

**Board Report**

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**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE  
FEBRUARY 17, 2021**

**SUBJECT: COUNTYWIDE PLANNING MAJOR PROJECT STATUS REPORT**

**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

**RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE monthly report on the Major Capital Projects in the environmental planning phase by the Chief Planning Officer.

**DISCUSSION**

- **East San Fernando Valley LRT**

On December 3, 2020 the Board approved the certification of the Final EIR for the East San Fernando Valley project. This concluded the CEQA environmental clearance of the project. On January 29, 2021 the Federal Transit Administration signed the Record of Decision which concluded the NEPA environmental clearance for the project. The project is now eligible for both state and federal grant funding and early development activities such as utility relocation and right-of-way acquisition can begin.

The Program Management Department is continuing with the development of preliminary engineering design and coordination with third parties for needed permits and approvals.

Staff is also working on the scope of work and schedule for a Shared Right-of-Way Study that was directed by the Board at the December meeting and is returning this month with a report on next steps for that study.

- **West Santa Ana Branch Corridor**

The West Santa Ana Branch project continues to work on environmental documents addressing the first round of Federal Transit Administration comments on the Administrative Draft submitted in late November 2020. Staff continues to coordinate with various third parties as necessary including Union Pacific Railroad, cities, Caltrans, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and various utility providers.

Staff is working on developing the community engagement strategy before releasing the Draft Environmental document. The project will be seeking Board approval to execute Master

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Cooperative Agreements (MCAs) with the cities of Bell, Downey and Paramount at the Planning & Programming Committee meeting this month.

- **Green Line to Torrance LRT Extension**

The EIR scoping period is proceeding for a 45-day review period which started on January 29 and will be extending through March 14 with virtual scoping meetings scheduled on February 24 and 27, 2021.

In advance of the scoping period, during the past month a series of stakeholder meetings have been held to refresh the community on the project. The team has met with all the stakeholders in the study area which include:

- South Bay Metro Service Council (January 8),
- South Bay COG Transportation Committee (January 11)
- Redondo Beach Unified School District (January 12)
- South Bay Bicycle Coalition (January 13)
- North Torrance Neighborhood Association (January 14)
- Torrance Chamber of Commerce (January 14)
- Redondo Beach Rotary Club (January 20)
- Redondo Beach Chamber Government Relations Council (January 26)
- South Bay Galleria (January 26)

The stakeholders were very interested in the initiation of the environmental process and participating in the scoping process for the project. They shared concerns pertaining to quality of life, transportation, and station access that they want addressed in the environmental document. In general, the stakeholders want to participate in the environmental process and provide input to identify ways to address concerns.

Additionally, the team is having on-going meetings with other stakeholders including

- Caltrans (January 8). Several meetings have been held with Caltrans. On January 8, there was a follow-up meeting based on their initial feedback on the conceptual alignments. The team shared revisions to the proposed alignment for the Hawthorne Blvd. alternative reflecting their guidance to avoid a longitudinal encroachment on their right-of-way (ROW).
- BNSF Railroad (January 22). Several meetings have been held with Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad. On January 22, BNSF shared their informal comments on the schematic alignments provided to them in December. BNSF will provide additional comments on the concepts and share how they would like to ideally revise the shared ROW so that both facilities can operate safely. A follow-up meeting is pending for the end of February/early March for further discussion.
- City of Torrance (January 26). The project team had a follow-up meeting to discuss station integration to facilitate access to the neighborhoods and their Torrance Transit Center that is under construction.

Stakeholders meetings with the following were scheduled:

- South Bay Association of Chambers of Commerce (February 2)
- Torrance Transportation Committee (February 2)
- North Redondo Business Association (February 11)

- **Eastside Corridor LRT Extension**

Since the January Planning & Programming Committee meeting, staff has met with the following corridor cities to solicit their input on the Draft Advanced Conceptual Engineering in their respective jurisdictions:

- City of Whittier (November 18)
- City of Pico Rivera (December 15)
- City of Santa Fe Springs (December 21)
- City of Commerce (January 20)
- City of Montebello (February 11)

Subsequent meetings were held per the cities' requests to either provide an overview of the Draft Advanced Conceptual Engineering to elected officials or discuss specific project elements within the city's respective jurisdictions. The project team met with the City of Whittier City Council Ad-hoc on January 7. On January 19, the project team met with the City of Pico Rivera to discuss a city-led Rio Hondo Bridge Improvement project to coordinate design efforts. A project update was provided to the Washington Coalition on February 4.

These meetings were generally attended by city managers, assistant city managers, department directors, and appropriate city staff. Overall, there is general support for the project. Cities have provided preliminary input on the status of any city right-of-way improvements and/or abutting development projects.

Formal comments on the Draft Advanced Conceptual Engineering were submitted by the cities of Whittier, Pico Rivera, and Santa Fe Springs. Comments from the cities of Commerce and Montebello are forthcoming in late February. The Tunnel Advisory Panel also concluded their review of the Draft Advanced Conceptual Engineering and geotechnical studies.

Contract Modifications for the environmental and engineering consultants are nearing completion with an anticipated execution date in February. Meanwhile, the project continues to advance under the existing contracts.

- **Sepulveda Transit Corridor**

Metro's internal review of the private sector pre-development agreement (PDA) proposals has been completed. The multi-departmental proposal review team are bringing the highest ranked proposals back to the Board this month for review.

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Over the course of two meetings, the Board is expected to review the recommendations regarding the firms to be awarded a PDA contract from Metro. Staff will present the PDA recommendations to the Board this month and then return to the Board next month for contract award. This will allow the public sufficient time to review the Board report and learn more about the procurement process, including factors supporting the recommendation for award, and provide any comments to Metro or directly to the Metro Board.

The selected PDA project proposals will be advanced into environmental review that will be formally initiated through public scoping meetings. These scoping meetings are expected to take place in fall 2021.

- **NoHo to Pasadena BRT**

The NoHo to Pasadena BRT Draft EIR comment period began on October 26 and concluded on December 28. The comments received are currently being reviewed and are in the process of being summarized. Currently the most challenging issues include community concerns over parking loss along Olive Avenue in Burbank and other comments pertaining to the Eagle Rock section of the project.

In Eagle Rock, most comments favor routing the BRT along Colorado Blvd. rather than on the SR-134 freeway. However, the community has expressed concerns over impacts to the buffered bike lanes, medians, traffic, and parking. Several comments have expressed support for a new BRT concept on Colorado Blvd. referred to as the "Beautiful Boulevard" which was developed by a local community group known as The Eagle Rock Association (TERA). Staff is currently examining this concept and how its key elements compare to the existing alternatives analyzed in the DEIR.

As of January, staff has begun re-engaging with key stakeholders to work through these remaining issues. In Eagle Rock specifically, a stakeholder roundtable is being planned to discuss BRT design concepts on Colorado Blvd. and try to strike a balance between some of the competing priorities expressed by community members. The primary goal of this additional stakeholder outreach is to help inform the next step in the process, which is to develop a recommended Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). Key details contained in the LPA will include a final project alignment, station locations, and a specific BRT configuration along each segment of the alignment (i.e. center-running, side-running, or curb-running bus lanes). Staff is also planning on conducting an additional community meeting to present and discuss the final LPA prior to presenting it to the Metro Board for approval.


Staff currently intends to return to the Metro Board in April 2021 with two recommendations, including 1) selecting the LPA and 2) approving the Project's Title VI Service Equity Analysis. If the Board approves both recommendations, staff will begin work on the Final EIR and advance the selected BRT design.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - Countywide Planning Monthly Major Project Updates

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