



Board Report

File #: 2021-0521, File Type: Contract

Agenda Number: 8.

PLANNING & PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 17, 2021

SUBJECT: WEST SANTA ANA BRANCH TRANSIT CORRIDOR PROJECT

ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION

AUTHORIZE the Chief Executive Officer to execute Modification No. 13 to Contract No. AE5999300 with WSP USA Inc. to provide additional environmental technical work during the completion of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement / Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) in the amount of \$1,302,845, increasing the Total Contract Value from \$28,484,036 to \$29,786,881, and extend the period of performance through June 30, 2022.

ISSUE

This is a request to authorize the necessary additional funds to professional services Contract No. AE5999300. A Contract Modification is necessary as additional Conceptual Engineering (CE) and technical analysis is needed for the Draft EIS/EIR in response to FTA comments and in coordination with Metro Departments and direction from Metro's Senior Leadership. The additional work will also help to inform and support the Final EIS/EIR once the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) is selected by the Board, currently anticipated in January 2022. As the additional work is part of a separate, but related, work effort from the Final EIS/EIR, extending the period of performance through June 30, 2022 is necessary. Delaying this additional work to a future date would pose significant delays to the overall project schedule and risk that the project would be unable to meet its Measure M schedule.

BACKGROUND

The West Santa Ana Branch (WSAB) Project (Attachment A) is a proposed light rail transit (LRT) line along a 19-mile corridor from southeast Los Angeles County to Downtown Los Angeles serving the cities and communities of Artesia, Cerritos, Bellflower, Paramount, Downey, South Gate, Cudahy, Bell, Huntington Park, Vernon, unincorporated Florence-Graham community, and downtown Los Angeles. This rail corridor is anticipated to serve commuters in a high travel demand corridor by providing relief to the limited transportation systems currently available to these communities. In addition, the project is expected to provide a direct connection to the Metro C Line (Green), Metro A Line (Blue) and the LA County regional transit network.

Due to the environmental complexity of the Project, additional Contract Modification Authority (CMA)

was granted for this Project in July 2019 (2019-0218). Since then, staff has continued to advance the conceptual plans and environmental analysis for the Project requiring additional modifications to the Contract as well as to extend the contract period of performance from April 30, 2021 through December 31, 2021. Board approval is required to execute this modification.

DISCUSSION

A critical path to environmentally clearing the Project is continued close coordination with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). As the lead federal agency for Metro projects, the FTA is responsible for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance and review. The FTA Region 9 Regional Administrator's signature is required on both the Draft EIS/EIR and the Final EIS/EIR prior to publication. Although Metro staff works closely with the FTA throughout the planning and environmental process, FTA is most involved with the review of the Draft EIS/EIR and Final EIS/EIR prior to publication of the documents. It is not unusual for the Draft EIS/EIR and Final EIS/EIR documents, and accompanying technical reports, to undergo several rounds of FTA review prior to publication. Over the past year, staff has received numerous additional comments and direction from the FTA and Metro Departments, resulting in additional technical and environmental work needed to complete the Draft EIS/EIR.

Additionally, a separate, but related work effort will be undertaken at the direction of Metro Senior Leadership, to provide an additional evaluation of implementation strategies to help inform the Board in the selection of the LPA. The additional work will also help to inform and support the analysis conducted in the Final EIS/EIR. The Board is currently anticipated to select the LPA for the Project and authorize the contract option for the Final EIS/EIR in January 2022. Major tasks included in the Modification 13 scope of work include:

- Update Environmental Impact Reports and Draft EIS/EIR in response to FTA and Metro Department comments;
- Additional workshops with the FTA to resolve their comments on the Draft EIS/EIR;
- Respond to stakeholder issues and comment letters through the preparation of draft letters and/or memoranda to stakeholders;
- Update other (non-environmental) reports to be consistent with the latest project description in support of the Draft EIS/EIR;
- Draft outline and review Cost and Financial Appendix;
- Prepare SCAG Air Conformity Memorandum;
- Prepare text comparing 2016 vs 2020 SCAG Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for the Draft EIS/EIR;
- Update Slauson/A Line Station Plans;
- Update Pioneer Station Crossover Engineering Plans and Environmental Analysis;
- Additional evaluation of implementation strategies; and
- Additional Planning and Technical Meetings.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

