



Board Report

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**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 15, 2023
EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 16, 2023**

SUBJECT: THE LONG BEACH-EAST LA (FORMERLY I-710 SOUTH) CORRIDOR MOBILITY INVESTMENT PLAN

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE report on the status of the Long Beach-East LA (formerly I-710 South) Corridor Task Force progress, draft Corridor Mobility Investment Plan, and original I-710 South Corridor Project.

ISSUE

This report provides an update on the development of the Draft LB-ELA Corridor Mobility Investment Plan (CMIP) that will be published in January 2024, along with an update to the Board on the progress made by the Task Force since the June 2023 meeting.

This report also provides an update on the status of the “No Build” conclusion to the original I-710 South Corridor Project Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) and grant activities supporting a LB-ELA Corridor project that was part of the Board-approved Pre-Investment Plan Opportunity.

BACKGROUND

In May 2021, the Metro Board approved a motion to suspend further work to advance the current 710 S Corridor Project EIR/EIS. The motion also directed staff to collaborate with a variety of stakeholders to conduct outreach and develop a funding plan in order to advance a revised Early Action Program that includes projects that can be advanced separately from mainline 710 South infrastructure improvements and to identify additional locally-supported projects to enhance mobility along the 710 South Corridor.

As a result, staff initiated the LB-ELA (formerly I-710 South) Corridor Task Force in September 2021 to re-engage local impacted communities and stakeholders to develop a set of recommendations for

Metro investment in multimodal projects and programs that would take the place of the original I-710 South Corridor Project, for which the Board suspended the environmental process and then took action to replace its original Locally Preferred Alternative 5C with Alternative 1, the “No Build” Alternative.

Staff convened a Task Force that included local jurisdictions, community advocates, and stakeholders representing goods movement, business, labor, public health, and air quality. Staff worked with the Task Force to establish the advisory Community Leadership Committee (CLC) that comprises local residents and related working groups to articulate the values of the communities and stakeholders within the corridor to guide the development of the LB-ELA CMIP. Based on this input, the Board approved the corridor Vision, Goals, and Guiding Principles at its September 2022 meeting.

With this foundation in place, staff launched the next phase of the Task Force’s workplan by conducting extensive community engagement and stakeholder outreach to develop the Task Force’s Initial List of Multimodal Strategies, Projects, and Programs (MSPPs). At the June 2023 Planning and Programming Committee, staff presented an overview of this process and the framework for generating the evaluation criteria that would be used to determine each of the MSPPs alignment with the Vision, Goals, and Guiding Principles.

Since June 2023, staff has led the Task Force and CLC, in joint and separate meetings to develop the evaluative criteria, receive feedback, and present on how the criteria were applied to the MSPPs. Staff has recently worked with the technical team to combine these results with additional factors and criteria to identify candidate projects and programs to be included in the Draft CMIP for consideration of Board investment.

DISCUSSION

The Draft CMIP will feature an overarching, multimodal, community-driven, and regionally significant transportation vision and investment strategy for the LB-ELA Corridor in response to the Board’s direction in May 2021 to re-engage community and corridor stakeholders to develop a new approach to investing Measure R and M funding intended for the I-710 South Corridor. This investment strategy will be aligned with and advance the Vision, Goals, and Guiding Principles as developed by the Task Force and community members and approved by the Board in September 2022.

The Draft CMIP will feature a set of investment recommendations for near-term, multimodal corridor projects and initiatives, implementation strategies to advance recommended projects and initiatives over time, and modal programs that will develop additional projects and programs for future investment opportunities.

At the heart of the CMIP will be a multimodal set of projects recommended for Board approval that will:

- (1) Advance and align with the LB-ELA Corridor’s Vision, Goals, and Guiding Principles.
- (2) Leverage Measure R and M funding committed to the corridor with state, federal and other sources of funding.
- (3) Identify other funding opportunities and strategic partners to advance projects and programs

not eligible for the use of Measure R and M funding.

To identify the multimodal set of projects recommended for Board approval and investment, the technical team evaluated the hundreds of projects across all modes (active transportation, arterial highways, community, freeway, goods movement, and transit) that were received from public and stakeholder input earlier this year (Attachment A). The Task Force will need to prioritize these projects as part of the Draft CMIP.

