

**Board Report**

File #: 2017-0135, **File Type:** Motion / Motion Response

Agenda Number: 6.

**AD-HOC CONGESTION, HIGHWAY AND ROADS COMMITTEE
APRIL 19, 2017**

SUBJECT: HIGH DESERT CORRIDOR (HDC) STATUS UPDATE

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE **status report on the HDC project.**

ISSUE

The purpose of this report is to update the Board on the actions taken since the completion of the environmental process in response to a motion (Attachment A) by Directors Najarian and Antonovich (File # 2016-0949), and discuss next steps toward the implementation of the Project.

DISCUSSION

Project Overview

The HDC Project is a proposed 63-mile multi-purpose transportation improvement project linking State Route (SR) 14 in Los Angeles County and SR-18 in San Bernardino County (Attachment B - Project Map). The project is intended to improve east-west transportation mobility to accommodate existing and future transportation demand between Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties, improve the regional goods movement network, and enhance traffic safety.

In June 2016, the HDC Project Approval and Environmental Document (PAED) process was completed and the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) and the Project Report were signed by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). A comprehensive status report on the Preferred Alternative was presented to the Board in July 2015 under Board Report No. 2015-0896.

The Preferred Alternative (PA) consists of a combination of a freeway, an expressway, a toll segment, and a High Speed Rail (HSR) Service (Attachment C - Preferred Alternative). The incorporation of green energy technology such as solar power and a bike path along the corridor were also included in the PA.

Caltrans served as the lead agency responsible for compliance with the California Environmental

Quality Act (CEQA) and the preparation of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Caltrans, under delegated authority by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) also ensured compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The final step, securing one or more Records of Decision (ROD) from Federal agencies would require a financial plan for the project.

During the PAED process, the Project Development Team (PDT) comprised of Metro, Caltrans, and the HDC Joint Powers Authority (HDCJPA) representing local Cities along the High Desert Corridor, and the Counties of Los Angeles and San Bernardino conducted detailed evaluation of all alternatives considered including various alignments for the project and potential benefits, costs, and impacts of those alternatives including a No-Build alternative, freeway/expressway with and without HSR feeder/connector service, and freeway/tollway with and without HSR feeder/connector service; and the appropriate analysis of various options and variations under each alternative. The PDT also identified appropriate mitigations for the Project impacts. The proposed roadway configuration was planned to begin in Palmdale as a freeway, follow Avenue P-8 in Los Angeles County, continue parallel to and south of El Mirage Road where entering San Bernardino County, turn east to Air Expressway Boulevard near I-15, transition to an expressway at Dale Evans Parkway, and end at SR -18/Bear Valley Road in the Town of Apple Valley.

The HDC HSR was envisioned to connect the proposed California High Speed Rail (CHSR) station in Palmdale to the proposed XpressWest high speed rail station in Victorville. XpressWest is a privately-owned high speed passenger rail service planned to operate between the cities of Victorville in San Bernardino County and Las Vegas in Nevada.

Further details of the Project were reflected in the report presented to the Board in July of 2015.

Financial Plan

The Project Initiation Document (PID) and PAED phases of the HDC Project were funded by \$32.5 million in Measure R funds, \$4,447,535 in Measure I funds from SANBAG, and \$15.5 million in grandfathered Regional Improvement Program (GF RIP) funds.

Total project cost is estimated at over \$11 billion in 2018 dollars. Metro has programmed \$270 million in Measure M funds in Fiscal Years (FY) 2019 through 2021 based on a rough estimate of right-of-way acquisition costs. These funds can be repurposed for appropriate project uses as approved by the Metro Board. Additionally, \$1,878,700,000 in Measure M funds were programmed for the LA County segment in FYs 2063 through 2067.

No other funds are available for this project at this time.

Public Private Partnership (P3)

The Project is being considered for implementation through a P3 process. While seeking P3 opportunities, Metro staff began communication with Caltrans District 7 and District 8, SANBAG, and the HDCJPA to detail the timing of implementation of the Project, identify potential future funding for the project from various sources, confirm the anticipated schedule of implementation of

complimentary and connecting projects (CHSR and XpressWest), as well as coordinate multi-agency efforts in advancing the various components of the Project. The HDC JPA recently completed a HSR Ridership and Revenue Study and held a live webinar to publish the results in March 2017.

Initial findings suggest that the implementation of the Project would likely be in phases with consideration of urgency or need for each segment and component as well as the expected benefits gained by the proposed investments. For each highway segment, “logical termini” will need to be identified and fully funded to advance to subsequent phases. In this case, partial RODs may be pursued for the phases of the Project in lieu a single ROD for the entire Project. In the event the various components of the Project are to be implemented on separate schedules, the current Project documents may need to be amended to reflect the necessary changes to satisfy design and environmental requirements.