These actions will not impact the safety of Metro customers and/or employees because this Project is

in the planning process phase and no capital or operational impacts result from this Board action.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The FY 2021-22 budget contains \$4,487,319 in Cost Center 4370 (Mobility Corridors), Project 460201 (WSAB Corridor Administration) for professional services. Since this is a multi-year contract, the Cost Center Manager and Chief Planning Officer will be responsible for budgeting in future years.

Impact to Budget

The funding for this project is in the Measures R and M Expenditure Plans. The fund source for the above activity is Measure R 35%. As these funds are earmarked for the WSAB Transit Corridor project, they are not eligible for Metro bus and rail capital and operating expenditures.

EQUITY ASSESSMENT

If selected by the Board, this Project will benefit communities through the addition of a new high-quality reliable transit service which will increase mobility and connectivity for the historically underserved and transit-dependent communities in the corridor. Approval of the contract modification will allow staff to complete the Draft EIS/EIR on schedule, which will be followed by a public review period allowing the corridor communities and other stakeholders the opportunity to provide their comments and feedback on the Project. The public review period was extended from 45-days to 60-days to allow the public additional time to review and comment on the document.

Various Project Measures and Mitigation Measures have been developed as part of the environmental document to mitigate potential impacts related to construction and/or operation of the Project. In addition, Metro has developed the WSAB Transit Oriented Development Strategic Implementation Plan (TOD SIP) to help cities maximize the transit investment that will be made in the corridor and to ensure that communities along the corridor equitably benefit from the investment. Metro will also be pursuing Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) Corridor Baseline Assessments for all Metro transit corridors, starting with Measure M, to support corridor communities in identifying strategies to equitably leverage the positive benefits on the transit investment while also preparing for potential unintended consequences around issues like gentrification and displacement.

Since initiating the Project study, Metro has conducted extensive outreach efforts with corridor communities and other stakeholders for a greater understanding of any potential harm or burdens that may potentially result from the Project. Targeted outreach efforts have been made to reach out to people of color, low-income, and limited English proficiency populations, and persons with disabilities. As a result of the comments received during the scoping process, as well as ongoing coordination with the corridor cities and continued technical analysis, several changes were made to the Project Definition. Additionally, Metro has introduced numerous efforts, such as the upcoming TOC Corridor Baseline Assessments, TOC Grant Writing Assistance Program, and the upcoming TOC Technical Assistance Program to support communities in equitably leveraging the transit investments and preparing for potential unintended consequences of gentrification and displacement to improve

equitable TOC outcomes for the WSAB corridor communities.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The Project supports the following strategic plan goals identified in Vision 2028: Goal 1: Provide high-quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling, Goal 3: Enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity and Goal 5: Provide responsive, accountable, and trustworthy governance within the Metro organization.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board could decide not to approve the recommended contract modification. However, this alternative is not recommended, as this would impact the project's environmental clearance schedule and would pose significant delays to the overall project schedule and increase the risk of not meeting the Project's Measure M timeline.

NEXT STEPS

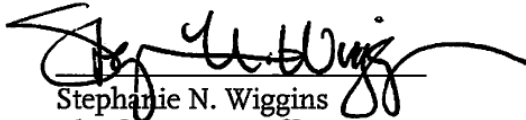
Upon Board approval, staff will execute Modification No. 13 to Contract No. AE5999300 with WSP USA Inc. for technical services to perform the necessary additional environmental analyses, and evaluation of implementation strategies. The findings of the Draft EIS/EIR are anticipated to be presented to the Board in January 2022.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A - WSAB Build Alternatives Map
- Attachment B - Procurement Summary
- Attachment C - Contract Modification/Change Order Log
- Attachment D - DEOD Summary

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