



Board Report

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Agenda Number: 17

REVISED
PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
JULY 19, 2017

SUBJECT: LINK UNION STATION UPDATE

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE report on the Link Union Station project in response to March 2017 Board Motion.

ISSUE

At the March 23, 2017 Board meeting, Chair Fasana, Director Barger, Director Solis and Direct Dupont-Walker directed the CEO to develop a new alternative for an outdoor and community-oriented passenger concourse that is above or at-grade with the rail yard and maximizes panoramic views of Union Station and the surrounding areas to passengers and visitors, with the requirement that this alternative be as cost-effective as possible. In addition, the Board Motion included the following:

1. Direct Metro's Joint Development team to lead, in coordination with and in parallel to the Link Union Station project, the release of a Request for Information/Qualifications (RFI/Q) to attract private development opportunities within Union Station and Gateway Plaza, in partnership with the City and County of Los Angeles and the surrounding property owners.
2. Evaluate opportunities to create pedestrian/active transportation linkages to the LA River.
3. Establish a volunteer-based, architectural review panel to offer suggestions and recommendations aimed at ensuring design consistency in and around Union Station that amalgamates the historic and modern elements of the surrounding area while promoting innovative ideas.
4. Develop a comprehensive community engagement strategy designed to capture input that is representative of the cultural diversity in the Union Station service area.

The CEO was directed to report back on all the above during the July 2017 Board cycle. Refer to Attachment A for the March 2017 Board Motion.

BACKGROUND

At its March Board meeting, the Metro Board approved the staff recommended “6+2 Phased” alternative that includes 6 run-through tracks for Regional Rail, 2 run-through tracks for future High Speed Rail that would be constructed at a later time, and accommodation for the future West Santa Ana Branch (WSAB) LRT project at Union Station. Included with the staff recommended alternative was a new expanded passenger concourse below the rail yard, which would need to be raised by approximately 15 feet above the existing yard. The 15-foot raise of the rail yard is needed to meet the minimum vertical clearance requirement over the ~~new Patsaouras Busway Station~~ El Monte Busway and US 101 freeway below the proposed run-through tracks viaduct structure.

Above-Grade Passenger Concourse Concept

In response to the Board Motion, the Link Union Station (Link US) project team has conducted a feasibility study for a new passenger concourse option that is above the raised rail yard. To provide the required vertical clearance over all 14 tracks (Gold Line, Regional Rail, future WSAB and future High Speed Rail), the floor of the above-grade concourse would need to be approximately 60’ above the ground level of the existing passageway. The above-grade concourse would be an aerial structure between 60 feet and 110 feet in width, to be supported by a series of columns and associated foundations located within the train platform areas. Regardless of whether the passenger concourse is above or below the rail yard, the 15-foot raise is needed to meet the minimum vertical clearance requirement over the new Patsaouras Busway Station. Refer to Attachment B for the above-grade passenger concourse concept.

A series of new vertical transportation elements (escalators, elevators and stairs) would be needed for each of the following grade changes:

1. Between the Red/Purple Line entrance on the West Portal area and the Metro Gold Line platform and future Metro WSAB Line platform
2. Between the Metro Rail platforms and the above-grade passenger concourse
3. Between the above-grade concourse and each of the five Regional Rail platforms
4. Between the above-grade concourse and Patsoauras Bus Plaza

Based on findings from the feasibility study, below are key advantages of the above-grade concourse over the below-grade concourse:

- Less impacts to rail operations (Regional Rail, Amtrak and Gold Line) during construction with shorter construction duration
- Views of the historic Union Station, LA River and downtown Los Angeles
- Approximately \$500 million in project cost savings. The estimated project cost with the below-grade concourse alternative ranges from \$2.2 to \$2.6 billion. The estimated project cost with the above-grade concourse alternative ranges from \$1.7 to \$2.1 billion.

Below are some disadvantages of the above-grade concourse over the below-grade concourse:

- Longer passenger travel time for connections from rail to bus, Regional Rail to Metro Rail, and vice versa
- Less square footage for station amenities and back-of-house areas
- Less square footage for potential private development (retail and mixed-use developments)

- Higher cost in operations and maintenance
- Limited access from the East Portal to the historic Union Station

Staff intends to carry both above-grade and below-grade passenger concourse concepts in the project's overall environmental review process for Link US. The Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) is anticipated to be circulated for public review in the first quarter of 2018. Refer to Attachment C for the comparison between the two concourse concepts.

