



## Board Report

File #: 2025-0166, File Type: Budget

Agenda Number: 11.

### PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE MAY 14, 2025

**SUBJECT: HIGH DESERT CORRIDOR FY26 WORK PROGRAM**

**ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATION**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

CONSIDER:

- A. APPROVING \$11,937,350 in Measure M High Desert Multipurpose Corridor (HDMC) funds identified in the Expenditure Plan for Right-Of-Way (ROW) acquisition to be repurposed to the High Desert Corridor (HDC) Joint Powers Agency (JPA) for the Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) work program; and
- B. AUTHORIZING the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or their designee to negotiate and execute all necessary funding agreements with the HDC JPA.

#### **ISSUE**

The Metro Board is a member agency of the HDC JPA and annually programs Measure M funds dedicated to the HDMC to support the HDC JPA's efforts to advance the HDMC High Speed Rail alignment through the FRA's Corridor Identification and Development Program. The HDC JPA has requested Metro program Measure M funding for the FY26 HDC JPA work program to advance the project's planning, environmental, and advanced conceptual services (Attachment A) to support the project's advancement through the FRA planning process.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The HDMC, features the implementation of a new 54-mile east-west High-Speed Rail (HSR) alignment (the Project) between the future Palmdale Multimodal HSR Station in Los Angeles County and the Brightline West (BLW) Station in Victor Valley in San Bernardino County. The HDMC is funded through Measure R and Measure M with each listing the Project in their respective expenditure plans. Metro programs funds for the Project annually to advance its progress through a rigorous Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) grants process known as the Corridor Identification and Development Program (CIDP), which was created in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

(2021).

The Project will link the Metrolink Antelope Valley Line (AVL) with two future HSR lines - California High Speed Rail Authority (CAHSR) and BLW (Attachment B). CAHSR is a State initiated program that is mandated to deliver high-speed rail service between San Francisco and Los Angeles. BLW is a privately funded HSR service that will connect Las Vegas with Victor Valley and Rancho Cucamonga. Once completed, the Project will enable passengers to travel between Palmdale and Victor Valley in less than 30 minutes and provide a key rail link to encourage one-seat rides between Los Angeles County and Las Vegas and San Francisco.

The Project supports the State's ambitious greenhouse gas reduction efforts and provides economic development and mobility benefits for a region that includes many historically underserved, low-income, and disadvantaged communities. The Project is estimated to deliver 9 million boardings per year.

### Environmental Review

Measure R provided \$33M for the environmental clearance of the HDMC, which at the time included a four-lane freeway/tollway and HSR service between Palmdale and Victorville. The \$33M in Measure R funds have been fully expended. In 2016, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) completed the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review of the Project. In December 2020, Caltrans subsequently informed the Federal Highway Administration that the "no build" option was selected for the freeway/tollway element of the HDMC. The removal of the four-lane freeway/tollway would necessitate updates to the environmental document.

In April 2021, the HDC JPA requested that the Project move forward with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) as the lead agency for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review. To streamline the environmental review process, the HDC JPA opened dialogue in October 2024 with the CAHSR to utilize their NEPA delegation for the CAHSR to be the lead agency of environmental review of the Project.

### Metro Support for Project Advancement through the FRA CIDP

The FRA prioritizes future passenger rail corridors for investment through its CIDP, which lays out a three-step process for potential corridors to undergo project planning and development to become ready for implementation. The Metro Board has consistently provided vital support for the Project over the past five years (Attachment C) to develop the project and secure FRA support to enter and advance through the CIDP's three steps:

Step 1: Scoping

Step 2: Preparation of the Service Development Plan (SDP)

Step 3: Preparation for implementation

At its January 2023 meeting, the Metro Board committed \$8.5 million in Measure M Project funds to serve as 50% local match for two grant applications that resulted in the following awards: \$8 million from the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) Transit and Intercity Rail Corridor Program (TIRCP) for advanced engineering (April 2023) and \$500K from the FRA for CIDP planning work (December 2023).

