



Board Report

File #: 2016-0557, File Type: Informational Report

Agenda Number: 40.

PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 16, 2016

SUBJECT: RAYMER TO BERNSON DOUBLE TRACK PROJECT UPDATE

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE response to the February 25, 2016 Board directive to provide a **final report for the Raymer to Bernson Project**.

ISSUE

At the February 25, 2016 Board of Director's meeting, Directors Kuehl, Krekorian, Antonovich and Dupont-Walker requested that Staff work with the California Secretary of Transportation to re-scope the Raymer to Bernson Double Track project to avoid 1.5 mile segment of residential area in Northridge (refer to Attachment A).

DISCUSSION

Background

The Raymer to Bernson Double Track Project will increase regional mobility along the Metrolink Ventura Subdivision and the Los Angeles-San Diego-Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) corridor by providing a second mainline track, approximately 6.4 miles in length, between Control Point (CP) Raymer to CP Bernson . The Ventura Subdivision is used by Metrolink Ventura Line, Amtrak Pacific Surfliner, Amtrak Coast Starlight and Union Pacific freight trains. This project is located in the rail corridor owned by Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) and Metro. As part of this work, nine at-grade rail crossings and two bridges will be reconstructed including a new second side platform and a new grade separated pedestrian crossing at the existing Northridge Metrolink Station.

There are currently two mainline tracks between Los Angeles Union Station and CP Raymer. North of CP Raymer, it is a single track with passing sidings located along the corridor through Ventura County. When northbound and southbound train schedules require a meet in the single-track corridor, one train must wait in a siding location for the other train to pass. This not only delays service but also results in trains idling in the sidings. Since CP Bernson to CP Topanga currently has two mainline tracks, the double track project as originally proposed would then allow for a continuous double-track railroad for additional 8.7 miles north of CP Raymer to CP Topanga, near the Chatsworth Metrolink station, improving the regional mobility, increasing the reliability of train services and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from idling trains (refer to Attachment B).

Partial Double Track Alternative

In response to concerns of residents adjacent to the project site, Metro has engaged WSP Parsons Brinkerhoff to analyze an alternative configuration of a partial double track that leaves in-place the existing 1.5 miles of single track by the residential neighborhood between Lindley Avenue and Balboa Boulevard (north of CP Raymer) and provides 5 miles of a new second mainline track between Balboa Boulevard to CP Bernsen. The purpose of the study is to determine the operational benefits of the existing condition compared to the “partial double track” alternative and the full double track alignment. Two simulation analyses were conducted as part of the study. The first analysis evaluated the reliability of the partial double track configuration assuming the current (June 2016) Metrolink, LOSSAN and freight service schedules. The second analysis evaluated the maximum capacity proposed partial track alternative compared to the proposed double track alignment to determine if it can sufficiently support the future service volumes defined in Metrolink’s 10-Year Strategic Plan and LOSSAN Corridorwide Strategic Implementation Plan.

The study concluded that both configurations (partial and full double track) can support the current train service schedules (passenger and freight) and the forecasted future train service growth defined by Metrolink’s 10-Year Strategic Plan and LOSSAN Corridorwide Strategic Implementation Plan. The operational capacity would increase by 150% for a partial double track alternative compared to a 200% increase for the full double track alignment. The study also indicated that additional capacity under both the partial and full double track alignments is possible through modification of the existing signal system. Since signal spacing determines the frequency and overall throughput in each direction of the corridor, it is a contributing factor to capacity similarly to a physical track capacity.

Staff has shared the results of the study with the California State Transportation Agency and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Division of Rail and Mass Transportation. Caltrans is supportive of the full double track project as it is a much needed improvement that will enhance regional mobility for the LOSSAN corridor. Caltrans was not receptive to the proposed partial double track concept and preferred the full double track configuration. Caltrans also indicated that the state funds can only be redirected to the improvements along the LOSSAN corridor which is along the Metrolink Venture Line in Los Angeles County.

Staff also met with Sherwood Forest residential neighborhood last month to discuss the findings of the study including the State’s response on the preference of the full double track configuration. Staff will continue to keep the Sherwood Forest residential neighborhood and any interested stakeholders updated with any new developments of the project.