The evaluation process used numerous criteria-quantitative and qualitative-that the Task Force adopted in June 2023. These criteria were selected to reflect the Task Force's Vision, Goals, and Guiding Principles and offer ways of evaluating the wide array of projects staff received across all modes and states of readiness (Attachment B). A more detailed look into the evaluation criteria, how they were formulated, and methodology can be found in Attachments B and C.

Staff presented evaluation results to, and received feedback from, the Task Force, CLC, and stakeholders in October 2023. A summary of comments received from the Task Force and CLC is in Attachment D. After reviewing the draft evaluation scores with Task Force members and corridor stakeholders and incorporating input, staff made revisions and produced the final scoring results for each project evaluated (Attachment A).

Staff then assessed each project for readiness factors to determine which projects could be eligible for discretionary grant funding in near-term funding cycles. Staff considered the fact that readiness factors varied across modes given the complexity of each project; therefore, the readiness threshold for each mode will be tailored accordingly.

Tiering Analysis of Candidate Projects and Programs

Staff created a "Tiering Analysis" that would sort projects by (1) the evaluation scores that demonstrate alignment with the Task Force's Vision, Goals, and Guiding Principles and (2) the state of readiness to seek discretionary grant funding and be implemented near-term (Attachment E). Tier 1 projects score well across evaluation criteria, while Tier A projects are deemed to have a high state of readiness. A project that scores well across evaluation criteria and has a high state of readiness is considered a "Tier 1A" project, while a project that does not score as well across evaluation criteria and does not have a high state of readiness is considered a "Tier 2B" project.

Staff will assess projects in the Tier 1A, Tier 1B, and Tier 2A categories (Attachment F) to determine suitability for inclusion in the Draft CMIP as an investment priority for the Board. The Tier 1A category will include projects and planning efforts that will be competitive for near-term discretionary grant opportunities. Tier 1B projects may receive project development funding to support seeking future discretionary grant opportunities and implementation. Tier 2A projects have two pathways for selection - one is to be packaged with other Tier 2A projects-or with a Tier 1A project-to become a priority project, the other is if the project would be considered competitive for a specific, available grant opportunity tailored to such a project. Tier 2B projects will not be considered for investment at this time but will be re-considered in the future as part of the modal program development process.

Staff are currently presenting tiering analysis to and receiving feedback from the Task Force, CLC,

and stakeholders. A summary of preliminary comments received will be presented verbally by Staff during the Executive Management Committee Meeting on November 16, 2023.

Implementation Assessment

To help further refine the overall evaluation of projects, Tier 1A, 1B, and 2A projects (Attachment F) will then be assessed against several strategic factors to determine if the projects to be considered ultimately for Board funding will have a clear pathway toward implementation. These factors will help staff and the Task Force to prioritize projects and make its final recommendations for the Draft CMIP.

The prioritization factors are as follows:

- **Identified Roles and Responsibilities:** Metro will not be considered the lead agency for implementing many of the projects under consideration-particularly those that are on local roads. For a project to be prioritized for Metro funding and to be successful in securing discretionary funds, the roles and responsibilities for implementing the project must be understood and agreed upon. For projects under consideration, Metro is expected to play one or more of the following roles: Lead, Partner, Fund, Support, or Collaborate (Attachment G).
- **Discretionary Grant Strategy:** This factor will examine how well candidate projects and programs align with state, federal, and other discretionary grant programs to leverage local funding. Please see Attachment H for the methodology staff intends to use to help review alignment between candidate CMIP projects and prospective grant opportunities.
- **Project Cost / Local Match Required:** Combined with the discretionary grant strategy assessment, staff will also consider how project cost and how much local match would be needed to deliver the project, considering the amount of funding available - and when it is available - to serve as local match. This factor will be important to ensure that staff recommends a full program of projects for Board consideration as part of the Draft CMIP given limitations on Measure R and M funding available (Attachment I)
- **Political / Institutional / Jurisdictional Support:** Staff will navigate any existing or expected legitimate concerns to be raised by relevant institutions or political jurisdictions that could undermine the project's potential for implementation.
- **Equity Considerations:** The CMIP must align with the LB-ELA Guiding Principle of Equity, deliver benefits to Equity Focus Communities and under-resourced jurisdictions, and consider equity-based concerns in the design, construction, and outcomes phases of CMIP implementation. This factor will assess the equitable geographic distribution of funds, consider opportunities to provide technical assistance to jurisdictions with fewer shovel-ready projects, and identify a path forward for concerns to be addressed after approval of the CMIP.
- **Practical Feasibility / Constructability:** Projects and Programs will be assessed for any potential limitations to their construction or implementation.

