



Board Report

File #: 2016-0731, Version: 1

PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 16, 2016
CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 17, 2016

SUBJECT: AIRPORT METRO CONNECTOR 96TH STREET TRANSIT STATION PROJECT

ACTION: CERTIFY FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT AND RELATED ACTIONS

RECOMMENDATION

CONSIDER:

- A. APPROVING the **Airport Metro Connector (AMC) 96th Street Transit Station Project** which will add a new Metro rail station to the Crenshaw/LAX Line at 96th Street;
- B. CERTIFYING the Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR). Attachment A contains the Project Overview. The Final EIR is available upon request or at www.metro.net/projects/lax-extension <<http://www.metro.net/projects/lax-extension>>;
- C. ADOPTING the:
 - 1. Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP) (Attachment B); and
 - 2. Findings of Fact (Attachment C)
- D. AUTHORIZING the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to file the Notice of Determination (NOD) (Attachment D) with the Los Angeles County Clerk and State of California Clearinghouse; and
- E. RECEIVING AND FILING the quarterly project status report including architectural and engineering design services and coordination with the Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) and the Crenshaw/LAX Project, as directed by the Metro Board in July 2014 (Attachment E).

ISSUE

Metro staff coordinated extensively with the Crenshaw/LAX and Southwestern Yard projects as well as LAWA's Landside Access Modernization Program (LAMP) in preparing the EIR for the Project. The Project will provide an improved connection between the regional transit system and LAX as well as the surrounding area. With Metro as the lead agency, the Metro Board must approve the Project and

certify the Final EIR; adopt the MMRP and Findings of Fact; and authorize the CEO to file the NOD. The Project is one of the 12 transit projects in Measure R and is included in Measure M on the November 8th ballot.

The Board is also being requested to receive and file the quarterly status report on the Project including updates on the architectural and engineering design services and coordination with the LAWA and the Crenshaw/LAX Project.

DISCUSSION

Background

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that the lead agency balance, as applicable, the economic, social, technological, and other benefits of the project against its unavoidable impacts when considering project approval. CEQA Guidelines Section 15091(a) states that if the specific economic, legal, social, technological or other benefits of the project outweigh the unavoidable adverse effects, those effects may be considered acceptable. The Final EIR determined that the Project would not cause any significant unavoidable impacts. The one potentially significant impact is associated with hazardous soil conditions at the Project site. This can be mitigated to less than significant levels with incorporation of mitigations.

Sections 21086.6 and 21081 of the California Public Resources Code require that public agencies approving a project with an EIR adopt an MMRP and Findings of Fact. The purpose of the MMRP is to ensure that the mitigation measures identified in the Final EIR that mitigate the potentially significant environmental effects of the Project are, in fact, properly carried out. The Lead Agency must also include a Findings of Fact that a MMRP has been prepared and provides a satisfactory program that would ensure avoidance or sufficient reduction of the significant effects of the project. Metro staff is responsible for assuring full compliance with the provisions of the MMRP and Findings of Fact.

In June 2014, the Board approved the AMC 96th Street Transit Station as the preferred alternative for connecting the Metro rail system to LAX and staff initiated work on the Draft EIR. In July 2014, the Board authorized the design and construction of accommodations on the Crenshaw/LAX line so as not to impact the operation of that Line. In July 2015, the Board awarded the architectural and engineering design services contract for the station.

Community Outreach

A community outreach program was conducted throughout the environmental planning phase of the Project. The Public Scoping meeting was held on February 23, 2015 to initiate the public engagement process. The Draft EIR was released on June 22, 2016 for a 46-day public review period (June 22, 2016 to August 6, 2016). The public hearing to accept comments on the Draft EIR was held on July 13, 2016 with 45 community members and stakeholders in attendance. During the public hearing, 10 attendees provided public testimony on topics including the future of the LAX City Bus Center, impacts to Metro Green Line service and stations, Arbor Vitae Street at-grade railroad crossing, parking in neighboring communities, project funding, bicycle access to the station, and escalator and elevators capacities. The public comment period closed on August 6, 2016 with 74

comments received via letters, Facebook, Twitter and email. Copies of all public testimony and comments, along with responses, have been included in the Final EIR. Following the release of the Final EIR, notices were sent to those who commented on the Draft EIR.

Coordination with LAWA

Staff worked extensively with LAWA representatives to coordinate the respective environmental efforts for both the Project and LAMP, which are on parallel schedules. LAWA provided Metro with existing and projected traffic data to help ensure that both the separate and independent projects are fully synchronized. Staff consulted with LAWA staff on public comments related to LAWA's LAMP which were submitted as part of the Project Draft EIR review period. On September 15, 2016, LAWA released its Draft EIR for the LAMP for a 45-day public review period and held two public hearings to accept comments on October 15 and October 19, 2016. The public comment period is scheduled to close on November 15, 2016.

