Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation
Authority
One Gateway Plaza
3rd Floor Board Room
Los Angeles, CA

File #: 2017-0798, **File Type:** Contract **Agenda Number:** 24.

PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
JUNE 20, 2018

SUBJECT: EAST SAN FERNANDO VALLEY TRANSIT CORRIDOR

ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION

CONSIDER:

A. APPROVING the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) as Alternative #4 (modified): At-grade Light Rail Transit (LRT) with the Rail Maintenance and Storage Facility Option B;

B. AUTHORIZING the Chief Executive Officer to:

1. EXECUTE Modification No. 16 to Contract No. PS4370-2622 with KOA Corporation (KOA) to exercise Option B for the Project's Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report (EIS/EIR) in the amount of $699,255, increasing the total contract value from $5,559,918 to $6,259,173;

2. EXECUTE Modification No. 17 to Contract No. PS4370-2622 with KOA for technical analysis including advanced conceptual engineering (ACE), first/last mile planning, a connectivity study with the Metro Orange Line and grade crossing safety analysis in support of an at-grade LRT Alternative #4, in the amount of $2,021,013, increasing the total contract value from $6,259,173 to $8,280,186; and

3. INCREASE Contract Modification Authority (CMA) specific to Contract No. PS4370-2622 in the amount of $400,000, increasing the total amount from $1,039,443 to $1,439,443.

ISSUE

Metro is the lead agency for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) EIR clearance and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is the lead agency for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) EIS clearance. As the lead agency for the CEQA clearance, Metro has, in coordination with the FTA and the cities of Los Angeles and San Fernando, completed an environmental analysis for the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor Project.

Board action on the selection of an LPA is needed to prepare the Final EIS/EIR and remain on schedule, with an opening date of 2027. Selection of the LPA and preparation of the Final EIS/EIR

collectively is a key milestone in the project delivery process. The Project is included in the Measure M Expenditure Plan and is included in the Twenty-Eight by '28 Initiative.

BACKGROUND

The East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor (ESFVTC) Project is a proposed 9.2-mile transit corridor that would extend north from the Metro Orange Line (MOL) for 6.7 miles in the median or along the curb of Van Nuys Boulevard, and then northwest on or adjacent to San Fernando Road for 2.5 miles to the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station.

At the November 20, 2013 meeting, the Board received and filed an update on the initial phases of the Draft EIS/EIR for the ESFVTC Project (Item #25). At that time, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and LRT were the build alternatives identified to be studied and $170.1 million had been reserved for the Project in Metro's 2009 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). While working on the environmental document, Metro found that all the build alternatives would cost more than what had been reserved for the Project in the 2009 LRTP, with the LRT alternatives projected to cost significantly more. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) as lead agency for the EIS, declined to advance the joint environmental document because a reasonable and achievable funding package was not identified. Subsequently in November 2016, Measure M was passed by Los Angeles County voters, which estimated $1.3 billion in funding for the Project. With a funding package identified, the FTA agreed to proceed with environmental review.

If LRT is chosen as the preferred alternative, the LRT tracks adjacent to San Fernando Road would operate on the westerly portion of the Metro-owned railroad right-of way (ROW) and Metrolink would operate on the easterly portion of the ROW. The Project's Draft EIS/EIR assessed four build alternatives along with the required Transportation Systems Management (TSM) and No-Build alternatives. The build alternatives include two BRT (curb running and median running) and two LRT (standard LRT and low-floor LRT/tram) alternatives. The number of stations considered ranged from 14 to 28 and both at-grade and partial-subway alternatives were considered. If LRT is selected as the preferred alternative, the environmental document also evaluated three candidate locations for a maintenance and storage facility (MSF).

The ESFVTC Project is identified in the Measure M ordinance as a "high-capacity transit project, mode to be determined, that connects the Orange Line Van Nuys Station to the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station. Consisting of 14 stations along 9.2 miles". Per the Measure M Expenditure Plan, $1.331 billion has been estimated for the Project in 2015 dollars. Staff's LPA recommendation for the ESFVTC Project is consistent with the ordinance.

