



## Board Report

File #: 2020-0192, File Type: Project

Agenda Number: 5.

### PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE APRIL 15, 2020

**SUBJECT: ORANGE LINE TERMINUS IMPROVEMENTS**

**ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

CONSIDER:

- A. APPROVING the G (Orange) Line Terminus Improvement Project;
- B. CONCLUDING that the G Line Terminus Improvement Project is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080, Subdivisions (b)(10) and (b)(11) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15275, Subdivision (a); and
- C. AUTHORIZING Metro staff to file a Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk and the State Clearinghouse.

#### **ISSUE**

Ridership on the G Line is anticipated to increase 39 percent by 2025. To accommodate this growth, staff is proposing capacity improvements to the G Line terminus at North Hollywood (Project). Staff is requesting Board approval to determine that the Project is Statutorily Exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and authorize Metro staff to formally file a CEQA Notice of Exemption (NOE) with the Los Angeles County Clerk and State Clearinghouse.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The G Line terminus at North Hollywood (Station) opened with the Orange Line in October 2005. The Station was originally designed to support approximately 4,000 passengers per day. Today, more than 7,000 passengers pass through the Station and, with the completion of the Metro Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit Improvements Project, ridership is anticipated to increase by 39 percent. In addition, the Station will be experiencing increased layover activity to accommodate electric bus charging.

To address projected increases in demands on the Station, staff and consultants undertook a detailed analysis of existing and projected pedestrian traffic through the terminus. The team used two

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independent predictive models to analyze and visualize current and future pedestrian flows through the terminus. Through this process, it became clear that to accommodate increased transfers from the street-level buses to the B (Red) Line below ground, a new portal is required. Due to the configuration of the B Line station, the only feasible location for a new portal is at the northwest corner of South Lankershim and Chandler Boulevards (see Attachment A - Project Site Plan & Rendering).

The Station is currently developed with the historic Lankershim Depot building and a one-story building located on the northwest section of the site, along with a bus turnaround and layover areas for the G Line, electric bus charging infrastructure, parking, bus shelters, and a new portal and elevators to the B Line mezzanine.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Project would revitalize and expand transit facilities at the Station, including additional discharge, boarding and layover bays for the G Line and future bus rapid transit services; new bays for local/regional buses; electric bus charging facilities and an expanded portal to the subsurface B Line station. The Project scope includes:

### 1. Bus Bays

- 6 G Line bays - 1 Boarding Platform (3 bays) and 3 Alighting/Drop-off Bays
- 6 interior loop layover bays
- 14 Transit Center perimeter bays
- 3 on-street bus stops
- Employee breakroom

### 2. West Portal Expansion

The existing staircase and single escalator, running from the station mezzanine level to plaza (surface) level will be replaced as follows:

- A. From the mezzanine to ancillary landing - new wider central staircase plus two (2) bidirectional escalators
- B. From the landing to 'north' plaza - a new staircase and one (1) bidirectional escalator
- C. From ancillary to 'south' plaza (at Lankershim and South Chandler) - a new staircase and one (1) bidirectional escalator; the stair will be sized, and conduit and panel will be provided, to accommodate the addition of a second escalator by Metro in the future if needed

### 3. Electric Bus Charging

- New switchgear and transformer vaults
- Electric bus charging facilities for the Orange Line and new bus rapid transit services, with charging facility expansion capability including conduit and space allocation for future charging infrastructure at all local bus bays

#### 4. Pedestrian Plaza Enhancements

- New drought tolerant landscaping
- Space for Metro Security
- Upgraded lighting
- New trees and shade structures

The Project was developed and refined with extensive input from and coordination with Operations, Security, ADA/Civil Rights, Systemwide Station Design, and Parking Management. The Project will streamline transfers between the G Line and local and municipal buses as well as the B Line, by consolidating bus bays around the G Line terminus and creating more direct paths from the G line discharge area to the below-ground B Line station. Abundant trees and shade structures, enhanced lighting and new next bus/train messaging will improve passenger comfort and safety. The Project has been designed based on principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) to ensure that visibility and sightlines are preserved and that proper physical protections are in place to ensure the safety and security of Metro patrons and the public.