These prioritization factors will be evaluated concurrently with the presentation of the tiering analysis to the Task Force and CLC. Staff will use these factors, the evaluation scores, and the tiering analysis to develop a recommended set of projects for Task Force consideration in December 2023. Following that discussion, staff will finalize the recommended set of projects and programs to prioritize for inclusion in the Draft CMIP.

Modal Programs

The CMIP is intended to be a “living” document in the sense that Measure R funding available now will be supplemented by future allocations of Measure M (FY26 and FY32). Accordingly, the plan will feature Modal Programs that will enable staff, in collaboration with local jurisdictions and/or partners, to develop and refine projects not selected for funding by the Board in the initial release of the CMIP to become better candidates for funding in future cycles, by improving evaluation or readiness factors. Staff is considering setting funding targets for each Modal Program to demonstrate current and future Measure R and M commitments to these modes going forward while specific projects and programs are developed for securing grants and/or implementation.

Modal Programs will also be the “workshop” in which new strategic initiatives and pilot programs will be developed or launched to advance the Vision, Goals, and Guiding Principles of the Task Force, whether Metro serves as the lead, partner, or collaborator.

The Modal Programs will comprise the following categories:

- Active Transportation
- Arterial
- Community
- Freeway (incorporating multimodal Improvements)
- Goods Movement
- Transit

Modal Programs will also allow staff to develop new projects in Equity Focus Communities that did not have projects ready for evaluation at this time, or to incorporate equity features into existing projects, to help the CMIP align with its Equity Principle and its overarching Vision and Goals.

Within the Modal Programs, Community Programs offer an opportunity to advance programs and initiatives supported by local communities that align with the Vision and Goals of the Task Force and promote a greater quality of life for local impacted residents across a wide array of policy areas. Community members have made it clear that they would like, as an outcome of the CMIP, a focus on community health and workforce development, among other priorities. Staff recognizes that Metro may not be the appropriate lead agency or funder for these programs and is evaluating for each of these Community Programs the appropriate role for Metro, whether Measure R/M funding or another funding source should be considered, and what other agencies should be convened to develop and advance these programs. A final assessment of these issues related to Community Programs will be provided as part of the Draft CMIP recommendations.

Public Engagement Process

Staff has continuously conducted public engagement as the work of the Task Force progresses toward the development of its project priorities and funding recommendations for Metro. As part of the Draft CMIP release, scheduled for January 2024, Metro will be holding a series of community meetings and other engagement activities throughout the corridor area to generate public awareness and elicit comments on the draft. These engagement activities will encourage the community to get involved to learn more and provide feedback on the recommended funding strategies and project list for the LB-ELA corridor communities. To support these efforts, staff will implement a robust Community Engagement Program (CEP) that is equitable, educational, and engaging, with the goal of receiving informed input from the diverse corridor area audiences.

Engagement Approach Leading up to and Following Release of Draft CMIP

From mid-January through late February 2024, the CEP will include a strategic sequence of communication tactics, including an inclusive, multilingual, and grassroots-oriented approach leading up to the release of the Draft CMIP as well as a comprehensive community engagement campaign. A monthly e-newsletter will be circulated leading up to the Draft CMIP release, accompanied with links to interactive features on the corridor StoryMap, to ensure that the communities are being engaged and informed leading up to that milestone.

The approach for the CEP will be initially informed by the prior public engagement campaigns as well as with insights from the ongoing Task Force and CLC efforts. In-person, digital, and grassroots strategies will be further refined and coordinated in partnership with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) that have an established presence and reach to the 18 cities and 5 unincorporated communities in the corridor area.

