



## Board Report

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### AD-HOC CONGESTION, HIGHWAY AND ROADS COMMITTEE

APRIL 19, 2017

### PLANNING & PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE

APRIL 19, 2017

**SUBJECT: I-710 SOUTH CORRIDOR PROJECT EIR/EIS UPDATE**

**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE **I-710 South Corridor Project EIR/EIS update** report.

#### **ISSUE**

The I-710 South Corridor Project is approaching a major milestone, the recirculation of the draft environmental document, in June 2017. The Project alternatives have been revised to reflect community and agency input received during the first circulation of the draft environmental document in 2012 and Metro Board Motion 22.1 (2015), which added primarily non-freeway improvements to the Project and several mitigation and policy considerations. The Project Team has included all scope elements added by Motion 22.1 in the revised Project description and completed all the additional technical evaluations required. Mitigations and policy considerations contained in the Motion will be evaluated in future Project phases as appropriate. Staff is currently establishing the channels by which these elements will be addressed.

Upon completion of the public circulation period, the Project Team will develop a recommendation on a Preferred Alternative and an Initial Phasing Plan. These recommendations will be based on community input, funding availability, and a robust technical analysis of the costs and benefits of each alternative. The recommendations will be vetted through the I-710 advisory committees before being brought to the Metro Board in January 2018. Staff anticipates completing the Final EIR/EIS by summer 2018. In anticipation of potential funding opportunities, staff has developed a series of “early action” project concepts which have been included in Metro’s Measure M Expenditure Plan.

#### **DISCUSSION**

##### **Background**

The I-710 South study area encompasses an 18-mile long corridor that extends from Ocean Blvd. in Long Beach to State Route 60. The I-710 South is a vital transportation artery linking the Ports of Los

Angeles and Long Beach to major origins and destinations in Southern California and beyond. As a result of population growth, cargo container growth, increasing traffic volumes, and aging infrastructure, the I-710 South experiences serious congestion and safety issues. Among the major concerns in the corridor are higher than average truck accident rates, the projected growth in the study area, and effects of recurring congestion and diesel emissions on air quality in the surrounding communities. The I-710 South project seeks to improve mobility, safety, air quality, public health, and accommodate projected growth.

A Draft EIR/EIS circulated on June 28, 2012 evaluated four build alternatives, three of which included a grade-separated freight corridor. Close to 3,000 comments were received as part of the circulation. Community Alternative 7 (CA-7) was proposed by the Coalition for Environmental Health and Justice (CEHAJ) as a build alternative to be studied in the Draft EIR/EIS. CEHAJ consists of several environmental and community organizations including Communities for Better Environment, Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, Natural Resources Defense Council, East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice, Physicians for Social Responsibility, and Coalition for Clean Air, among others. Under CA-7, CEHAJ proposed no additional general purpose lanes, a separate 4-lane elevated freight corridor restricted for use by zero emission trucks, no new right-of-way acquisition, an aggressive strategy to improve public transit via rail and bus in the I-710 Corridor, comprehensive regional active transportation improvements, comprehensive construction mitigation program, and extensive community benefits programs, and requested that CA-7 be studied in a Recirculated Draft Environmental Impact Report/Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (RDEIR/SDEIS).

In early 2014, the Project Team began working with the various I-710 advisory committees to present the work accomplished to date (traffic forecasting and alternatives development) and to further refine the preliminary build alternatives and geometric concepts. By mid-2014, the following two Build Alternatives were presented to the I-710 advisory committees for inclusion in the RDEIR/SDEIS (Attachment A):

Alternative 5C - Widen I-710 to 5 mixed flow lanes in each direction plus improvements at I-710/I-405 (including truck by-pass lanes), I-710/SR-91, I-710/I-5 and every local interchange between Ocean Blvd. and SR-60.

Alternative 7 - Two dedicated lanes (in each direction) for clean technology trucks from Ocean Blvd. in Long Beach to the intermodal railroad yards in Commerce/Vernon, plus improvements at I-710/I-405, I-710/SR-91, I-710/I-5 and every local interchange between Ocean Blvd. and SR-60.

### Board Motion 22.1

After extensive coordination and collaboration with a variety of stakeholders, the Board approved Motion 22.1 in October 2015. This Motion directed staff to evaluate certain CA-7 scope elements under Alternatives 5C and 7 in the I-710 Corridor Project EIR/EIS, and to report back in 60 days. The additional scope elements included the evaluation of bikeway and pedestrian improvements, right-of-way avoidance design options, additional transit service analysis and additional mitigation concepts (see Attachment B for the Motion language). Three independent bikeway projects were also recommended for study outside the EIR/EIS and staff was directed to come back with recommendations on how to fund those studies.

At the January 2016 meeting, the Board authorized the Chief Executive Officer to execute a contract modification to provide additional funds (\$3,729,598) required to complete the additional work specified in Motion 22.1

Between January and December 2016, the Project Team worked with Caltrans, Metro Transit Operations Planning, LA County Department of Public Works, US Army Corps of Engineers, Air Quality Management District, Gateway Cities COG, the corridor cities, Southern California Edison, LA Department of Water and Power and other stakeholders to develop designs, engineering plans, and cost estimates for every item added to the scope of the Project through Motion 22.1. The culmination of this effort was the completion of a fully-revised Project description, which incorporates Motion 22.1 in its entirety. Since October of 2016, the Project Team has been presenting the Project description revisions and updates to the I-710 advisory committees, highlighting Motion 22.1 elements.