DISCUSSION

A detailed description of each of the alternatives is provided in the attached Executive Summary to the Draft EIS/EIR (Attachment A). The full Draft EIS/EIR is available on the Project website at: www.metro.net/projects/east-sfv <http://www.metro.net/projects/east-sfv>. A description and factors to consider for each alternative are described below.

Build Alternative 1 - Curb-Running BRT

In the evaluation of the curb-running BRT alternative, it was determined that frequent intersections and a high concentration of businesses exist along Van Nuys Boulevard. A motor vehicle would need to enter the curbside BRT lane to navigate a right-turn into a parking lot or onto one of the many intersecting roadways. This motor vehicle movement would significantly impact the alternative's operating efficiencies and substantially affect vehicular access to businesses.

Build Alternative 2 - Median-Running BRT

This alternative would realize superior BRT operation efficiencies by operating in an exclusive lane in the middle of Van Nuys Boulevard and avoiding most motor vehicle conflicts. However, because an articulated bus can only seat 57 passengers, overcrowding could be a problem, especially if bus spacing is not maintained. Because bus stops for local buses are currently at approximate ¼-mile intervals on Van Nuys Boulevard, and because median-running BRT would have stops every ¾ of a mile, local buses would remain in the curb lane and not benefit from the median bus lane.

Build Alternative 3 - Low-Floor LRT/Tram

The low-floor LRT/tram alternative would operate similar to existing local bus service with stops at approximate 1/3-mile intervals. There would be 28 stations with median platforms that would be elevated about two feet thereby matching the height of low-floor train cars. A technical review found that having 28 stations over a 9.2-mile alignment would result in poor operating efficiencies (42 minutes to travel end-to-end by 2040). Because of the frequent stops, the alternative's travel speed would be less than that of the BRT alternatives.

Build Alternative 4 - LRT At-Grade and Subway

This alternative would resemble other Metro-operated LRT systems with high floor trains, an elevated station platform, and spacing that would enable the system to realize significant operating efficiencies (14 stations). The alternative includes 2.5-miles of subway and three underground stations (Sherman Way, Van Nuys Metrolink Station, and Roscoe Boulevard). However, the analysis found that a short subway segment would cost an additional $1.4 billion, doubling the Project cost, but only reduce passenger travel time by approximately two minutes. For this reason, the recommended LPA is deemed "modified" because it does not include the subway segment. The alternative would realize significant efficiency improvements (29 minutes to travel end-to-end by 2040), and the highest projected corridor boardings (47,400 by 2040).

Maintenance and Storage Facility (MSF)

Should the Board identify a rail alternative as the LPA, a MSF is required. Staff considered three candidate sites: Option A - west of the MOL Van Nuys Station; Option B - west of Van Nuys Boulevard and immediately south of the Metrolink tracks; and Option C - west of Van

Nuys Boulevard and immediately north of Metrolink tracks. All options would be within a ¼-mile of the alignment and are 25 to 30 acres in size. When the community was notified of the three MSF options, significant opposition to Option A materialized due to the number of businesses that would be affected/displaced. A limited number of comments were received pertaining to Options B and C; however, a letter was received from Los Angeles City Council District 6 which covers this area, in support of Option B. Comments were received in support of a fourth option (not included in the Draft EIS/EIR) that would be on LADWP land to the east of the Van Nuys Metrolink Station. Metro looked at this land but determined that it was more than a ¼-mile from the alignment and would require navigating through LADWP property to access. In addition, LADWP provided a comment letter stating their intention to use this land for planned expansion as early as 2019 and that it was therefore unavailable.

