



Board Report

File #: 2020-0135, File Type: Agreement

Agenda Number:

PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE MARCH 18, 2020

SUBJECT: I-5 NORTH HIGH OCCUPANCY VEHICLE AND TRUCK LANES PROJECT FROM STATE ROUTE (SR)-14 to PARKER ROAD ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION AGREEMENT

ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION

AUTHORIZE the CEO to execute a third-party Agreement with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and Mountain Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) to fund wetlands mitigation costs as stipulated in the Streambed Alteration Agreement associated with the implementation of the I-5 North Capacity Enhancements Project (the Project).

ISSUE

Pursuant to Section 1602 of the California Fish and Game Code, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) entered into a Streambed Alteration Agreement (#1600-2019-0008-R5, dated October 23, 2019) with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) outlining Caltrans' responsibility for mitigation of impacts of the Project on fish and wildlife. Through this agreement, Metro will pay MRCA through Caltrans. MRCA will implement restoration, preservation, and/or creation of habitat prior to project-related disturbance or vegetation removal.

BACKGROUND

Metro is the implementing agency for and will start construction of the I-5 HOV and truck lanes project (Project) between I-5/SR -14 Interchange in the City of Santa Clarita and Parker Road in Castaic area in early 2021 calendar year.

The Project has been identified as a regional priority project and is included in the Measure M Expenditure Plan. Upon implementation, the Project will extend the existing HOV lanes from the south of the I-5/SR-14 interchange to Castaic - a 14-mile extension to promote more high occupancy vehicles to reduce congestion. Extension of truck lanes will contribute to further separation of trucks from the automobile traffic for improved mobility and safety.

DISCUSSION

As the owner/operator of the freeway, Caltrans is responsible for mitigating all impacts on the environment resulting from construction and operation of the freeway. In exploring potential efficiencies in implementation of the I-5 improvements project, Metro, Caltrans, and MRCA agreed that MRCA implementing the mitigation work on behalf of Caltrans would be most efficient.

The scope of mitigation work includes preparation of a Mitigation and Monitoring Plan and locating one or more suitable sites within the Santa Clara River watershed for creating or restoring habitat. On behalf of Caltrans and as the implementing agency for the construction phase of the Project, Metro will pay \$690,590 as full payment to satisfy the proposed mitigation requirements in 404 Nationwide Permit and 1602 Agreement.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

The proposed action has no known adverse impact on the safety of Metro's patrons and employees or users of the facility.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Funds for a one-time payment of \$690,590 are included in FY20 for I-5 North Capacity Enhancement from SR-14 to Parker Road Project, in Highway Program Cost Center 4730, under Project No. 460313.

Impact to Budget

The source of funds will be Measure R Highway Capital (20%) Funds and/or Measure M Highway Construction Capital (17%) Funds. These funds are not eligible for bus and rail operation and capital expenditures.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The proposed project is consistent with the following Metro Vision 2028 Strategic Plan Goals:

Goal 1: Provide high-quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling by alleviating the current operational deficiencies and improving mobility along the I-5 freeway;

Goal 3: Enhance communities and lives through mobility and sustainability opportunities. While the project improves mobility on I-5, mitigating the environmental impacts of the project preserves the natural environment in North Los Angeles County.

Goal 5: Provide responsive, accountable, and trustworthy governance by taking the lead in developing and implementing the Project, and partnering with California Fish and Wildlife Service, Army Corps of Engineers, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, Caltrans and Federal Highway Administration, all of whom have shared goals to help enhance quality of life within the region.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

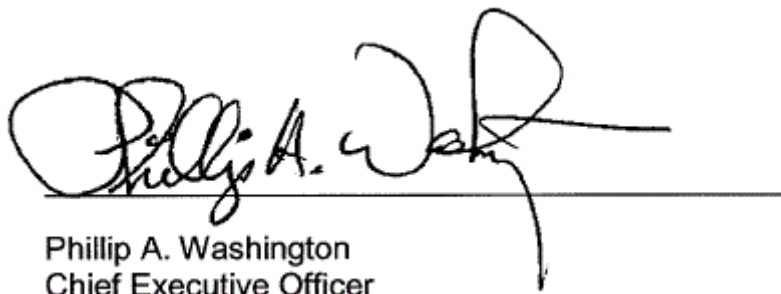
The Board could decide not to approve staff recommendation. However, such decision is not recommended as engaging MRCA in delivering the required mitigation is the most effective way to fulfill the requirements of Section 1602 and minimize the risk of delay and additional costs associated with the necessary habitat mitigation.

NEXT STEPS

Upon Board approval, staff will execute the agreement with the MRCA.

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