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The \$1 million in combined funding from the Board and FRA for CIDP planning work allowed the HDC JPA to complete Step 1 of the CIDP and enter into Step 2 (Preparation of the SDP). The SDP is a planning-level document that provides FRA, Metro and project stakeholders with the information needed to assess the utility of establishing HSR service along the HDMC, the costs of implementation, and the next steps to advance the Project. Metro initiated the SDP for the HDMC on behalf of the HDC JPA in 2020 prior to the creation of the CIDP and submitted it to FRA in January 2023; following new guidance released by FRA for the CIDP process in 2024, the HDC JPA obligated \$100K of the FRA CIDP grant to align the draft SDP with new FRA requirements. Metro will continue to work with the HDC JPA to update and finalize the SDP to submit to FRA for final approval in 2026.

The \$8 million TIRCP award combined with Metro's \$8 million local match (\$16 million total) will support advanced conceptual design and other pre-implementation activities that are part of Step 3 of the FRA CIDP.

## **DISCUSSION**

On April 17, 2025, the HDC JPA Board approved the proposed FY26 budget and work program for \$11,937,350, subject to Metro Board approval. Key activities for the FY26 work program include:

1. Completing the NEPA process - HDC JPA will work with the CAHSR, lead agency, to finalize and submit the environmental document to FRA. Once NEPA approval is received, anticipated to occur in early 2026, HDC will seek CEQA concurrence that finalizes the environmental approval process, to then achieve a Record Of Decision in late 2026.
2. Continued grant pursuits - in December 2024, the HDC JPA submitted a \$42 million Federal-State Partnership (FSP) grant application for advanced conceptual design to integrate the Project with CAHSR and BLW. The HDC JPA will await the award of grants through the FSP and will continue to pursue grant opportunities, leveraging the \$17M in grant funding provided so far, as they become available.
3. Update the SDP - HDC to provide technical analysis and support for Metro to submit the final SDP Gap Analysis to the FRA for final approval in 2026.
4. Consultant Services - HDC to provide program management, engineering, and financial advisory services, as the HDC JPA mobilizes towards 30% design, plus management of the JPA. See Attachment D for the HDC JPA FY26 work program budget detail.

## **DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT**

The Project's advancement will be done per all applicable FRA, California Public Utilities Commission, CAHSR, BLW, and Metrolink design and engineering standards, which will maximize Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and safety benefits to the public.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

The Measure M Expenditure Plan includes \$170 million for the Project for right-of-way (ROW) acquisition or other project uses, and can be repurposed for appropriate project uses, as approved by the Metro Board. \$23,758,000 million of this amount has already been repurposed and programmed

in various Metro Board actions to advance the SDP, fund HDC JPA administration, and serve as local match to successful grants. Currently, there is approximately \$146.2 million available, which is eligible to be used by the HDC JPA to fund the FY26 work program, complete the Final SDP, and mobilize towards 30% design.

Recommendation A will repurpose and program \$11,937,350 in funds from the ROW acquisition to implementation of the FY26 HDC JPA work program, leaving a balance of \$134.3 million in remaining Measure M funds for future HDC JPA ROW activities.

<b>Measure M Funding Plan for HSR Project ROW Acquisition</b>	<b>\$ 170.0M</b>
- Prior Metro Board Actions (See Attachment C)	(\$ 23.8M)
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>\$ 146.2M</b>
- FY26 Work Program/Recommendation A (Metro Board 5/25)	(\$ 11.9M)
<b>Projected Measure M Balance for HDC</b>	<b>\$ 134.3M</b>

Note - the table above does not include \$33M in Measure R funds spent previously for Caltrans to complete environmental clearance in 2016 for the HDMC, including the four-lane freeway/tollway, which was later removed from the Project by Caltrans.

Impact to Budget

\$11,937,350 has been included in the FY26 Proposed Metro Budget for the HDC JPA FY26 work program under project number 475499.

It will be the responsibility of the Chief Planning Officer to program funds for the HDC JPA for this multi-year program in the future. Annual funding agreements between Metro and the HDC JPA will be audited and reconciled each year, subject to Measure M requirements.

The funding source for this project is Measure M 17% Highway, which is not eligible for Metro bus & rail operations and capital projects.