NEXT STEPS

The HDC JPA recently completed a HSR Ridership and Revenue Study, and held a live webinar in March 2017 to publish the results. Metro will complete a Level II Traffic and Revenue study for the proposed freeway tolling in May 2017. Upon completion and review of both studies, Metro will work with the PDT towards completing the Project Financial Plan, which is required prior to issuance of a Record of Decision (ROD) for the project.

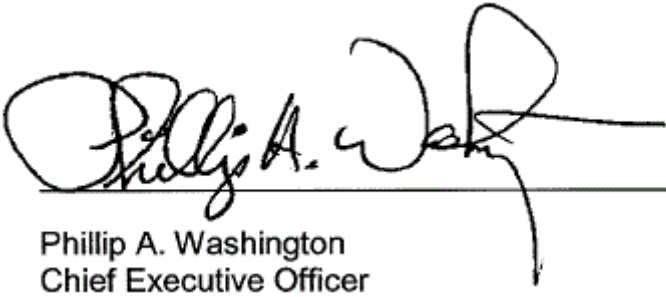
Additionally, Metro will continue to work with Project partners (Caltrans and the HDCJPA) to identify feasible and practical ways to advance the project including appropriate phasing by segments and/or Project components and the necessary variations from what has been identified in PAED phase. Staff will report back to the Board in August 2017 with an update.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A - Motion Najarian & Antonovich
- Attachment B - Project Map
- Attachment C - Preferred Alternative
- Attachment D - Project History

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Board Report

File #:2016-0949, **File Type:**Motion / Motion
Response

Agenda Number:20

**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
JANUARY 18, 2017**

Motion by:

Directors Antonovich and Najarian

January 18, 2017

High Desert Multipurpose Corridor

The High Desert Multipurpose Corridor (HDMC) will play a critical role in North Los Angeles County by increasing mobility through its prime rail and highway components, as well as its interconnectivity to regional rail, California High Speed Rail, and the Palmdale Airport; facilitating improved regional goods movement by eventually connecting Interstate 5 to Interstate 15; generating green energy for both its rail operation and the surrounding area, and; by greatly expanding active transportation through dozens of miles of bikeways.

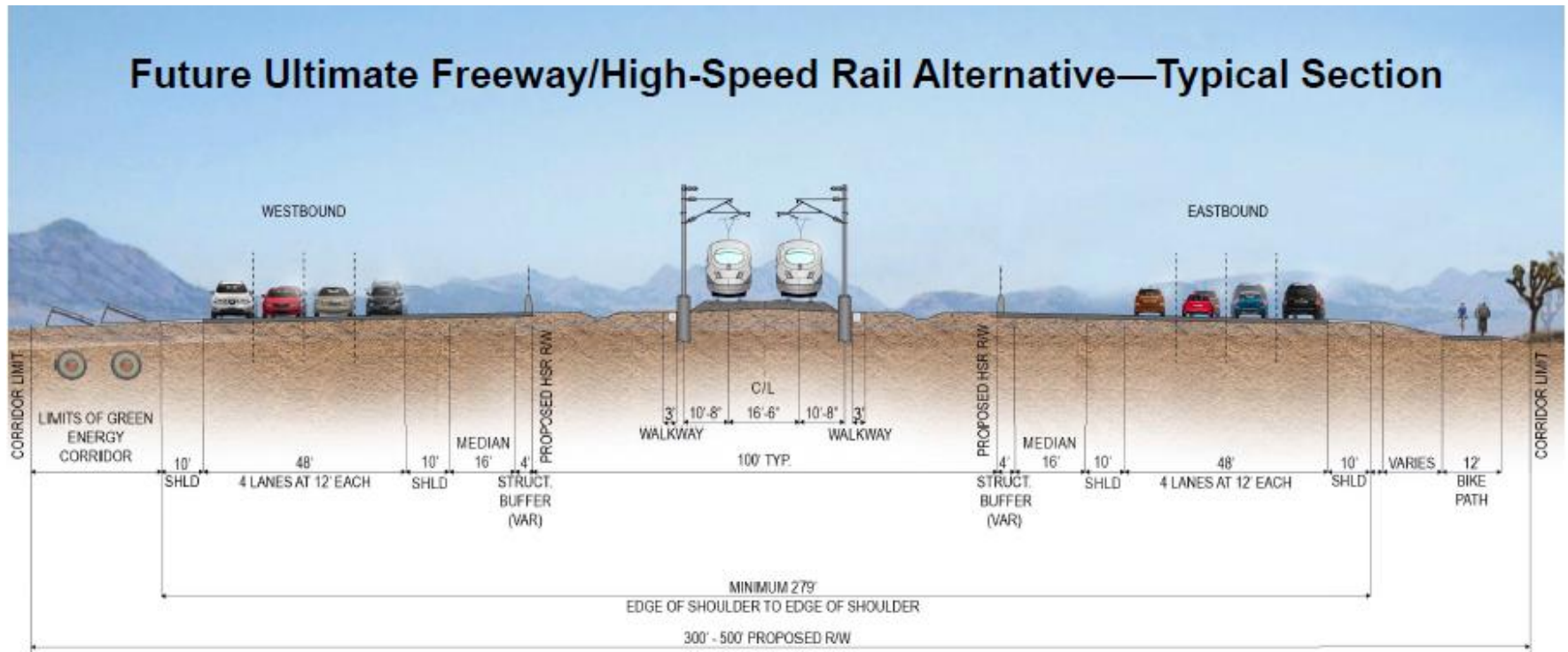
HDMN is also a priority public-private partnership project for Metro that has already reached critical milestones, including a certified environmental impact study and significant funding commitments, as identified in Measure M. The HDMC's Joint Powers Authority will soon be releasing the results of an investment-grade rail ridership study, and Metro is currently undertaking a toll revenue study, which is anticipated to be completed in spring 2017.