FUNDING

Metro has secured a total of \$80.3 million for the project with \$60.82 million from the California State Transportation Improvement Program and \$19.48 million California State Proposition 1B Intercity Rail. The California Transportation Commission has postponed the funding of the project to fiscal year 2019. As of June 2016, Caltrans has ended the funding contract for the design phase of the project and Metro has placed the project on hold.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue to monitor state funding for the project and if state funding is still available, staff will return to the Board with recommendations by the first quarter of FY 19.

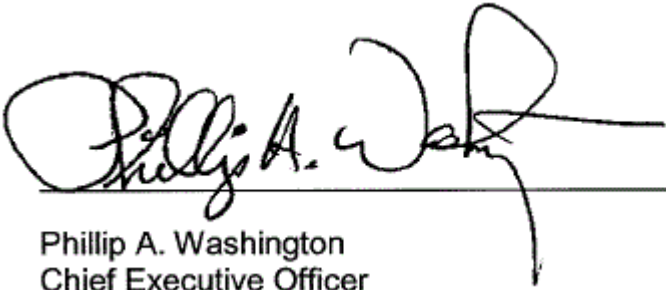
ATTACHMENT

- A. Raymer to Bernson Motion
- B. Metrolink Ventura Sub.

Prepared by: Dan Mahgerefteh, Senior Manager, Transportation Planning Regional Rail (213) 922-3662

Jeanet Owens, Senior Executive Officer, Project Management/Regional Rail,
(213)922-6877

Reviewed by: Richard Clarke, Chief Program Management Officer, (213) 922-7557



Phillip A. Washington
Chief Executive Officer

Amendment by Directors Kuehl, Krekorian, Antonovich and Dupont-Walker

February 25, 2016

Raymer to Bernson Double Track Project

The Raymer to Bernson Double Track Project proposes 6.4 miles of second mainline track between Control Point Bernson near De Soto Avenue and Control Point Raymer near Woodley Avenue. The project will also upgrade the Northridge Metrolink station by providing a second platform, a grade-separated pedestrian underpass, new passenger information displays, and improved wayfinding. Roughly 1.5 miles of the double track project runs through a residential neighborhood in Northridge where the second track would be spaced at 15 feet from the existing track and approximately 35 feet from the residential property lines with no proposed noise and vibration mitigations included. The Raymer to Bernson Double Track Project benefits external agencies, and Metro is the project manager for Metrolink.

The project proceeded through the environmental and design phase without any public input or review by the residential community even though it would result in train tracks moving 15 feet closer to existing homes. Upon learning of the project this past summer, residents quickly organized to oppose it. As a result of numerous community concerns, the Metro CEO directed that the project be placed on hold in August 2015 pending further technical analysis and engagement with the community. To address community concerns, Metro took noise and vibration readings at key neighborhood locations. The results show that existing levels exceed current federal standards with noise levels regularly reaching 107 dBA decibels. The results also confirm that noise and vibration will increase with the proposed double track project.

Despite Metro's outreach efforts, continued misinformation and inaccurate data have resulted in a deep level of distrust and anger towards this agency by the residents. Residents question the accuracy of the project's environmental categorical exemption as well as the number and length of trains delayed daily in the corridor. This inaccurate information, coupled with a lack of public outreach, has resulted in a united and firm opposition by the residential community to the project.