**EQUITY PLATFORM**

The Project will improve mobility for residents in North Los Angeles County by providing a high quality, environmentally friendly, safe, and efficient transportation option to access jobs, healthcare, education, other services, and economic opportunities offered at major urban and employment centers in Los Angeles and Las Vegas. As part of the environmental review process, the HDC JPA has engaged in frequent dialogue with key governmental stakeholders, plus consultation with local native tribal governance councils. As the Project advances, there will be extensive outreach to the local communities.

The entire Project service area falls within the low-income communities and households as defined by AB 1550. A significant portion also falls within disadvantaged and low-income communities, as defined by SB 535. The Project also serves Metro-defined Equity Focus Communities (EFC) in the Antelope Valley, including the cities of Palmdale, Lancaster, and unincorporated Los Angeles County. In addition, between 61% and 77% of residents within the Project area are predominantly from Black,

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Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) populations, with the highest percentage of BIPOC populations in the City of Palmdale. Many of the BIPOC populations include people with limited English proficiency.

### **VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED OUTCOME**

VMT and VMT per capita in Los Angeles County are lower than national averages, the lowest in the SCAG region, and on the lower end of VMT per capita statewide, with these declining VMT trends due in part to Metro's significant investment in rail and bus transit.\* Metro's Board-adopted VMT reduction targets align with California's statewide climate goals, including achieving carbon neutrality by 2045. To ensure continued progress, all Board items are assessed for their potential impact on VMT.

As part of these ongoing efforts, the Project is expected to contribute to further reductions in VMT. This item supports Metro's systemwide strategy to reduce VMT by shifting roadway users to the High Desert Corridor high-speed rail service and other regional rail corridors. The reduction in VMT will also improve transportation safety in the High Desert region by reducing travel on State Route 138, a two-lane, rural state highway which experiences higher-than-average traffic volumes/collision rates. Other benefits include reductions in traffic congestion, greenhouse gas emissions, and vehicle noise for those living near highways. Metro's Board-adopted VMT reduction targets were designed to build on the success of existing investments, and this item aligns with those objectives.

\*Based on population estimates from the United States Census and VMT estimates from Caltrans' Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) data between 2001-2019.

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

Recommendation A supports the Metro Vision 2028 Strategic Plan goals 1, 4, and 5 as follows:

- Goal 1.2: Invest in a world-class transit system that is reliable, convenient, and attractive to more users for more trips;
- Goal 4.1: Work with partners to build trust and make decisions that support the goals of the Vision 2028 Plan;
- Goal 5.2: Exercise good public policy judgment and sound fiscal stewardship.

### **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

An alternative is that the Board does not approve the recommendations. This is not advised since completion of the Final SDP will enable the Project to participate in the Federal Corridor Identification Program. Additionally, the HDC JPA has received \$17 million in grants and Metro Board-approved funding to advance the Measure R and M Project, indicating strong support from State and Federal partners that the Project has merit and provides value to the Southern California rail network.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Subject to the Board's approval of the recommendations, Metro will execute a funding agreement

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with the HDC JPA to implement the FY26 work program. Metro will continue coordination meetings with the FRA and the HDC JPA to complete the Final SDP. Staff will return to the Board annually.

The HDC JPA will bring onboard an engineering design services firm in Summer 2025 to advance the Project design. The HDC JPA will continue efforts toward environmental clearance, with a Record of Decision expected in late 2026. Metro and HDC JPA are anticipated to submit the final SDP Gap Analysis to the FRA for final approval in 2026.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - HDC JPA Funding Request

Attachment B - HDC Corridor Map

Attachment C - Metro Board Actions in Support of HDC

Attachment D - HDC JPA FY26 Work Program Budget Detail

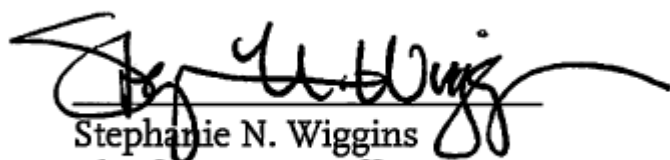
Prepared by: Jay Fuhrman, Senior Manager, Multimodal Systems & Corridors Planning, (213) 547-4381

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Reviewed by: Ray Sosa, Chief Planning Officer, (213) 547-4274



