



Board Report

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Agenda Number: 21.

PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE JANUARY 17, 2018

SUBJECT: CLAREMONT METROLINK STATION STUDY REPORT

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE final report on the Claremont Metrolink Station Study with staff recommendations to keep the Claremont Metrolink Station open and proceed with a staff-level task force to provide recommendations on how Metrolink and Gold Line Phase 2B and other transit services will complement each other to provide greater transit services to the surrounding communities along the shared rail corridor.

ISSUE

On September 28, 2017, Directors Solis, Barger, Fasana, and Najarian directed the Chief Executive Officer to evaluate the benefits and/or impacts related to removing the Claremont Metrolink Station (see Attachment A - Metro Board Motion 21.1). Metro staff worked closely with representatives from the Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority, Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA), and City of Claremont to complete the Claremont Station study as directed by the Board. The findings of the study are herein presented.

DISCUSSION

Background

The Claremont Metrolink Station is located 1.2 miles west of the Montclair station and 2.1 miles east of the Pomona North station along the Metrolink San Bernardino Line that operates between downtown San Bernardino and Los Angeles Union Station. The Foothill Gold Line Phase 2B extension to Montclair project (Gold Line project) that broke ground on December 6, 2017 will share the railroad right-of-way with Metrolink tracks for approximately 3.78 miles starting from (half a mile west of) the Metrolink Pomona North station to the Claremont station and end in Montclair station. The Gold Line project plans to co-locate the Gold Line stations with Metrolink stations in Pomona, Claremont and Montclair. The Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) included relocating the existing Metrolink Claremont station to 0.9 miles from the Montclair Metrolink station and 2.3 miles from the Pomona North station.

Findings

The findings of the study are a compilation of information gathered from a close collaborative working

group comprising of the Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority, SCRRA, City of Claremont and Metro. This study is limited to only the items listed in the Board Motion. In order to specifically address the items outline in the Metro Board Motion 21.1, these findings are organized into 11 tasks as listed below.

Task 1: Current and projected ridership at the Metrolink Claremont station under existing conditions (without Gold Line Phase 2B)

Ridership at the Metrolink Claremont station is 406 on an average weekday. Ridership at the station has been fairly stable over the past six years (see table 1 below). SCRRA projects 482 average weekday riders by 2025 and the Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority forecasts 1,361 average weekday Metrolink boardings by 2035.

Table 1: Average Weekday Boardings

	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY25*
Claremont Station	415	402	394	400	397	406	482
* 2025 projection from Metrolink Strategic Plan							

Source: SCRRA

Seventy percent (285) of riders drive to or leave the station by car; 25% (103) walk or bike to or from the station; and 5% (19) arrive at or leave the station by bus or other means. It is important to note that the Metrolink Claremont station has a higher percentage of riders walking and biking (25%) to or from the station compared to the Pomona North (15%) and Montclair (4%) stations. This could be due to the Metrolink Claremont station’s proximity to major Claremont destinations such as the Village, Claremont Colleges, and other transit-oriented developments near the station.

Ridership Profile

SCRRA 2015 on-board survey shows that 68% of the 406 average weekday riders (278) mostly leave Claremont to Los Angeles or other destinations for work or school, whereas 32% of riders (128) arrive in Claremont mostly for work or school. Of the 406 average weekday riders, 61% (249) are adults, 12% (48) are senior/disabled, 18% (75) are students, and the remaining 8% (31) are youth.

Task 2: Impacts to Metrolink operations and travel times with the elimination of the Metrolink station

Only early morning Metrolink trains and last two night trains that do not need to wait for passing trains could save approximately 2-3 minutes of travel time with the elimination of the Metrolink Claremont Station. Approximately 70% of the San Bernardino Line is single-track, and therefore trains traveling in opposite directions can only pass each other at the double-track sections which accounts for only 30% of the entire line. Due to the constraints posed by the single-track sections outside of Claremont, Metrolink trains have to wait at double-tracks or sidings for a passing train for at least 10 minutes. The spacing between double-track sections dictates whether a travel time reduction can be incorporated into the schedule. In this case, travel time reduction needs to be greater than 10 minutes to realize travel time savings. The majority of the 38 trains that run on the San Bernardino Line every weekday would not see any travel time savings.