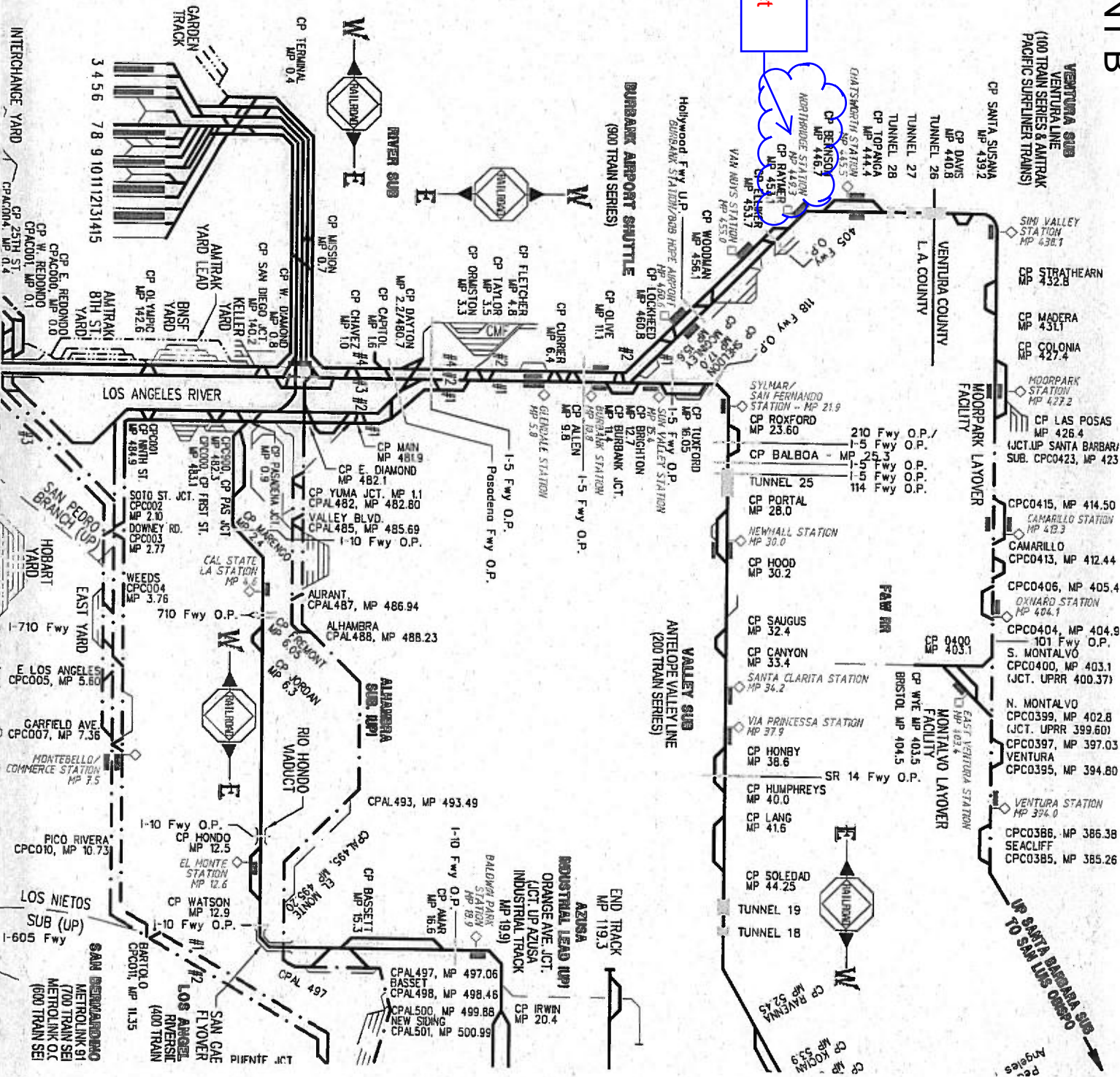
Metro has secured \$104 million in funding for the project with \$63.5 million coming from the State Transportation Improvement Fund (STIP). STIP funding is highly competitive, and it is important to maintain the funding for improvements in Los Angeles County. According to Metrolink, providing a second mainline track outside of the residential area would still provide a significant operational improvement to the flow of Metrolink, Amtrak, and UPRR trains.

WE THEREFORE MOVE that the **Board** direct the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to:

1. Work with the California Secretary of Transportation to re-scope the Raymer to Bernson Double Track project to avoid the 1.5 mile residential area in Northridge.
2. Should the State not authorize a reduced project scope, the CEO shall work with the California Secretary of Transportation to identify another qualified project in Los Angeles County where the project funding could be utilized.
3. Continue outreach to the residential neighborhood to ensure they are informed regarding the progress of this motion.
4. Provide a progress report in April 2016 with a final report back in July 2016.

ATTACHMENT B

Raymer to Berrison
Double Track Project



3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 21 31 41 51