project Sponsor anticipates that community benefit agreements will be developed in connection with these additional governmental discretionary entitlements, reviews, and approvals. The Project Sponsor would then commence the permitting process for the Project, including permits required from Metro, the City of Los Angeles, California State Parks, Caltrans, and Cal/OSHA and/or other agencies with jurisdiction.

Following all discretionary entitlement, review, and approval processes, the Project Sponsor would return to the Board at a later date to update the Board on the Project's resultant community benefit agreements through all processes and address the additional Metro approvals required to construct and operate the Project, including the necessary real property and operating agreements required for the Project.

ATTACHMENTS

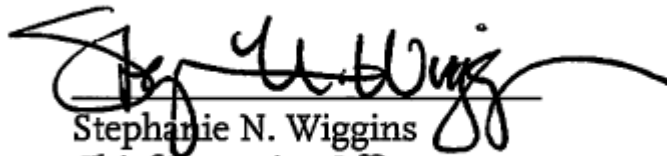
Attachment A - Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations
Attachment B - Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
Attachment C - Notice of Determination
Attachment D - Map of Proposed Project
Attachment E - Project Commitments
Attachment F - Community Access Plan

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