CBO Partnerships

Following Metro's Community Based Organization Partnership Plan, staff has coordinated with interested CBOs to help inform the approach for the CEP and support the implementation of community engagement activities. Leading up to the release of the Draft CMIP, two roundtable meetings are planned with more than 30 CBO partners to receive input and coordinate their support with notification and community engagement tactics leading up to and during the Draft CMIP release and community engagement campaign period.

CBO Partners are anticipated to lead and/or support community engagement events and notification activities. CBO partners include, but are not limited to:

- Mexican American Opportunity Foundation (MAOF; 12 locations)
- YMCA (three locations)
- Community Family Guidance Center
- Rio Hondo College
- East LA Chamber of Commerce
- Northwest Downey Little League
- Regional Hispanic Institute

- Black Women Rally for Action
- Hoops 4 Justice
- South Gate Junior Athletics Association
- Southern California Area National Council of Negro Women
- Tower of Faith Evangelic Church
- Salvation Army Long Beach Red Shield
- Compton Community Garden
- Calvary Chapel Compton
- Humble Servants N Motion
- Para Los Niños
- Eastmont Community Center
- Southeast LA (SELA) Collaborative.

Communications Campaign - Following Draft CIP Review Period

The CEP includes a multilingual communications campaign that will include e-newsletter updates, emails, and information-sharing booths at community events and pop-up events as well as activities that continue to promote public awareness on the CMIP.

I-710 South Corridor Project “No Build” Update

At its May 2022 meeting, the Board acted on a request from Caltrans to rescind the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) 5C and, in its place, approve Alternative 1, the “No Build” alternative, as the new LPA for the I-710 South Corridor Project Final Environmental Document ([File #2022-0100 <https://boardagendas.metro.net/board-report/2022-0100/>](https://boardagendas.metro.net/board-report/2022-0100/)). This action effectively concluded the prior environmental process and cleared the path forward for the Task Force to provide a new set of projects and programs as part of the I-710/Long Beach-East LA Corridor Mobility Investment Plan for Board consideration to deliver much-needed investment for the communities directly impacted by the movement of people and goods through the I-710 South Corridor ([File #2022-0336 <https://boardagendas.metro.net/board-report/2022-0336/>](https://boardagendas.metro.net/board-report/2022-0336/)).

Caltrans District 7 initiated the process to close out and finalize the EIR/EIS for the I-710 South Corridor Project. On October 4, 2023, Caltrans District 7 submitted letters to the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) (Attachment J) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) (Attachment K) transmitting the I-710 South Administrative Final EIR/EIS and seeking comments by November 1, 2023. Providing an early review of the draft final environmental document to USEPA and USACE is required per the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Memorandum of Understanding between the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Caltrans. The I-710 South Corridor Project Final Environmental Document is expected to be signed by Caltrans District 7 in mid-2024.

Update on LB-ELA Corridor Grant Activities

Staff presented an overview (File #2023-0019 <https://boardagendas.metro.net/board-report/2023->

0019/>) of grant applications submitted by Metro and other agencies for multimodal projects and programs in the LB-ELA Corridor. As a result, state and federal agencies awarded nearly \$1 billion in discretionary grant and surplus funding programs to these corridor projects and programs, including three of four Board-approved Pre-Investment Plan Opportunity (PIPO) projects.

Metro recently submitted a set of grant applications for the remaining PIPO project, the I-710 Humphreys Avenue Crossing Project. These applications were for the federal Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Program and the state's Reconnecting Communities: Highways to Boulevards program, seeking vital planning and construction funding for this project and to identify additional opportunities to improve related freeway crossings that need improvement to better serve bus, bicycle, and pedestrian mobility across the freeway to connect communities separated by I-710. Additional information about these grants can be found in Attachment L.