Stephanie N. Wiggins  
Chief Executive Officer



February 12, 2025

To: Ray Sosa, Metro Chief Planning Officer

From: Arthur Sohikian, HDC JPA Executive Director

RE: **Consistent with the Measure M Expenditure Plan, HDC JPA requests the Metro Board consider approving the HDC JPA FY26 Work Program at Metro's May 2025 Board meeting.**

### **2024 HDC JPA Highlights**

- High Speed Rail Project National Environmental Policy Act continues with a goal to achieve a Record of Decision.
- April 2024, HDC JPA completes California TIRCP \$8M master agreement.
- April 2024, HDC JPA obligates \$100,000 FRA Corridor Identification Program Grant to complete the Service Development Plan with Metro as project lead.
- May 2024, Metro Board approves FY2024-2025 HDC JPA Budget Work Plan
- July 2024, HDC JPA Financial and Business Advisory Consultant Team contract begins.
- October 2024, HDC JPA releases Engineering and Design Services RFP
- December 2024, HDC JPA Financial Budget and Model draft is unveiled that assisted in FY26 Budget Work program development
- HDC JPA will consider adopting the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget at their upcoming Board of Directors meeting on April 17, 2025.

### **HDC JPA FY2025-2026 Work Program**

The HDC JPA is pleased to report that the coming FY26 fiscal year continues the build out of the organizational structure of the agency by adding the Engineering and Design Support Services consulting team. HDC JPA staff submit a NEPA and Planning FY26 Work Program.

Consequently, as the High Speed Rail Project progresses beyond the environmental phase into preliminary engineering/design and right of way planning, the HDC JPA requires additional staffing and contractors to support the increasing complexity, expertise, and level of effort this project requires. To conduct this work effort, the HDC JPA FY26 Proposed Budget of \$11,937,350 (Attachment A) seeks to establish the organizational management structure for this purpose. As noted in Attachment A, the HDC JPA requests Measure M Funds of \$11,937,350. A summary of the activities that would be conducted with this funding is highlighted below.

### **Complete NEPA environmental clearance and Obtain Record of Decision**

The HDC JPA continues working with the FRA and the California High Speed Rail Authority staff to continue the NEPA environmental clearance, Section 106 analysis as well as obtaining an FRA Record of Decision for the High Speed Rail Project in FY26. The funding in the FY26 Budget reflects the anticipated increased activity.



### **Metro Staff Assistance**

The HDC JPA values its partnership with Metro. It is important to note Metro staff have been critical to the success of project development activities to date. As the project progresses, the HDC JPA will continue to rely on Metro's expertise.

### **HDC JPA Agency Management**

To effectively set up the agency's organizational structure and manage the expanded work program for FY26, it is incumbent and justified to have the appropriate staffing to assist executive management with the additional responsibilities that will be required. Planning is at the forefront of the activities, including financial planning. The HDC JPA will be onboarding staff providing technical expertise to effectively carry out the expanded duties as it pertains to environmental approvals, engineering design, financial planning and right-of-way planning.

### **Update High Desert Corridor Service Development Plan (SDP)**

Metro will continue as lead on the HDC Service Development Plan (SDP) to be submitted to FRA for final consideration in FY26. The current January 2023 SDP requires additional analysis and cost updates due to the alignment, structural, and operational changes made to the Project since January 2023. This budgeted amount will be reimbursed to the HDC JPA through the Federal Railroad Administration Corridor Identification Grant funds.

### **Engineering and Design Support Services (EDS)**

Engineering Design and Related Advisory Services (EDS) will begin in FY26. The EDS firm will support HDC JPA with overseeing the work related to the engineering and design services that will be necessary for FY26.

This work includes conducting advanced conceptual planning and engineering work that includes the following tasks: 1) engineering oversight of the work to be conducted to integrate the HDC JPA High Speed Rail Project into the Palmdale Station with California High Speed Rail Authority and the Victor Valley Station with the Brightline West organization; 2) oversight of the engineering work to be conducted for the Service Development Plan; 3) coordinate with the conceptual engineering work to be conducted by the Environmental Clearance Team; 4) coordinate with the Federal Railroad Administration and State Agencies; 5) coordinate with the Right of Way Project Team on ROW Acquisition Planning; 6) support grant applications and grant agreement compliance; and, 7) provide cost scheduling, control, and estimating functions, as well as other related support services.