Task 3: Analysis of changes to gate operations at all crossings in Claremont if the Metrolink

station is eliminated

There are four at-grade rail crossings in Claremont: Cambridge Avenue, Indian Hill Boulevard, College Avenue, and Claremont Boulevard. The Claremont Metrolink station is currently located between Indian Hill Boulevard and College Avenue whereas the relocated Metrolink station would be located between College Avenue and Claremont Boulevard. Gate down time was analyzed for the Indian Hill Boulevard, College Avenue, and Claremont Boulevard crossings under existing conditions and two future condition scenarios: Gold Line with and without Metrolink Station (see table 2 below). Cambridge Avenue is over half a mile west from the Claremont station and the current gate down time is not affected by the existing station; therefore, future gate down time would also not be impacted by the station relocation or elimination.

Table 2 shows that gate down time could be reduced by 3-6 minutes in the future if the Metrolink station is eliminated. In addition, table 2 also indicates that gate down time will be significantly higher when the Gold Line is in operation at Claremont and College crossings compared to existing conditions due to the frequency of the Gold Line service during the peak hour. Indian Hill Boulevard, which is proposed to be grade-separated for the light rail tracks, could see a 4 minute reduction in gate down time compared to existing condition.

Table 2: Gate down time in Minutes per Peak Hour*

Railroad Grade Crossings	Existing Condition	Future Condition Gold Line with Relocated Metrolink Station	Future Condition Gold Line with Metrolink Station Eliminated
	Indian Hill Boulevard	9 minutes	11 minutes
College Avenue	9 minutes	30 minutes	27 minutes
Claremont Boulevard	11 minutes	35 minutes	30 minutes
Number of trains during peak hour	4 Metrolink trains	6 Metrolink trains 24 Gold Line trains	6 Metrolink trains 24 Gold Line trains

* Gate down times are estimates and could change with final design and project implementation; peak hour is from 6 AM to 7 AM and from 5 PM to 6 PM
Sources: SCRRA and Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority

Task 4: Analysis of when Metrolink service would be discontinued in Claremont during Gold Line construction, and length of time during which no rail transit options would be available in Claremont

According to the Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority, if the decision is made to eliminate the Metrolink Claremont Station, Metrolink service to the Claremont station would be discontinued as early as the end of 2021 and there would be no rail service in Claremont for approximately five years until the opening of Gold Line Phase 2B in 2027. However, if the Metrolink Claremont station is relocated as currently planned, construction of the new station could be completed before the existing station is demolished and therefore there would be minimal disruption to the existing Metrolink service.

Task 5: Cost savings associated with the construction of the Gold Line Phase 2B

If the decision is made to remove the Metrolink Claremont station, the Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority estimated a savings of approximately more than \$40 million in costs with five months of the construction schedule. The estimated savings do not include potential savings associated with parking facility. If the Metrolink station is relocated, the Authority would have to build parking to accommodate both Metrolink riders and Gold Line riders.

Task 6: Impacts and potential mitigations to Metrolink riders that currently board at the Claremont station

Staff identified potential impacts of the Claremont Metrolink station elimination to riders during and after construction of the Gold Line Phase 2B extension project.

During Construction

During construction of the Gold Line, there would be approximately 5 years of no rail service in Claremont as described under Task 4. Riders could board the Metrolink San Bernardino Line at the Montclair station (1.2 miles to the east) or the Pomona North station (2.3 miles to the west). As a potential measure to address this impact, the Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority has committed to provide a free courtesy shuttle during construction to facilitate the transfer from Claremont to the Montclair or Pomona North stations. The free shuttle could cost the Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority approximately \$400,000/year for 5 years for a total of \$2 million.

The Metrolink passengers at Claremont will have the option of going to the Montclair station and pay \$1 additional Metrolink fare for a regular roundtrip to Union Station compared to fares from the Claremont station. In addition, travel time could be increased by an estimated 9 to 11 minutes to board at the Montclair station depending on access mode of shuttle, car, or bicycle. Furthermore, some of the 102 riders who currently access the Claremont station by walking or biking may lose that option due to the additional distance to Montclair and or Pomona North station. Thus, eliminating the Metrolink Claremont station could change the mode of access for riders and increase net vehicle miles, travel time, and cost to Metrolink passengers. In addition, there are intangible impacts to Metrolink passengers at Claremont that are beyond the scope of the study that cannot be quantified and/or addressed.

