



## Board Report

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**File #:** 2022-0273, **File Type:** Motion / Motion Response

**Agenda Number:** 9.

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### REGULAR BOARD MEETING APRIL 28, 2022

**SUBJECT: WEST SANTA ANA BRANCH TRANSIT CORRIDOR PROJECT**

**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE status report on the January 2022 Motion 10 by Directors Hahn, Solis, Garcetti, Mitchell and Dutra on the West Santa Ana Branch Transit Corridor Project.

#### **ISSUE**

This item provides responses to the tasks included in the January 2022 Motion 10 (Attachment A) by Directors Hahn, Solis, Garcetti, Mitchell and Dutra (Legistar File# 2022-0023), as requested by the Board.

#### **BACKGROUND**

At its January 2022 meeting, the Board received the Draft EIS/EIR for the WSAB Project, approved Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS) as the northern terminus, and also approved the 14.8-mile Slauson/A Line to Pioneer route as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the project's initial segment between Artesia and Downtown Los Angeles. The Board further directed staff to conduct additional technical analysis to identify a cost-effective alignment route for the Slauson/A Line (Blue) to LAUS segment and to identify interim bus connections to connect Slauson/A Line (Blue) to LAUS.

At the January 2022 meeting, the Board also approved a motion by Directors Hahn, Solis, Garcetti, Mitchell, and Dutra (Motion 10) directing that the Board adopt as policy that the full WSAB project will be declared complete once it provides a single seat ride connecting the City of Artesia (Pioneer Boulevard) to LAUS via rail. The motion also included tasks for staff to initiate to ensure the full completion of the WSAB Project. The Board has requested that staff provide a status update on these tasks at the April 2022 Board Meeting.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Below is a report on the tasks included in the January 2022 Board Motion.

#### **A. Identify and pursue accelerated construction of individual project components and**

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**accelerated funding for the locally preferred alternative including as part of the Transit Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) Cycle 5, in order to complete it sooner than FY33.**

The Metro Grants Management Team, in collaboration with Planning, the Technical Services Team, other Metro departments, and WSP USA, Inc. has prepared and applied to the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) for Cycle 5 of the TIRCP grant. The application was submitted on March 3 and included a request of \$1 billion in funds.

**B. Advance Value Capture and Public-Private Partnership work, including a Project Development Agreement opportunity, to accelerate and complete the line into Downtown LA.**

Metro has procured a value capture consultant team to assist staff in the collaborative process with WSAB corridor cities to discuss opportunities for value capture. The value capture approach and process were presented to various governmental bodies, including the WSAB City Manager Technical Advisory Committee on February 10, 2022 (Attachment B). Initial meetings will be scheduled with cities and follow-up efforts are expected to take place in the upcoming months. Metro will also continue to coordinate with key stakeholders as part of the process including Gateway Cities COG and Eco-Rapid.

For the initial segment, Metro staff is continuing to assess project delivery methods to make a recommendation to the Board on a project delivery strategy in September. Staff has developed a list of topics and key questions to answer to determine how to best deliver the LPA and allow completion of the entire line to Union Station by 2041. Metro will recommend a delivery method based on its potential to accelerate the schedule, reduce costs, and provide a high-quality customer experience.

Metro staff are continuing to analyze the potential for a PDA to accelerate delivery of the downtown segment and provide a one seat ride from Pioneer to Union Station by 2041. Staff will continue to work with key stakeholders, including developers, businesses, and residents to assess the technical and financial feasibility of various alignment types.

**C. To mitigate impacts of a Slauson Ave forced transfer on the existing light rail system with the initial operating segment's northern terminus at A Line (Blue) Slauson Station:**

- 1. Coordinate with stakeholder agencies, including the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation, the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works, and the City of Vernon Public Works Department to develop and implement bus rapid transit service along the future final project alignment between Slauson Ave and Los Angeles Union Station, consistent with the Metro Board-approved Bus Rapid Transit Vision and Principles Study (March 2021).**

Additional technical analysis on the identification of bus connections to connect the Slauson/A Line (Blue) to the LAUS segment is included in the scope of work approved for Contract Modification No. 14 by the Board in March 2022. This work is under development and will include stakeholder coordination to consider speed and reliability

matters along the corridor and remain consistent with the March 2021 BRT Vision and Principles Study.

- 2. Advance major capital improvements to the Washington/Flower Wye Junction countywide light rail bottleneck, based on a minimum funding target of \$330 million as defined by previous studies (July 2017) to be sought through new or future funding opportunities. As this project will support increased transit usage during major events, including the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games, as well as improved service reliability for daily transit users, Metro shall prioritize the project for 2028-related funding opportunities, subject to consideration by the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games Mobility Executives group.**

The Washington/Flower WYE Junction is the point where the Metro A (Blue) Line trains merge with the Metro E (Expo) Line trains before proceeding north along Flower Street to enter the existing subway tunnel just south of the 7th/MetroCenter Station. This tunnel will soon operate further north through the new Regional Connector project tunnels. The Washington/Flower WYE would grade separate the northbound E Line track to allow the junction to operate more smoothly with less delay, which will then support systemwide operations. This portion of the line that travels along Flower Street is adjacent to the Los Angeles Convention Center and the Crypto.Com Arena. This area will serve as the location for the Olympic Games Downtown Sports Park that is expected to attract upwards of 360,000 daily visitors during the summer of 2028.