The HDC JPA appreciates the continued partnership with Metro to advance the HDC JPA High Speed Rail Project with your guidance and requests the Metro Board consider approving the HDC JPA FY26 Work Program at Metro's May 2025 Board meeting.

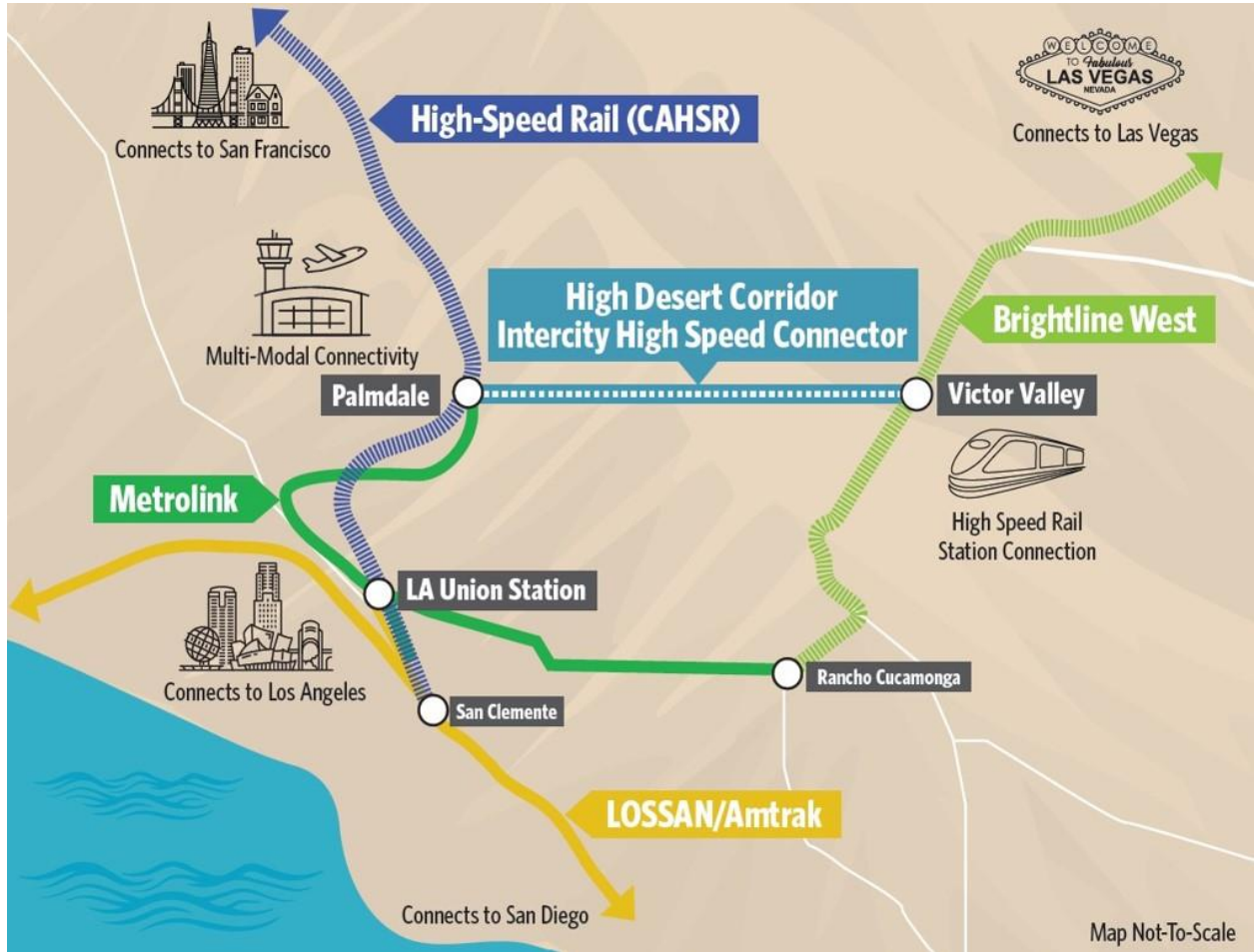
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Arthur V. Sohikian".