Public Outreach

The Draft EIS/EIR was released for a 60-day public review period on September 1, 2017. Metro hosted five public hearings and in total, more than 900 comments were received. Per the "Public Comment Summary Report" (Attachment B), the two most common comments received were:

1) Support for an at-grade LRT alternative with 14 stations; and
2) Opposition to Maintenance and Storage Facility Option A, which is adjacent to the MOL Van Nuys Station

Two comments were received that require additional study, both of which can be addressed as part of the Final EIS/EIR:

Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) - The SCRRA requested additional safety analysis be undertaken along the 2.5-mile shared railroad ROW that is adjacent to San Fernando Road and between Van Nuys Boulevard and the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station. There are six at-grade intersections along this span of ROW where a single regional rail track currently exists. In response, staff will undertake a more detailed "LRT Grade-Crossing and Safety Study" as a part of the technical analysis recommended in this report to support the Final EIS/EIR.

The SCRRA letter also cited Metro's Brighton to Roxford Double Track Study, which includes the addition of a second mainline track along the same span of ROW that is proposed for use by the light rail project. This would create a total of four tracks including two for the East San Fernando Valley light rail project and two for the Brighton to Roxford regional rail project in the segment between Van Nuys Boulevard and the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station. Initial reviews indicate the ROW width is adequate to accommodate all four tracks, however, staff will undertake a more detailed advanced conceptual engineering design as a part of the technical analysis recommended in this report to support the Final EIS/EIR and to insure that a future regional rail track is not precluded.

City of San Fernando - The City of San Fernando expressed support for LRT, but requested that Metro work to minimize the need to acquire industrial properties in the City. There is sufficient room for LRT, the existing single regional rail track, and a Class 1 bike path for most of the one-mile

segment that passes though the City. However, because the ROW narrows north of Brand Boulevard, staff initially thought industrialized land acquisition would be required. Staff has re-reviewed the ROW and is now confident that it can significantly reduce or eliminate acquisitions of industrialized properties in the City of San Fernando. To insure that impacts to industrial properties are minimized to the greatest extent possible, staff will undertake Advanced Conceptual Engineering (ACE) in close coordination with the City of San Fernando as a part of the technical analysis recommended in this report to support the Final EIS/EIR.

Additional Considerations

- Van Nuys Station/MOL Connection - After the ESFVTC Draft EIS/EIR was near completion, Metro initiated, as a separate study, the MOL-BRT Improvement Study. The MOL-BRT study is considering a grade-separated BRT station at Van Nuys Boulevard. The current ESFVTC Draft EIS/EIR envisions an at-grade to at-grade station connection with the MOL. If the MOL project independently selects a grade separation at Van Nuys Boulevard, the MOL aerial station will require a vertical connection to the ESFVTC. In that scenario, a connectivity study is needed to identify modifications to the ESFVTC to enable the Project to properly connect with the MOL. This connectivity study would be concurrently conducted with the preparation of the Final EIS/EIR as a part of the technical analyses recommended in this report. Each Project has independent utility as they don't connect; rather the ESFVTC's southern terminus would be under the MOL's Van Nuys Station, where transit users would be able to transfer via a vertical connection (i.e., escalator, stairs, and/or elevator).

- First/Last Mile (F/LM) - In December 2016, the Board directed staff to include F/LM components in all LRT Transit Corridor Studies. The Board policy requires that F/LM be integrated in the planning and delivery of the transit project, and allows that those F/LM improvements included in the project may be implemented by the local agency and counted toward satisfying the 3% local match requirement, which is reflected in the Measure M implementing guidelines. However, those projects where such cost and scope are finalized in advance of the F/LM plans are considered "transitional", and separate funding outside the rail project budget must be secured to implement an F/LM plan.