1. Private Development Opportunities

Metro Joint Development staff is closely coordinating with the Link US team to develop a Request For Information/Qualifications/Proposal (RFI/Q/P) for private development at LAUS. This coordination will clarify additional development opportunities generated by the Link US Project, to be included in the RFI/Q/P. The goal will be to release the RFI/Q/P in Fall 2017, prior to the environmental clearance of the Link US Project, in order to allow the selected development team the opportunity for close coordination with the Link US team as the Link US project proceeds through environmental clearance and preliminary engineering. Having a developer team available during of the preliminary design and engineering process will facilitate identification of opportunities for strong connections between transit, development and bordering streets, and to explore potential value creation opportunities for the transit investments on site.

A potential timeline for the RFI/Q/P is as follows:

- 1) Release RFI/Q/P - October 2017
- 2) Proposals Due - February 2018
- 3) Developer Recommendation to the Board - June 2018

2. Active Transportation Opportunities

Staff is coordinating closely with Metro Active Transportation team to evaluate opportunities to create active transportation linkages between LAUS and the LA River. In particular, the Link US team has identified potential Active Transportation elements as part of Link US, and will continue to work with the Mayor's office, Councilman Huizar's office, City of Los Angeles Planning and Public Works Departments, and community stakeholders to further define the scope of the Active Transportation elements. Refer to Attachment D for potential Active Transportation elements as part of Link US.

3. Architectural Review Panel

Metro Joint Development staff has reached out to the leadership of the American Institute of Architects Los Angeles chapter (AIA/LA) to informally solicit ad-hoc & voluntary architectural review for the Link US project. The AIA/LA has regularly provided similar volunteer services to the City of Los Angeles through the Department of City Planning's Urban Design Studio. The AIA/LA has provided preliminary support for this service. Next steps are to identify the appropriate point in Link US project development to utilize the design review services.

4. Community Engagement Strategy

As part of the environmental review process, the Link US project team has implemented an extensive community engagement and stakeholder outreach strategy with a focus on the culturally diverse communities surrounding the Union Station area, including El Pueblo, Chinatown, Little Tokyo, Arts

District, Boyle Heights and Lincoln Heights. In the months approaching the release of the Draft EIR/EIS anticipated in the first quarter of 2018, the Link US project team will conduct another round of outreach to keep the communities engaged.

To facilitate coordination across Metro's transit infrastructure investments in the Arts District, Metro Community Relations staff will form a new Union Station/Arts District Community Advisory Committee, with representation from the Mayor's office, Councilman Huizar's office and community stakeholders. Link US project team will support the Metro Community Relations team on efforts in the creation of this committee. Once it is formed, staff intends to interact regularly with this committee to seek feedback on the Link US project.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will return to the Board during the September or October 2017 Board cycle regarding the scope of the proposed active transportation improvements around LAUS as part of the Link US project, and request for approval of a contract modification for additional design services associated with the active transportation elements. Staff will continue to identify funding sources for construction for the base Link US project. Metro Joint Development Staff will release a RFIQ/RFP in Fall 2017. Staff will continue to advance the EIR/S to include both the Above-Grade and Below-Grade Concourse Options. Staff will circulate Draft EIR/S for public review in Spring 2018. Staff will return to the Board for approval of the EIR/S Preferred Alternative in Fall 2018.

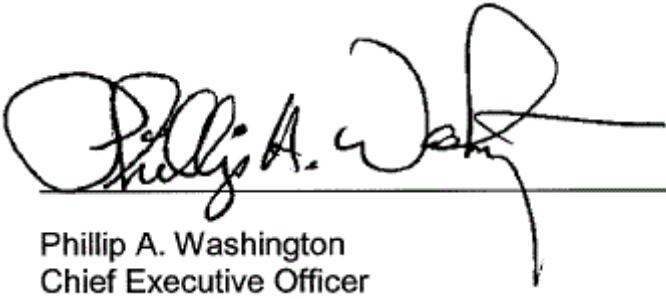
ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - March 2017 Board Motion
Attachment B - Above-Grade Concourse Concept
Attachment C - Concourse Concepts Comparison
Attachment D - Potential Active Transportation Elements

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