Arthur V. Sohikian  
Executive Director



# ATTACHMENT B



## ATTACHMENT C

### Metro Board Actions in Support of HDC

In August 2020, the Metro Board approved a Life-of-Project (LOP) budget of \$5 million to develop a SDP for the Project. Metro, in partnership with the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) and Brightline West, developed the SDP in coordination with the HDC JPA and other key stakeholders.

In April 2022, the Metro Board approved an increase of \$500,000 in the LOP budget to complete the HDC SDP to develop additional engineering analysis, rail operation analysis, operations and maintenance plans, and coordinate with stakeholders. In addition, the Metro Board approved \$1,236,500 for the FY23 HDC JPA work program. The Board action funding the FY23 work program can be found in file number [#2022-0171](#).

In August 2022, the Metro Board approved Metro's participation in the new HDC JPA, replacing the previous HDC JPA after the decision from San Bernardino County to withdraw from the HDC JPA.

In January 2023, the Metro Board programmed \$8,500,000 to the HDC JPA as a local match for a State Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) grant and for the FRA Corridor Identification and Development (ID) Program for project development and to advance the Project towards 30% design. The Board action funding the Metro match for future grant pursuits can be found in file number [#2022-0847](#).

In May 2023, the Metro Board authorized \$1,947,500 for the FY 24 work program, which included funding for the HDC JPA to work towards NEPA environmental clearance, and the ROD, HDC JPA management, the procurement process to onboard both a financial advisory firm and program management support services, technical planning and grant application support, and other administrative expenses. The Board action funding the FY24 work program can be found in file number [#2023-0099](#).

In May 2024, the Metro Board authorized \$4,374,000 for the FY 25 work program, for the HDC JPA to complete the NEPA environmental clearance, achieve the ROD, HDC JPA management, the onboarding of an engineering firm for advanced conceptual design, technical planning and grant application support, and other administrative expenses, plus \$2,200,000 for Metro to complete the SDP. The Board action funding the FY25 work program can be found in file number [#2024-0084](#).

NOTE – A Measure M compliance audit will be performed during FY 26 to reconcile and confirm Project expenditures to date.

METRO PROGRAMMING OF MEASURE M FUNDS FOR HDC PROJECT *				
Metro Board Date	Amount	Programmed to Date	Balance of Measure M Funds Remaining	Comment
			\$ 170,000,000	Starting Measure M Balance of Funds Available for HDC
August 2020	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 165,000,000	Metro Develop a Service Development Plan (SDP) for the Project
April 2022	\$ 1,736,500	\$ 6,736,500	\$ 163,263,500	FY 23 HDC JPA Work Program and increase to SDP Budget
January 2023	\$ 8,500,000	\$ 15,236,500	\$ 154,763,500	Metro local match to future State and Federal grant applications
May 2023	\$ 1,947,500	\$ 17,184,000	\$ 152,816,000	FY 24 HDC JPA Work Program
May 2024	\$ 6,574,000	\$ 23,758,000	\$ 146,242,000	FY 25 HDC JPA Work Program and Metro to complete the SDP
May 2025 **	\$ 11,937,350	\$ 35,695,350	\$ 134,304,650	FY 26 HDC JPA Work Program
\$ 35,695,350				
* - does not include \$33M in Measure R funds previously programmed to environmentally clear the multi-purpose/highway corridor				
** - proposed				

