

**Board Report**

File #: 2023-0658, **File Type:** Motion / Motion Response**Agenda Number:** 18.

**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
OCTOBER 18, 2023****Motion by:****DIRECTORS HORVATH, BASS, YAROSLAVSKY, BUTTS, and NAJARIAN**

Metro's Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project (Project) proposes up to 16 miles of fixed guideway connecting the San Fernando Valley to the Westside and ultimately to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) through one of the most congested freeway corridors in the United States with more than 400,000 Angelenos moving through it every weekday. Much of this congestion results from the complex geography of the area and the very limited number of public transit options running north-south through the Santa Monica Mountains.

Metro is currently advancing technical studies in support of developing a draft environmental impact report pursuant to CEQA to evaluate project alternatives that address the transportation needs of the Sepulveda Corridor. During the environmental review phase, the Metro Board approved a finding that the use of a Pre-Development Agreement (PDA) for the Project could achieve a number of private sector efficiencies by integrating planning, design, and construction activities associated with the Project. In October 2019, Metro issued a Request for Proposals for the performance of the pre-development work, including cost estimates, constructability reviews, and technical analyses to support the ongoing development of the Project. Metro awarded the contract to the two highest ranking firms: LA SkyRail Express (Monorail) and Sepulveda Transit Corridor Partners (Heavy Rail).

The PDA project development period includes clear phases and milestones. In each phase, the PDA contractors are required to advance the design of their Transit Solutions Concept (TSC), working closely with Metro to protect the integrity of the environmental process, while taking into consideration meaningful public and stakeholder feedback, an essential element of any proposed Metro project. To ensure that stakeholders receive regular updates on project progress, milestones, and any potential impacts, Metro initiated public outreach meetings in 2018 to begin gathering community feedback. Thus far, Metro has held nine public meetings on the Project, providing project updates and discussing project alternatives for environmental review. There are additional public outreach and informational meetings planned for October 2023. Metro's community outreach staff conducts these outreach meetings, and Metro makes all information presented and gathered at community meetings available to the public. The project's website serves as a central hub for sharing information with the public, ensuring accessibility to all.

While Metro retains the absolute sole discretion to make decisions under CEQA, which includes

deciding whether to proceed with the Project or not, Metro's contract with the PDA teams permits them to also meet with community stakeholders to gather input and feedback provided that the teams notify Metro in writing of the planned meeting and topics and, following the meeting, share the substance of the communications and results of the meeting. Because Metro has not completed the Project's environmental review, the PDA teams are required to include disclaimer language on meeting agendas with stakeholders. These meetings are not publicly noticed, nor is the information presented and discussed made public.

Effective public participation during the planning process is a core value at Metro and an essential component to the success of any major project. Effective public participation strategies should also be applied to the PDA firms to minimize any confusion and improve transparency around the PDA teams' meetings with community stakeholders during the environmental process.

**SUBJECT: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE SEPULVEDA TRANSIT CORRIDOR PROJECT
MOTION**

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE Motion by Directors Horvath, Bass, Yaroslavsky, Butts, and Najarian that the Metro Board instruct the Chief Executive Officer to:

- A. Work with the PDA teams to publish reports of their community stakeholder meetings on a dedicated website or platform accessible to the public no later than December 1, 2023, to ensure that the information shared in the PDA teams' meetings is available to all interested parties, recognizing that because Metro has not completed an environmental review, the information contained does not constitute or evidence an approval by Metro of, or commitment of Metro to, any action for which prior environmental review is required;
- B. Report to the Board in January 2024 with an accounting of the amount of funds that have been budgeted and expended for both the Sepulveda Corridor Transit Corridor Project and the I-405 Express Lane Project; and
- C. Upon completion of the PDA process, report with an evaluation of the efficacy of the PDA model compared to other tried and tested project delivery methods as well as the development of a lessons learned assessment.