CONSIDER **Motion by Antonovich and Najarian** that the Metro Board of Directors direct the CEO to report back to the Board in March 2017 with a status update on the High Desert Multipurpose Corridor Project, including important milestones reached, next steps, collaborative efforts between staff and the HDMC JPA, and opportunities for advancement of the project.

High Desert Corridor



Future Ultimate Freeway/High-Speed Rail Alternative—Typical Section



ATTACHMENT D

Project History

In 1995, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) adopted a new alignment for SR-138 as a freeway.

In 1996, a Project Study Report (PSR) was approved by Caltrans District 7 for a combined freeway/conventional highway at the west end of the corridor near SR-14.

In 1998, a PSR was approved by Caltrans District 8 in San Bernardino addressing improvements along the SR-18 at the east end of the corridor

In 2002, a Regionally Significant Transportation Investment Study (RSTIS) was conducted by Caltrans Districts 7 and 8 in partnership with the FHWA, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), the San Bernardino County Associated Governments (SANBAG), Metro, the Counties of Los Angeles and San Bernardino, the Cities of Palmdale, Lancaster, Adelanto, Hesperia, and Victorville, and the Town of Apple Valley for the High Desert Corridor that was to provide transportation connectivity between the Counties of Los Angeles and San Bernardino. The RSTIS Steering Committee adopted, as the Locally Preferred Alternative, an east-west corridor that resembles the current proposal.

In 2004, the North County Combined Highway Corridors Study (NCCHCS) conducted by Metro in cooperation with the Cities of Lancaster, Los Angeles, Palmdale, and Santa Clarita, and the County of Los Angeles was completed. The Study developed a multi-modal transportation plan for the northern part of the Los Angeles County with focus on SR-138 corridor as a key feature to accommodate traffic and goods movement demand.

In 2005 the HDC was officially recognized in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) Section 1305 as a High Priority Corridor E-220 on the National Highway System (NHS) between Los Angeles and Las Vegas via Palmdale and Victorville.

In 2006 the High Desert Corridor Joint Powers Authority (HDCJPA) was formed to oversee the planning, development, financing, and construction of a freeway corridor between SR-14 in the Palmdale/Lancaster area and Adelanto, Victorville, and Apple Valley. The HDCJPA membership includes the Counties of Los Angeles and San Bernardino, Town of Apple Valley, and the cities of Adelanto, Victorville, Lancaster and Palmdale.

Also in 2006, a Project Study Report - Project Development Support (PSR-PDS) was approved by Caltrans Districts 7 and 8, which addressed the development of a future

High Desert Corridor transportation facility from SR-138/SR-14 junction in Los Angeles County to Interstate 15 (I-15) in San Bernardino County.

In 2007 the City of Victorville and Caltrans District 8 conducted environmental studies for projects at the east end of the corridor the leading to improvements between US-395 and SR-18. In 2009, Caltrans District 7 conducted environmental studies for improvements at the west end of the between SR-14 and 100th Street East. During the course of conducting these two studies and coordinating with regulatory and resource agencies for the proposed projects, it was determined that the public's interest would be best served by combining these into one larger project – the HDC – which incorporates the two “end pieces” and fills the gap in between.

In April 2010, the Metro Board of Directors authorized entry into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for implementation of the HDC Project in cooperation with the HDCJPA; SCAG; SANBAG; Caltrans Districts 7 and 8; Counties of Los Angeles and San Bernardino; cities of Lancaster, Palmdale, Victorville, Adelanto; and the Town of Apple Valley.

In 2011 a supplemental PSR- PDS was approved to extend the easterly project limit for approximately 13 miles terminating at Bear Valley Road Cutoff in the town of Apple Valley. This is a supplement to the PSR-PDS approved in 2006 with original project limit between SR-14 to I-15.

In March 2012, the HDC was identified by the Metro Board as a strategic multi-purpose corridor. The new project scope included highway, high speed rail (HSR) service, a bikeway, and an energy production and/or transmission corridor (Attachment C – Preferred Alternative).