## ATTACHMENT D

### High Desert Corridor Joint Powers Agency Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2026

Item	HDC JPA Budget Description	Proposed FY26 Amount
1	<p><b>California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) staff support for NEPA Reevaluation Work:</b> Provide funding for California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) staff support to conduct the NEPA Reevaluation work that will be delegated by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to the CHSRA to support HDC JPA's environmental clearance that is needed to obtain a Record of Decision. Budgeted amount for FY26 is based on workplan that California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) provided, which is budgeted for fiscal year 2026.</p>	\$1,940,000
2	<p><b>Re-evaluate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) &amp; Record of Decision (ROD):</b> Complete the NEPA Re-evaluation/Re-validation and Record of Decision (ROD) with Final Review by the FRA NEPA designation entity California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA). Tasks for FY26 include:                      -Addressing comments, provide revised version for CHSR final review. Prepare final version for NEPA Re-evaluation and prepare a ROD for CHSRA final approval.                      -Draft a Letter of Concurrence and re-initiate ROD Section 7 consult. Complete Section 106 process, Tribe Consultation. Prepare CEQA addendum for state funding. Conclude Surface Transportation Board (STB) Petition Approval process.                      2. Conclude Surface Transportation Board (STB) Petition Approval process.                      Contractors: Transportation Solutions: \$248,000                      Epic Land Solutions, Inc.: \$555,000                      Circlepoint: \$1,368,000                      Venable LLP: \$294,000                      Arrellano Associates \$120,000. Other sub contractors as needed based on NEPA process.</p>	\$2,585,000
3	<p><b>Service Development Plan (SDP) Update:</b> Metro will continue as lead on the HDC Service Development Plan (SDP) that will be submitted to FRA for their consideration in FY26. Based on FRA direction, the current January 2023 SDP requires additional analysis and cost updates due to the alignment, structural, and operational changes made to the Project since January 2023. This budgeted amount may be reimbursed to the HDC JPA through the <u>Federal Railroad Administration Corridor Identification Grant Stage 2 at 90% federal, 10% Measure M.</u></p>	\$2,310,000
4	<p><b>HDC JPA Management:</b> Oversee agency management including technical analysis, grant applications, budgetary activities, equity focused planning, administration, engineering, right-of-way planning, stakeholder engagement and communications. For FY26, HDC JPA management functions will be augmented to meet the increased project needs requiring the services of a senior level project management/planning, engineering and right-of-way (ROW) planning support, communications staff, and administrative support staff. As the project progresses beyond the environmental phase into preliminary engineering and final design, the HDC JPA requires additional staffing to support the increasing complexity, expertise, and level of effort. Contractors:                      AVS Consulting, Inc.: \$344,500                      Cal Strategic Management: \$290,000                      ERCL Consulting LLC: \$121,110                      HDC As-Needed Staff Support: \$68,900</p>	\$824,510
5	<p><b>Financial Advisory Services:</b> Conduct ongoing financial planning &amp; analysis, modeling, and structural management analysis to support project development into the fiscal year 2026 that includes identifying, developing, and refining the project funding plan, analyze options for local, state, and federal funding contributions toward the project, prepare local, state, federal grant applications and provide grants management support, coordinate with station integration planning work, provide updated ridership forecasting as needed, identify credit enhancement strategies. Coordinate with the Engineering Design Services firm that will be onboarded. Maintain and update on an</p>	\$1,165,000