  Because the policy was not in place before the Draft EIS/EIR was substantially written and submitted to the FTA for review for the Project, it will be concurrently addressed in parallel with the Final EIS/EIR phase. The F/LM study will be developed based on the Project. However, it will not be environmentally cleared as part of the Project EIS/EIR. Funds to undertake the F/LM studies are included in the technical studies recommended in this report. Consistent with the F/LM procedures and policies approved by the Board, F/LM recommended improvements emerging from LRT Transit Corridor plans must be included in the project scope and cost estimate, which is determined when 30% design is completed, to be a potential basis for 3% cost contributions.

Prior to proceeding with the above technical studies, an LPA needs to be selected by the Board in order to focus further work on a single Project that can be environmentally cleared when the Board

reviews and acts on the Final EIS/EIR and the FTA reviews and acts on the Final EIS. The Draft EIS/EIR analysis and community support have developed a strong consensus for the selection of LRT as the preferred mode for the Project. The MSF Site Option B (Attachment D) emerged as the recommended site for LRT maintenance and storage over Site Options A and C. Work on the above technical studies will be managed by the prime consultant, KOA, Inc., and performed by sub-consultants on the consultant team, as supervised by Metro staff. A Notice to Proceed will be issued following Board approval of the recommendations in this report.

Summary of Public Comments

As summarized in Attachment B, Metro hosted five public hearings and in an effort to increase public participation, public hearings were held at various locations and times of day. An additional informational meeting was held on October 10, 2017 to address specific concerns from property owners and tenants whose properties were identified for potential acquisition.

Approximately 350 persons attended and more than 900 comments were received by mail, email, through the Project website, and in-person at public hearings and community events. Some of the more common comments included:

- Strong preference for LRT;
- Strong opposition to MSF Option A;
- Significant support for a 14-station LRT option;
- Property acquisition concerns;
- Concerns pertaining to potential construction-related impacts;
- Support for potential transit connections to:
  - Future Metro Projects (Sepulveda Transit Project, MOL Improvements)
  - Amtrak and Metrolink;
- General safety and security concerns with public transit; and
- Concerns pertaining to the loss of on-street parking and loss of bike lanes

Community input has been encouraged and received at every step of the ESFVTC Project development.

LPA Recommendation

Based on the technical evaluation and public stakeholder input, Alternative 4, modified to be at-grade LRT only, is recommended as the LPA (Attachment C). The operating efficiencies that would be realized through LRT Alternative 4, along with the number of corridor boardings that the alternative is projected to generate, best matched the Project's purpose and need to:

- Improve north-south mobility
- Provide more reliable operations and connections between key transit hubs/routes
- Enhance transit accessibility/connectivity to local and regional destinations
- Provide additional transit options in a largely transit-dependent area
- Encourage mode shift to transit

The modified LRT Alternative 4 recommendation matches Metro's Metro M commitment to San Fernando Valley voters to construct a "high-capacity" transit project that extends from the MOL to the Sylmar San Fernando Metrolink station (9.2 miles). A three-car train set can accommodate up to 400 riders, which is far greater capacity than can be achieved with the other BRT alternatives evaluated.

The projected total cost for Alternative 4 with mix of at-grade and subway is $2.7 billion (2014 dollars), which exceeds the $1.331 billion (2015 dollars) estimated for the Project in the Measure M Expenditure Plan. However, by changing the subway portion of the alignment to at-grade, the projected total cost would be within range of the Measure M estimate. Due to its higher capacity, the LRT alternative could operate with a shorter headway and thereby have less of an impact to traffic. The train's capacity would also reduce overcrowding, which is a common issue for the articulated buses that currently operate on Van Nuys Boulevard. This corridor has some of the highest bus boardings in Metro's system, because of a high number of transit-dependent riders.

The LRT recommendation is also in-line with comments received during the Draft EIS/EIR 60-day public review period. The community voiced strong support for a rail alternative that would reduce travel time through and within the corridor. Although the community was supportive of the 2.5-mile subway, most stated that they'd prefer to have an at-grade LRT system now, rather than wait for additional funds to be identified for a subway. In addition, some voiced concern over the construction impacts (including additional ROW acquisitions) that would occur if a subway were built.