EQUITY PLATFORM

The LB-ELA Task Force endeavors to advance equity through its process and its ultimate outcome through the Investment Plan. Staff is engaging stakeholders, including those most likely to be impacted by potential improvements in the corridor, through a Community Leadership Committee (CLC), Community Based Organization (CBO) Partnering Strategy, and other avenues of public engagement to develop the LB-ELA Corridor Investment Plan. Staff has also continued coordinating meetings of the Equity Working Group (EWG), attended by Task Force and CLC members, to advise on overall equity considerations and pilot the Equity Planning and Evaluation Tool (EPET).

The CLC is composed entirely of residents from the communities along the corridor, the majority of which are Equity Focus Communities, and meetings are facilitated in English and Spanish. Further, CLC members are compensated through the agency's Advisory Body Compensation Policy. The CLC continues to participate in orientations and CLC business meetings as well as in the Equity and Zero Emission Truck Working Group meetings. Through their participation, the CLC reviews proposals and develops recommendations for consideration by the Task Force. During the evaluation process, CLC members recommended changes to criteria, advised on community priorities, and provided feedback on the results, such as concerns about geographic equity, which are being considered by the technical team in the prioritization process.

Staff has also implemented a CBO Partnering Strategy with more than 30 CBOs that are based in and work with the communities along the LB-ELA Corridor and predominantly serve Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) populations (Attachment M). Metro's goal is to continue to identify needs and priorities during the next phase of this work by gathering input from CBOs and the people they serve. A complete list of CBO Partners and a description of planned engagement activities is included in this report.

In June 2023, the EWG participated in an EPET workshop focused on documenting community histories for the EPET and CMIP. Task Force and CLC members contributed accounts of lived experiences (personal and interpersonal) to paint a more complete history from diverse community perspectives. Following the meeting, staff distributed a community history survey completed by several Task Force and CLC members. Accounts collected at the workshop and through the survey

will be part of the Draft CMIP presented to the Metro Board and the public in early 2024.

Between now and the next update to the Metro Board in January 2024, the LB-ELA Corridor Task Force and its attendant working groups and CLC will continue to promote community-driven conversations to ensure an equitable decision-making process as the Task Force develops multimodal strategies and identifies priority projects and programs for the LB-ELA Corridor to be brought to the Metro Board for consideration.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Collaboration among the LB-ELA Corridor communities impacted residents, Caltrans District 7, the Gateway Cities Council of Governments, and stakeholders through Task Force meetings and its attendant committees and public outreach forums will lead to the development of the multimodal, multiyear LB-ELA Investment Plan. The process and the outcome of the Task Force will help implement three key Metro Vision 2028 Strategic Plan Goals:

- 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
- Goal 4: Transform LA County through regional collaboration and national leadership

NEXT STEPS

The Task Force will provide its input into the Draft CMIP and test for consensus in December 2023.

Metro will publish the Draft LB-ELA Corridor Mobility Investment Plan and provide it to the Board in January 2024.

Staff will continue their public engagement process (Attachment N) on the development of the Investment Plan and return to the Board with the Final CMIP, including an official version of the CMIP that serves as a qualifying Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan for the purpose of securing funding from the California Transportation Commission's Solutions for Congested Corridors Program.

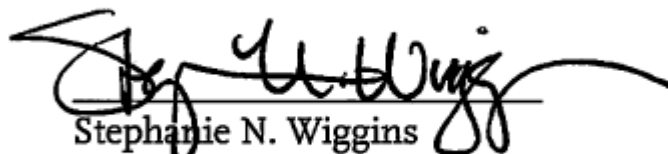
ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A - Draft Candidate Projects and Combined Evaluation Scores
- Attachment B - Evaluation Criteria and Rubric
- Attachment C - Evaluation Summary
- Attachment D - Summary of Task Force / CLC Comments on Evaluation Scores
- Attachment E - Tiering Analysis
- Attachment F - Tiered CMIP Candidate Project List
- Attachment G - Metro Roles in Implementing the CMIP
- Attachment H - Grant Pursuit Strategy Implementation Steps

Attachment I - Measures R and M Funding Availability
Attachment J - Caltrans District 7 Letter to the US Army Corps of Engineers
Attachment K - Caltrans District 7 Letter to the US Environmental Protection Agency
Attachment L - LB-ELA Corridor Grant Activities
Attachment M - List of CBO and FBO Partners
Attachment N - Community Engagement Activities Summary

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