The project is currently not funded, however, it is included in the list of 28x'28 projects and Metro is currently working to advance the review of the Washington/Flower WYE Junction Improvements as part of the 2028 Mobility Concept Plan, a set of projects that will provide mobility benefits during the Games and deliver legacy benefits for Metro. The 2028 Mobility Concept Plan will be refined over the next few months with input from LA28, our mobility partners (LADOT, Metrolink and Caltrans) and other agency stakeholders. The refinements will include better scope definition and cost estimates for the project as well as prioritization based on mutually agreed criteria, with endorsements by LA28 and our mobility partners. The goal is to have a prioritized list for joint Olympic funding advocacy that the Board can adopt in the summer/fall of 2022.

**D. As part of the additional study of the Slauson to Union Station segment, include the following:**

- 1. Develop the Little Tokyo station and access, in collaboration with the Little Tokyo and surrounding communities.**

Technical analysis and additional stakeholder outreach for the Little Tokyo station access are included in the scope of work approved for Contract Modification No. 14 in March 2022. This work is currently being initiated.

- 2. An assessment of above-grade/aerial sections of the locally preferred alternative where cut-and-cover could be constructed at lower cost.**

Technical analysis and additional stakeholder outreach are included in the scope of work approved for Contract Modification No. 14 in March 2022. This work is currently being initiated.

**E. Consistent with the LA River / Rio Hondo Confluence Station's ongoing feasibility study, include design elements in the Final EIR for the locally preferred alternative that will reduce impacts to operations associated with future construction of this station.**

Metro Staff is currently preparing the feasibility study and anticipates presenting the findings of this station to the Board in Fall 2022. Based on the findings, Metro Board will determine the feasibility of this station.

In the meantime, the WSAB project is working on updating the WSAB alignment to not preclude this future station and to reduce impacts to WSAB operations associated with future construction of this station.

**F. In partnership with community-based organizations (CBOs), develop a local and targeted hiring policy and project labor agreement (PLA) for construction jobs and for permanent jobs to be created by the West Santa Ana Branch Project.**

Metro has had ongoing CBO partnerships with groups based along the southeast Los Angeles County corridor. Early on, the project established a Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) to guide the community engagement process to better define improvements and enhancements to the future rail line. In addition, the first-last mile (FLM) planning work that is scheduled to start beginning in May will have a robust CBO engagement strategy, which will be tailored to the communities near the stations, taking into account community context, prior planning and outreach efforts, demographics, groups often underrepresented in the planning process, and availability to participate at different days/times throughout the week or month. The engagement strategy will be developed in coordination with the CBOs and will identify opportunities to incorporate FLM activities into existing community events, recommend the number and location of the events/activities, and describe the format for soliciting input.

Metro has worked with 22 CBOs along the WSAB Corridor, including Alliance for a Better Community, California Environmental Justice Alliance, Communities for a Better Environment, and Southeast LA Collaborative (SELA) to name a few.

As with all Measure M, construction contracts that have a contract value over \$2.5 million, Metro Project Labor Agreement/Construction Careers Policy (PLA/CCP) applies. Metro's PLA was adopted on January 27, 2012, and was subsequently renewed on January 27, 2017 for a period of 10 years. Metro's PLA/CCP shall be applicable on the WSAB project.

The PLA/CCP requires that the contractors commit to meet the applicable targeted hiring requirements. In addition, Metro's PLA/CCP conforms with the Local Hire Initiative as announced by U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT) in May 2021. As part of Metro's PLA/CCP requirements is the hiring of a Jobs Coordinator to assist in the recruitment of targeted workers through a collaborative effort with CBOs and other key-stake holders.

**G. Maintain subregions' funding apportionments as provided under Measure M, with any consideration for borrowing across subregions subject to future Board action. Should it ever become necessary to consider the use of Central City Subregion funding for construction outside the Central City Subregion, the Central City Subregion shall be made whole dollar-for-dollar.**

The current funding plan for the locally preferred alternative includes Measure M funding designed for the Gateway Cities subregion and no Measure M funding designated for the Central City Area subregion. Any future funding plan for the LPA, or portions thereof, will only include Central City Area Measure M funds with the approval of the subregion and Board, and will include a provision to replenish the funds back to the subregion.

### **EQUITY PLATFORM**

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. The WSAB Transit Corridor is comprised largely by Environmental Justice (EJ) communities. In 2017 (the first year of environmental analysis), minority residents comprised 65 percent of the total Study Area population, with Hispanic/Latino groups alone accounting for 51 percent of the total population. In addition, 44 percent of Study Area residents live below the poverty level, which is higher than the county average of 33 percent.

Since initiating the Project study, staff has conducted extensive outreach efforts for corridor communities, and has continued to engage project stakeholders through a variety of forums and platforms, including special outreach efforts to reach out to people of color, low income, and limited English proficiency populations, and persons with disabilities. During completion of the above tasks included in the January Board motion, Metro staff will continue to engage project stakeholders, including collaboration with corridor CBOs in the upcoming FLM planning work. Staff will also reengage communities as a part of the completion of the final environmental document to help define the project, including alignment profile, station locations, and design, that meets the changing mobility needs of Little Tokyo, Arts District, LAUS and surrounding area residents, employees, and businesses.

### **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.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Staff will continue to make progress on the tasks included in the January 2022 motion.

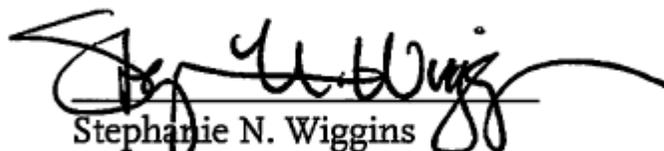
**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - January 2022 Motion 10

Attachment B - February WSAB City Manager TAC Presentation

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