The Draft EIS/EIR also evaluated three potential MSF sites. Based on a technical analysis of all three and public input, Option B (Attachment D) is recommended. MSF Option B is strategically located at the mid-point of the alignment and is the only option which does not significantly impact residential properties. Significant opposition to Option A (adjacent to the MOL) was expressed by the community, while Option B was the only MSF option that received support comments including letters from a local Los Angeles City Councilmember and Panorama City Neighborhood Council. It is unknown at this time if the future Sepulveda Transit Corridor can share the Option B MSF, as that project is in the early phase of a Feasibility Study in which alignments and modes are under preliminary evaluation.

The LRT recommendation is consistent with the goals/objectives outlined in the Metro Equity Platform Framework in that the Project alignment is located in a disadvantaged, underserved community where access to premium transit service is limited. There is a high concentration of minority communities residing in the ESFVTC study area including a significant concentration of Hispanic or Latino 71.7% (35% higher than the City of Los Angeles and 24% higher than the County). Approximately 17.5% of the households in the study area are below the poverty level, which is 0.2% higher than the City and 3.5% higher than the County. The ESFVTC Project will provide residents with direct connections to the Antelope Valley and Ventura County Metrolink lines and to the MOL, which connects to the Metro Red Line. Through these regional connections, underserved populations will have access to employment and educational opportunities, which otherwise would be much more difficult to reach without the Project. The F/LM Project component will promote equity and sustainability by connecting underserved neighborhoods to the Metro transit network. The community will be included in the process of identifying the pedestrian, bicycling, landscaping and other F/LM enhancements.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

Approval of this item will not impact the safety of Metro's customers or employees.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The FY19 budget includes $1.2M for the contract modifications in Project 465521, East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridors, Cost Center 4350, Systemwide Team 2. Board approval of this item will allow Metro staff to continue to develop the Project to its next milestones: completing the environmental process and initiating preliminary engineering.
Since this is a multi-year project, the cost center manager and the Chief Planning Officer will be accountable for budgeting the cost in future years, including any option exercised.

Impact to Budget
The funding sources include Measure M (35% - Transit Construction) and Measure R (35% - Transit Capital), which are not eligible for bus and rail operating expenses.

At this time, the total estimated cost for the Project is approximately $1.3 billion and consistent with the total cost previously reported to the Board (as part of the Draft EIR/EIS and Measure M Expenditure Plan). Staff is concurrently pursuing funding for the Project, in accordance with the funding sources identified in the Long Range Transportation Plan Financial Forecast (Metro's system -wide funding plan for Board-approved projects). The Project was recently awarded approximately $202 million in State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds, as well as $205 million in SB1 - Gas Tax Transit Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) funds. These funds will be available for the Project's future construction costs.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board may decide to not select a LPA for the ESFVTC Project. This is not recommended, as it would delay the Project, making it difficult to meet the Measure M Expenditure Plan schedule. Alternately, the Board may decide to not select the LRT alternative as the Project's LPA. This is not recommended because the LRT alternative would realize the greatest operating efficiencies, would accommodate far more riders and attract more boardings, and is the alternative that enjoys overwhelming support from the impacted community.

The Board may decide to select another alternative as the Project's LPA. The other alternatives evaluated in the Draft EIS/EIR are identified below, along with staff's reasoning for why the alternative was not recommended:

- Alternatives 1 and 2: Curb-running and median-running BRT - both the BRT alternatives had capacity concerns as an articulated BRT has a maximum capacity of 69 riders, which is far less than a three car LRT train-set which has a capacity of 400 persons. Overcrowding is a frequent problem for articulated buses that currently operate on Van Nuys Boulevard. In addition, the operation efficiencies that would be realized by the alternatives would not be significantly superior to those enjoyed by existing bus service. The community voiced strong support for LRT and opposition to BRT.