The implementation of some scope elements of Motion 22.1 will fall outside of the jurisdiction of Caltrans or Metro. For example, LA River Bike Path improvements will have to be implemented by the owner of the facility, Los Angeles County. In such cases, Metro staff has initiated discussions with the appropriate agencies to ensure there is an implementation path beyond the environmental clearance of the I-710 Project.

Besides the elements being added to the Project's scope, Motion 22.1 also directed staff to evaluate various policy proposals and possible mitigation measures during construction (e.g. subsidized transit operations in the Project study area during construction). The execution of these tasks will take place during future phases of the project. Nevertheless, Metro staff has initiated the creation of oversight groups that will ensure the continuation and eventual completion of these tasks.

A detailed description of the work performed by the Project Team to revise the Project Description and a description of next steps for every item in Motion 22, including elements to be implemented by others and proposals for future phases of the project, is provided in Attachment C.

#### Recirculation, Project Approval Process and Early Action Projects

The revised Project Description was used to complete all the technical studies that constitute the basis of the environmental document. The 1<sup>st</sup> Administrative Draft of the RDEIR/SDEIS was submitted for Caltrans review on January 6, 2017. This submittal is step 1 of Caltrans' 5 Step NEPA review process. Metro is working closely with Caltrans to ensure this review process is completed on schedule for the RDEIR/SDEIS to be out for circulation by mid-June 2017.

The RDEIR/SDEIS will be in circulation for 90 days. After the public circulation period, the Project Team will evaluate all the comments and prepare responses. Furthermore, the Project Team will prepare a recommendation for a Preferred Alternative and Initial Phasing Plan based on the following: 1) Input gathered from public comments and I-710 advisory committees; 2) the results of a baseline funding availability and P3 delivery evaluation (to be completed by June 2017); and 3) the evaluation of costs and benefits for each of the major segments of the Project to develop an implementation strategy that yields the best value for the users of the freeway and the residents of the corridor.

The Preferred Alternative and Initial Phasing Plan recommendation will be vetted through the various I-710 advisory committees between September and November 2017. Staff anticipates bringing the recommendation back to the Metro Board in January 2018. The Metro Board will then forward the recommendation to Caltrans for final concurrence. This process and timeline is illustrated in Attachment D. A Final EIR/EIS will be prepared for the Preferred Alternative and a Record of Decision/Notice of Determination (ROD/NOD) will be prepared for the Initial Phase of the project. The ROD/NOD is anticipated by August 2018. In order to build consensus for the project and for this project approval process to succeed, Metro staff will proactively engage numerous stakeholders through the corridor over the next 10 months. Working with the Community Relations and Government Affairs departments, Highway Program staff is developing a communication action plan that details every step needed to support project approval process.

In anticipation of opportunities to leverage local funding for the Project (\$590 million in Measure R and \$500 in Measure M), Metro staff is evaluating Initial Phase and “Early Action” project implementation under either one of the Project Alternatives. Once a Preferred Alternative and Initial Phase are selected, staff will begin work on final design for the “Early Action” projects. These projects have already been identified in the Measure M Expenditure Plan.

### **DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT**

The I-710 South Corridor EIR/EIS update will have no impact to the safety of Metro’s patrons or employees or the general public.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Funding for the recirculation and project approval of the I-710 South Draft EIR/EIS is included in the FY17 budget in Cost Center 4730 (Highway Program B), Project 462316, (I-710 South EIR/EIS), Task 5.2.100, Account 50316 (Services Professional/Technical). Since this is a multi-year project, the cost center manager and the Senior Executive Officer of the Highway Program or designee will continue to be responsible for budgeting the cost in future years. Additional funding will be required to complete the Final EIR/EIS, once a preferred alternative is selected. Staff will request authorization to amend the existing professional services contracts supporting this project at the January 2018 Board meeting.

#### **Impact to Budget**

The source of funds for this project is Measure R Highway Capital (20%) Funds from the I-710 South and/or Early Action Projects. These funds are not eligible for bus and rail operating and capital expenditures.

### **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

The Board may elect not to proceed with completing the environmental document for the Project. This alternative is not recommended as it would be contrary to prior Board directions and Metro’s intent to proceed with implementation of much needed improvements along the I-710 Corridor.

**NEXT STEPS**

Metro and Caltrans will circulate the RDEIR/SDEIS in mid-June 2017. A recommendation for a Preferred Alternative and initial phase of the project will be brought to the Board in January 2018.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - Project Alternatives Description

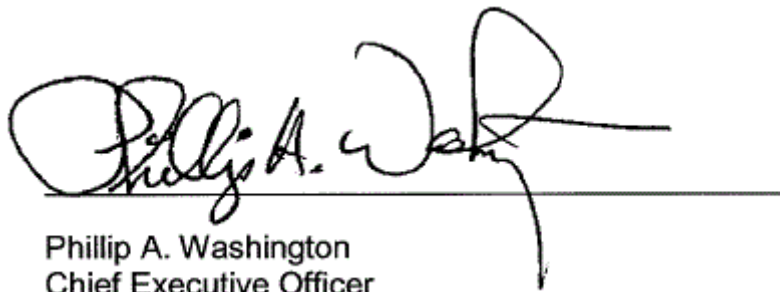
Attachment B - Board Motion 22.1

Attachment C - I-710 Corridor EIR/EIS Motion 22.1 Implementation Status Report

Attachment D - I-710 Project Approval Timeline and Process

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