The historic Lankershim Depot, which was restored beginning in 2011 and reopened as a Groundwork Coffee store in 2017, will be retained on the site but moved approximately 45 feet west to accommodate the new portal. A portion of the property is currently improved with a one-story industrial warehouse, leased to a master tenant with four subtenant spaces. After the leasehold interest terminates the building will be demolished to accommodate the expanded bus bays and bus charging facilities.

#### Community Outreach

Starting in 2016, staff has sought community input on the proposed transit center improvements in tandem with outreach on Metro Orange Line, and NoHo to Pasadena and North San Fernando Valley bus rapid transit projects. Feedback to date has been positive, with requests to incorporate adequate shade and lighting and to provide a design that increases patrons' sense of security in and around the Station.

#### CEQA Determination

CEQA provides statutory exemptions for certain activities and specified actions. According to Public Resources Code Section 21080, Subdivisions (b)(10) and (b)(11) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15275, Subdivision (a), CEQA does not apply to the institution or increase of passenger or commuter service on rail lines or high-occupancy vehicle lanes already in use, including the modernization of existing stations and parking facilities. Upon approval of the staff recommendations, the CEQA Notice of Exemption will be filed with the Los Angeles County Clerk (refer to Attachment B) and the State Clearinghouse.

#### Equity Platform

Consistent with the Equity Platform pillar, "listen and learn," staff has conducted extensive outreach to riders that would be impacted by the proposed changes to the Station. Staff will maintain a commitment to engage community stakeholders through its stakeholder mailing list, open houses, one-on-one briefings, and continued participation in community meetings.

According to the Fall 2019 On-Board Survey, 45% of G Line riders are below the poverty line and 74% do not have access to a car. The Station itself is located adjacent to an Equity Focused Community as defined in the Long Range Transportation Plan. In alignment with pillar three of the Equity Platform, the Project will “focus and deliver” resources where they will not only support increased service, but also improve the quality, safety, and efficiency of the journey for this population.

### **DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT**

With respect to recommendation A, approving the Project, the design of the Project has been and will continue to be developed with input from Metro Risk, Safety and System Security staff. In general, the Project is anticipated to increase overall safety and security at the Station by improving circulation, installing new lighting and improving visibility.

Approving recommendation B, to determine that the Project is Statutorily Exempt, and recommendation C, to authorize staff to file a CEQA NOE, as these would not impact the safety of Metro staff or the public.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

With respect to recommendation A, staff is not seeking a commitment of financial resources for the Project at this time. There is no financial impact should the Board approve recommendation B, to determine that the Project is Statutorily Exempt, and Recommendation C, to direct staff to file a CEQA NOE, would not impact safety of Metro staff or the public.

#### **Impact to Budget**

Continued design work for this effort is included in the FY20 budget and the FY21 budget request. Staff is not seeking Life of Project approval at this time.

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

Approval of the recommendations will support strategic plan goal 1.2, Improve LA County’s overall transit network and assets and enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity.

### **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

The Board could defer or deny approval of the Project (recommendation A) or the environmental recommendations B and C, however to do so would halt planning for the Project and impact the ability for the Project to be delivered in time to meet projected increases in ridership.

### **NEXT STEPS**

With Board approval of the staff recommendations, staff will file the CEQA NOE with both the Los

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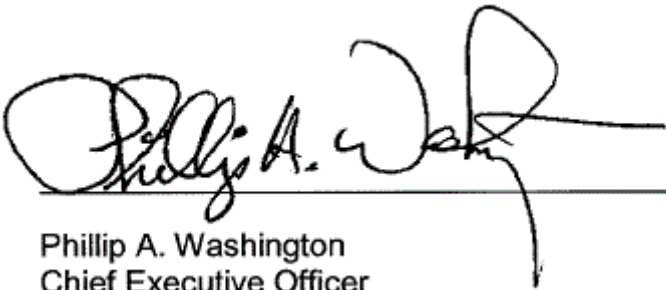
Angeles County Clerk and the State Clearinghouse. Staff will continue to refine the design and engineering of the site, determine funding sources and return to the Board to seek authorization to construct the Project.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - Project Site Plan & Rendering  
Attachment B - CEQA Notice of Exemption

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