Project Definition

The Project components, as described below, would be linked together by a continuous system of elevated walkways.

- Three LRT platforms would be located at the southwestern portion of the project site to serve the Crenshaw/LAX Line and a northern service extension of the Metro Green Line;
- A bus facility would include up to 20 active bus bays and up to 18 layover bus bays. The bus plaza will consolidate 13 Metro and municipal bus routes currently serving the LAX City bus center and/or the Aviation/LAX Transit center. The bus plaza would include pedestrian amenities such as restrooms, a lounge for bus operators, and other support services;
- A bicycle hub would accommodate up to 150 bicycles in a secure, indoor environment. Additional space for up to 50 bicycles would be provided for short-term parking. Amenities associated with the bicycle hub may include a repair area, a multi-use space, showers and lockers;
- A passenger pick-up and drop-off area would be provided for passengers arriving and departing by automobile; and
- A Metro Hub would link the multiple modes of transit on the second level of the Project. It would serve as the area of transition for all passengers. The design is exploring the inclusion of a security office, food/beverage/convenience/retail kiosk-type spaces, passenger amenities, artwork and information.

Quarterly Status Update

Architectural and Engineering Design Services

Work continues on the schematic design that was initiated in July 2016. Staff continues to work with LAWA on coordinating the Project elements and station design guidelines as identified in the approved June 2014 Metro Board motion (Attachment F) with their Automated People Mover which is on a parallel design and environmental clearance path.

Crenshaw/LAX Design Accommodations

In June 2016, the Board approved issuing a Contract Modification for Walsh/Shea Corridor Constructors (WSCC) to begin construction of the AMC accommodations in an amount not to exceed \$7,400,000. Currently, the civil design is 100% complete, systems design is 90% complete and train control design is approximately 55% complete. The contractor has begun construction of the accommodations on the Crenshaw/LAX line. Staff continues to negotiate with WSCC to reach an agreement on schedule and cost impacts of the accommodations. Staff will return to the Board for change authorization when the direct costs and time impact negotiations are complete. In addition to the design and construction costs, there will be Metro administrative and construction management costs associated with any schedule impacts.

Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) Grants

In April 2016, staff submitted an application for a TIRCP grant for the Project. In August, 2016, the California State Transportation Agency announced the award of \$40 million in TIRCP funds to the Project. The TIRCP program is funded by Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund proceeds under the Cap and Trade Program.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

The development of the Project followed Metro adopted policies. The approval will have no impact on the safety of our customers and/or employees.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The FY17 budget includes \$1,930,000 for the Project in Cost Center 4350 (Transit Corridors Planning), Project 460303 (AMC), Account 50316 (Professional Services). Since this is a multi-year contract, the cost center manager and the Chief Planning Officer, Countywide Planning, will be accountable for budgeting the cost in future years.

Impact to Budget

The source of funds is Measure R 35% Transit Capital dollars specifically earmarked for the Project. As such, there is no impact to bus and rail capital or operating dollars. In addition, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) and TIRCP, as part of the Cap-and-Trade Program, funding is also available for this project. The CMAQ funds were previously approved by the Metro Board and are included in approved grants. For this reason, the CMAQ funds cannot be redirected to bus or rail capital or operating uses. TIRCP funds were competitively allocated by the State of California specifically for the AMC project.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board could defer approving the Project, certifying the Final EIR, and adopting the MMRP and Findings of Fact. This alternative is not recommended as it would impact the schedule and would not be consistent with prior Board direction to accelerate completion of the Project.

NEXT STEPS

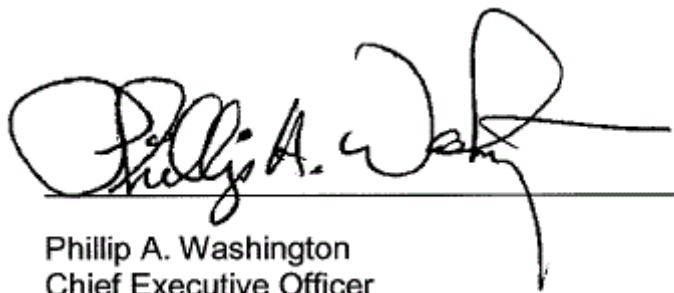
Upon Board approval, staff will file the NOD with the Los Angeles County Clerk and the State of California Clearinghouse. Staff will continue working with the Federal Transit Administration to prepare the Categorical Exclusion (CE) for the Project in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. Staff anticipates completing the CE in early 2017. Staff will also work with the state to execute the TIRCP grant agreement. Staff will continue to closely coordinate with LAWA staff and the Crenshaw/LAX project on station design and pre-construction activities.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Project Overview
Attachment B - Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
Attachment C - Findings of Fact
Attachment D - Notice of Determination
Attachment E - July 2014 Metro Board Motion
Attachment F - June 2014 Metro Board Motion

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