- Alternative 3: Low-Floor LRT/Tram - This alternative includes 28 stations (approximate 1/3-mile intervals) which resulted in operating efficiencies that were less than that of the BRT alternatives. The low-floor stations would help efficiencies, but the unique configuration would prevent trains from seamlessly connecting with other LRT lines if extended in the future. The community was very receptive to LRT, but strongly preferred a fourteen station design that could operate at greater speeds and reduce travel time.

- Alternative 4 (unmodified): At-Grade and Subway - This alternative without the proposed modification to eliminate the subway segment is double the project cost estimate in Measure M, has greater property impacts, and would substantially delay the timeline for delivery of the project; it is therefore not recommended.

If at-grade LRT is chosen as the LPA, the Board may also decide to not select Option B as the LPA for a MSF to house and service the trains. In addition to Option B, two additional locations were evaluated for an MSF in the Draft EIS/EIR. These MSF options are identified below along with staff's reasoning for why the Option is not recommended:

- MSF Option A: This MSF option, which would be located to the west of the Van Nuys MOL Station, resulted in significant opposition from the community. The area has many businesses due to the zoning in place.

- MSF Option C: This MSF option would be located to the west of Van Nuys Boulevard and immediately north of the Metrolink tracks in Panorama City. The option proved to be more difficult to access due to the dip in Van Nuys Boulevard where Metrolink passes. There are also several multi-unit residential properties to the north of the option that would be impacted by a train yard's noise and vibration.

NEXT STEPS

After selection of an LPA, staff will initiate work on the Project's Final EIS/EIR. Staff anticipates returning to the Board in early 2019 for Project Certification and then approaching the FTA to obtain a Record of Decision (ROD).

Upon Board approval, staff will execute Modifications No. 16 and 17 to Contract No. PS4370-2622 with KOA and work will immediately commence on the LRT Grade Crossing and Safety Analysis; ACE; Van Nuys Station Connectivity Study; and the F/LM analysis. Staff anticipates this effort to take eight to twelve months to complete.

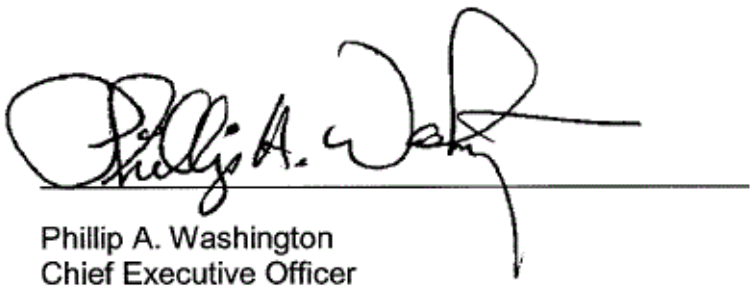
Staff will also release a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Project's preliminary engineering phase. By releasing the RFP now, staff will be ready to approach the Metro Board for authorization to award PE immediately following Board Certification of the Project.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Executive Summary of the Draft EIS/EIR
Attachment B - Public Comment Summary Report
Attachment C - Project Description and Map of Recommended Locally Preferred Alternative
Attachment D - Map of Maintenance and Storage Facility (MSF), Option B
Attachment E - Procurement Summary
Attachment F - Contract Modification/Change Order Log
Attachment G - DEOD Summary

Prepared by: Walt Davis, Senior Manager, (213) 922-3079
Laura Cornejo, Deputy Executive Officer, (213) 922-2885
David Mieger, Executive Officer, (213) 922-3040
Manjeet Ranu, Senior Executive Officer, (213) 418-3157

Reviewed by: Therese McMillan, Chief Planning Officer, (213) 922-7077
Debra Avila, Chief Vendor/Contract Management Officer (213) 418-3051
Richard Clarke, Chief Program Management Officer (213) 922-7557



Phillip A. Washington
Chief Executive Officer