

**Board Report**

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Agenda Number: 26.

**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
APRIL 19, 2017**

SUBJECT: RAIL TO RAIL/RIVER ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR PROJECT

**ACTION: ADOPT THE RAIL TO RAIL/RIVER ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR
PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS**

RECOMMENDATIONS

CONSIDER:

- A. ADOPTING the **Rail to Rail Active Transportation Corridor (ATC) Project** - Segment A Preliminary Design (Attachment A); the findings of the environmental analysis that the project qualifies for CEQA Categorical Exemption under Section 15307 (Class 4) Minor Alterations to Land; and file the Notice of Exemption (NOE) (Attachment B);
- B. ADOPTING the Rail to River ATC - Segment B Locally Preferred Alternative, Randolph Street Alternative, as described in the Alternative Analysis (AA) (Attachment C) and advance into the Environmental Review/Clearance and Preliminary Design phase after more refined cost estimates for Segment A are developed from 30% design documents.

ISSUE

In June 2016, a twelve-month contract was awarded to Cityworks Design for the environmental review, clearance and 30% Preliminary Design for the Rail to Rail ATC - Segment A. The Project team completed Preliminary Design for the Rail to Rail ATC - Segment A which includes conceptual designs for the length of the corridor. In addition, an environmental analysis was completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Metro serves as the CEQA Lead Agency and has final approval of plans and environmental documents. Board adoption of Recommendation A for the Rail to Rail/River ATC Project - Segment A Preliminary Design, acceptance of the findings for the environmental analysis and authorization to file the NOE for Segment A is being requested.

In June 2016, a nine-month contract was awarded to Evan Brooks Associates for an AA to determine the preferred alternative route for Segment B. The AA was completed in March 2017 using evaluation criteria consistent with overall project goals and objectives. Board adoption of Recommendation B for the AA Rail to River - Segment B findings, which includes the identification of the Randolph Street Alternative as the Locally Preferred Alternative, is being requested.

DISCUSSION

BACKGROUND

In October 2014, upon Metro Board direction, the Rail to River Intermediate Active Transportation Corridor Feasibility Report was completed and it concluded that the corridor was feasible along the Metro-owned Harbor Subdivision. Two segments emerged from the Feasibility Study: Rail to Rail ATC - Segment A and Rail to River ATC - Segment B. Combined, the Rail to Rail/River ATC spans approximately 10 miles in length.

The Rail to Rail ATC - Segment A is an approximately 6-mile Class I bicycle and pedestrian path running along the Metro-owned Harbor Subdivision alignment connecting the future Metro Crenshaw/LAX Line (Fairview Heights Station) with the Metro Silver Line (Slauson Station) and the Metro Blue Line (Slauson Station). Environmental analysis was completed in March 2017 and 30% Preliminary Design is scheduled to be completed June 2017. The Rail to Rail ATC - Segment A primarily consists of Metro-owned 30' cross-section right-of-way (ROW) and includes a 12' bi-directional bicycle path, a 7' pedestrian path, landscape/safety buffers and drainage swales with bioinfiltration. There are also areas where the Metro-owned ROW exceeds 30' and are identified as opportunity sites designed to include open space, landscaping and active transportation infrastructure to enhance mobility and safety.

The Rail to River ATC - Segment B AA was conducted. An Alternatives Evaluation Methodology was developed and utilized as evaluation criteria to each of the four alternatives: Malabar Corridor (B-1), Utility Corridor (B-2), Slauson Avenue (B-3) and Randolph Street (B-4). The evaluation criteria were consistent with the overall goals and objectives of enhancing mobility/connectivity and access to major destinations, minimizing transportation impacts, improving cost effectiveness/ease of implementation and addressing local/regional communities. The Randolph Street Alternative (B-4) scored the highest overall when compared to the other three alternatives, but did score the lowest on the cost effectiveness/ease of implementation as it has a higher cost of implementation and would require an easement from Union Pacific and local jurisdiction cooperation. The Randolph Street Alternative (B-4) has the support from the local jurisdictions (Los Angeles County, Huntington Park, Vernon, Bell and Maywood).

Comprehensive outreach was conducted as part of the development of both Segment A and Segment B. Mailings were sent out to 58,000 households and 70,000 brochures distributed on 30 bus lines, 45 schools and 90 organizations to better inform the public. Social media awareness and live broadcasting of community meetings were conducted and contributed to greater participation at community meetings. The Technical Advisory Committees (TAC) for Segment A and Segment B have provided technical input from the various internal departments within Metro and external agencies (jurisdictions, bureaus/departments, LAPD, LAC Sheriff, LAC Fire Department, Caltrans D7). The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) was established as a combined Segment A and Segment B committee and is represented by various community-based organizations/ Los Angeles City Neighborhood Councils throughout the length of the corridor. The CAC has provided input/feedback on the project, circulated information, handed out surveys and engaged the community throughout the process of the project.

Findings

CEQA COMPLIANCE

Under the state CEQA Guidelines, Section 15304, the Project is categorically exempt from CEQA. This CEQA exemption applies to projects, such as the Rail to Rail Active Transportation Corridor - Segment A, which consist of minor alterations in the condition of land which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees and where there is no reasonable possibility that the project will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. The Project will create bicycle lanes and a pedestrian/multi-purpose path within the existing street and public ROW. The Project will not have a significant, adverse effect on traffic, air quality, noise, and historical or other resources. Since projects of this type involving only minor alterations to land do not generally have a significant effect on the environment, they are declared by the state to be categorically exempt from the requirement for the preparation of environmental documents.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

The Board actions will not have any impact on safety impacts on Metro employees and patrons.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The FY17 budget includes \$2.85 million for the Rail to Rail/River ATC Project: (1) Segment A 30% Preliminary Design and environmental analysis; (2) Segment B Alternative Analysis; and (3) Outreach for both Segment A and Segment B, in Cost Center 4360 (Active Transportation), Project 405509 (Rail to River Bikeway Feasibility). Since this is a multi-year project, the cost center manager and Chief Planning Office will be responsible for budgeting the cost of future years, including any phase (s) the Board authorizes to be exercised.

Impact to Budget

The source of funds is Measure R Admin 1.5% which is not eligible for bus and rail operating and capital expenditures. Development of the Life-of-Project budget will be established after the completion of the procurement process.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board may choose not to adopt the Rail to Rail/River ATC project, findings of the environmental analysis, and selection of the Locally Preferred Alternative. This alternative is not recommended, as it is not in line with previous Board direction.

NEXT STEPS


Upon Board adoption and authorization, the NOE will be filed, and the Rail to River ATC - Segment B will advance into the environmental analysis/30% Preliminary Design.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Rail to Rail - Segment A Preliminary Design
Attachment B - Rail to Rail - Segment A Notice of Exemption
Attachment C - Rail to River - Segment B Alternative Analysis

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