After Construction

After construction of the Gold Line, riders would be able to ride the Gold Line to Union Station or transfer to Metrolink at the Pomona or Montclair Gold Line stations. Table 3 shows a comparison of post-construction conditions under existing conditions and future conditions with the Gold Line. However, riders who utilize the Metrolink Claremont Station to connect to destinations other than Union Station could connect to the Montclair and Pomona North stations by bus, car, or bicycle. The free courtesy shuttle between Claremont and Montclair and/or Pomona would only be provided during the 5 year period of the construction of the Gold Line Phase 2B extension project.

Table 3: Post Construction Conditions

Claremont Rail Service Comparisons		
	Metrolink Existing Conditions	Metro Gold Line Post-Construction Conditions
Service Frequency	Every 20–30 minutes (peak hours) Every 60–90 minutes (off-peak hours)	Every 6 minutes (peak hours) Every 12 minutes (off-peak hours)
Fares Claremont to Union Station	\$9.25 per trip \$18.50 roundtrip	\$1.75 per trip \$3.50 roundtrip
Parking	Free	\$3 per day
Travel Time Claremont to Union Station	55 minutes	67 minutes
Amenities	Bicycle storage Restrooms Quiet car option Food and drinks allowed Seats with tables	Bicycle storage

Source: Metro

Task 7: Impacts and potential mitigations to the City of Claremont if it becomes the Gold Line terminus with and without a Metrolink Station scenario

In response to the Board motion, Metro staff worked with the City of Claremont staff to identify the following impacts and measures to address impacts should the City of Claremont become a Gold Line terminus with and without a Metrolink station. The City identified impacts to tourism and commerce, traffic, parking, train crossings, and rail transit options should Claremont become the Gold Line terminus. In addition, City staff noted that having the Gold Line and Metrolink stations in Claremont would allow transfers between the two systems which would not be possible if Metrolink is eliminated.

See Attachment B for the list of impacts and measures to the City of Claremont if it becomes a Gold Line Terminus with and without a Metrolink station.

Per the Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority’s statute, the Foothill Gold Line Phase 2B is being planned and engineered to become one complete 12.3-mile, six-station segment from the APU/Citrus College Station in Azusa to the Montclair Transit Center. The project was environmentally cleared as one project, and the procurement documents for the design-build contract being finalized include all elements of the project to Montclair. After San Bernardino County expressed concerns that they may not have the full funding needed to extend the line into San Bernardino County in time to meet the Construction Authority’s schedule, the Construction Authority environmentally cleared the option of having the Claremont Station be a temporary terminus of the line. However, the Construction Authority has found a way to allow San Bernardino County approximately three years from today (two

years following the Notice to Proceed for the design-build contract) to make all necessary arrangements, including commitment of the full funding, and still be built as part of the current design-build contract. San Bernardino County has already identified and committed more than half of the funds needed. The Construction Authority is optimistic that the extra time being provided will allow the segment from Glendora to Montclair to be built as one project.

Task 8: Total parking spaces and current parking utilization rate at the co-located Metrolink and proposed Gold Line stations (Pomona North, Claremont and Montclair stations)

Parking utilization rates at the Pomona North, Claremont, and Montclair stations are shown in Table 4. Parking at Claremont is at 68% utilization, Pomona is at 93%, and Montclair is at 63% utilization. This suggests that if the Claremont station is eliminated, riders who drive to the Pomona North station may have difficulty finding parking whereas there is ample parking available at the Montclair station.

Table 4: Average Number of Parking Spaces Occupied

Station	Parking Spaces Available	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17
Pomona North	300	300	300	300	279	279
		100%	100%	100%	93%	93%
Claremont	440	383	374	268	299	299
		87%	85%	61%	68%	68%
Montclair	1836	1028	1065	1083	1157	1157
		56%	58%	59%	63%	63%

Source: SCRRA

Metro’s Gold Line Phase 2B Parking Demand Model was used to forecast opening day parking utilization for the Claremont Gold Line station under four scenarios based on a \$3/day fee (see table 5). The parking demand model showed that the highest demand for parking would occur if the Claremont Gold Line station is a terminus (i.e. does not go into Montclair) with a Metrolink station.

Table 5: Opening Day Parking Demand

Claremont Station Parking Demand Scenarios	Parking Demand
Base Scenario: Claremont is a mid-point suburban station with a Metrolink station	539
Alternative Scenario 1: Claremont is a mid-point suburban station without a Metrolink station	461
Alternative Scenario 2: Claremont is a terminus station with a Metrolink station	831
Alternative Scenarios 3: Claremont is a terminus station without a Metrolink station	763

Source: Metro Gold Line Phase 2B Parking Demand Model

Task 9: Determine the formal process by which to eliminate a Metrolink station, should that

local station city agree

Currently, there is no formal process to eliminate a Metrolink Station. If the Metro Board decides to eliminate the Claremont station, an update to the Foothill Gold Line Final EIR would be required. The City of Claremont is not supportive of eliminating the Metrolink station as evidenced by the December 12 City Council Resolution passed in support of the Metrolink Claremont Station (see Attachment C - Claremont City Council Resolution).

Task 10: Include City of Claremont staff in the project team during all phases of the study

Metro staff has worked closely and collaboratively with the City of Claremont staff throughout the development of the study. Several coordination meetings were held and the City of Claremont's input has been incorporated in the study particularly for Task 7 - Impacts to the City of Claremont if it becomes a terminus with and without a Metrolink Station scenario.

Task 11: City of Claremont Town Hall Summary

Task 11 directed staff to report back to the Board with a final report, findings and recommendations after presenting the draft to the City of Claremont. Metro staff in coordination with the Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority, SCRRA, and City of Claremont presented the preliminary results of the study at a City of Claremont hosted Town Hall meeting on December 11, 2017. The meeting was attended by approximately 360 residents and riders who use the Metrolink Claremont Station.

The Mayor of Claremont hosted and facilitated the meeting and staff representatives from Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority, Metrolink, Metro, and the City of Claremont served as panelists and presenters of the preliminary findings from this study. Metro Board Director Solis and Metro Board Director Fasana were also in attendance and provided remarks.

Claremont's City Council members and representatives of their Traffic and Architectural Commissions, past City Council Members, City staff, leadership from the Claremont Chamber of Commerce, elderly residents, regular commuters, disabled transit riders, environmentalists, students, college professors, longtime residents, business owners, all spoke in favor of keeping their Metrolink Station in Claremont.

As of December 21, 2017, over 400 total comments were received. With the exception of two public comments, all public comments expressed strong support for keeping the Metrolink Station in the City of Claremont and expressed strong opposition to the potential removal of the Claremont Station. Most comments included several reasons for keeping the station and impact of potential station elimination (See Attachment D - Summary of Public Comments). Nearly all public comments expressed strong support for having both Gold Line and Metrolink stations in the City of Claremont. The majority of comments explained the different yet complementary purpose of having both of the station in their town. The majority of the potential impacts and expressed concerns related to station elimination identified in the public comments cannot be measured or fully addressed in this study.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study and the enormous community support expressed for the Metrolink Claremont Station, staff recommends that the Metrolink Claremont station remains open. Further, staff concurs with relocating the Metrolink Station within the City of Claremont as stipulated in the Foothill Gold Line Extension Final EIR.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact. The Gold Line Phase 2B project includes the cost of the relocation of the Metrolink Claremont station.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The alternative would be for the Board not to receive this report. This is not recommended as the study was requested by the Board.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will form a staff-level task force to proactively develop a toolbox of strategies that would make the Metrolink and future Gold Line services complementary with each other to provide greater transit services to the surrounding communities along the shared rail corridor. The task force will include representatives from the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG), cities of Pomona and Claremont, Metro, SCRRA, Foothill Transit, and Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority. Staff will provide updates of the task force efforts to the Board via the Regional Rail quarterly report.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Metro Board Motion 21.1

Attachment B - Impacts and Measures to the City of Claremont if it becomes a Gold Line Terminus with and without a Metrolink Station

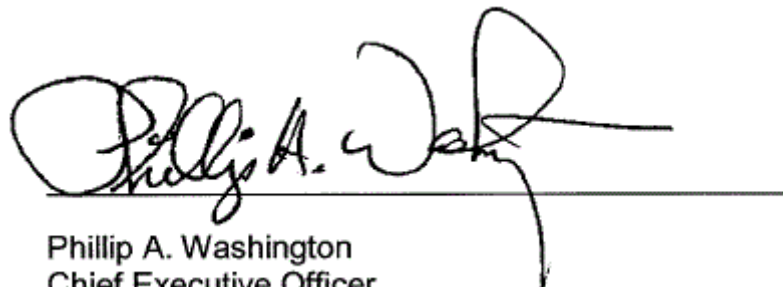
Attachment C - Claremont City Council Resolution in support of the Claremont Metrolink Station

Attachment D - Summary of Public Comments

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