## ATTACHMENT D

### High Desert Corridor Joint Powers Agency Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2026

6	<p><b>Program Management Support and Construction Management Support Services (PMC):</b> Procure the professional services of a program management support and construction management support services (PMC) firm to support HDC JPA with overseeing the work related to the phases of Engineering and Design, Construction, Transition to Operational Control, and Closeout. This work includes development of statements of work, contract development, contract administration support, local, regional, state, federal, and interjurisdictional grant agreement compliance, procurement support services, set and monitor program controls, project management, third party management including utility relocation, right-of-way acquisition &amp; relocation plans and implementation, cost scheduling &amp; control functions, cost estimating, environmental compliance, configuration management, transition to operational management, and other related support services. For FY25, the PMC contractor will be performing work at a level of effort that will be commensurate with transitioning from the environmental phase into the Preliminary Engineering phase of the project consisting of developing the Preliminary Engineering and Design (PE) statement of work and contract development, and developing a right-of-way acquisition and relocation plan. This budgeted amount is estimated for a 6 month work period during FY 25. Estimate is based on a previous three-year look ahead that will be revised to reflect the updated Service Development Plan assumptions and costs.</p>	\$0
7	<p><b>Engineering Design and Related Advisory Services (EDS):</b> The Engineering, Design, and related services (EDS) firm to support HDC JPA Executive Management with overseeing the work related to the engineering and design services that will be necessary for FY26. This work includes conducting advanced conceptual planning and engineering work that includes the following tasks: 1) oversight of the engineering work to be conducted for the Service Development Plan; 2) coordinate with the conceptual engineering work to be conducted by the Environmental Clearance Team; 3) engineering oversight of the work to be conducted to integrate the HDC JPA High Speed Rail Project into the Palmdale Station with California High Speed Rail Authority and the Victor Valley Station with the Brightline West organization; 4) coordinate with the California High Speed Rail Authority, Federal Railroad Administration and other State Agencies; 5) Coordinate with ROW Acquisition Planning work effort; 6) support grant applications and grant agreement compliance; 7) provide cost scheduling, control, and estimating functions, as well as other related support services. Funding for this task will be partially funded by the \$16.5 million TIRCP grant funding allocated to HDC JPA.</p>	\$2,480,000
8	<p><b>County of Los Angeles Treasury, Auditor-Controller, Legal Counsel, Public Works Staff Support:</b> Monthly Support for Accounts Payable/Accounts Receivable functions, Legal Counsel Support, Budget Oversight, Board Meetings staffing, Agency Oversight &amp; Compliance Items, Procurement /Contract Services plus Request for Proposals preparation and Oversight, and contract execution.</p> <p><b>Public Works Procurement/Vendor Services:</b> \$120,000 Procurement support services to advise, monitor, and provide oversight for preparing request for proposals, contract development and execution, memoranda of understanding (MOU), state and federal procurement compliance processes. These support services will include procuring contracts in the areas of professional services contracts and architectural and engineering contracts. For FY26, the support includes supporting the procurement processes that may come up during the fiscal year.</p> <p><b>Controller:</b> \$90,000 - Monthly Support for Controller related functions, budget oversight, grants reporting, invoice payments, financial reporting, interagency funds transfers, monthly reconciliation reports, and other related financial reports.</p> <p><b>Legal Counsel:</b> \$60,000 - Monthly Support for legal counsel to review agency contracts, memorandum of understanding (MOU), funding agreements, Board of Director reports, Agency Regulatory Compliance, Grant Applications &amp; Compliance, Procurement Documents: Request for Proposals process, contractual agreements, contract execution, and other related services.</p>	\$270,000
9	<p><b>LA Metro Staff Support:</b> Provide Metro staff support from several departments including Regional Rail Program, Cost Estimating, Countywide Planning support and assistance on an as-needed basis to support HDC JPA.</p>	\$150,000
10	<p><b>Stakeholder and Public Engagement and Planning Assistance:</b> Provide communications, community engagement, and other related planning assistance to support the Agency communications and planning functions.</p>	\$90,000

**ATTACHMENT D**

**High Desert Corridor Joint Powers Agency Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2026**

11	Audit Services: County of Los Angeles Audit Services	\$30,000
12	LA Metro Funding Agreement Audit Services	\$25,340
13	Multi-Media Promotion, Materials & Advertising. US HSR Association yearly membership	\$45,000
14	IT Support, Software & Website Mgmt.	\$22,500
15	Total Adopted FY25 Budget & Proposed FY26 Budget	<b>\$11,937,350</b>
16	Less: Reserve Fund-Cash on Hand as of March 31, 2024	<b>\$0</b>
17	Measure M Funds Requested for FY26 Budget	<b>\$11,937,350</b>



# High Desert Corridor Joint Powers Agency Fiscal Year 26 Work Program Planning and Programming Committee

May 14, 2025

Legistar File 2025-0166



# Recommendations

- APPROVE \$11,937,350 in Measure M High Desert Corridor (HDC) funds to the HDC Joint Powers Agency (JPA) for the Fiscal Year (FY) 26 work program; and,
- AUTHORIZE the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or their designee to negotiate and execute all necessary funding agreements with the HDC JPA.



Metro



# Project Background and Benefits

- The High Desert Corridor is a 54 mile east/west corridor which will create a major transit hub and high-speed rail connectivity from Palmdale to:
  - Future Brightline West high speed rail service to Las Vegas and Rancho Cucamonga
  - Future California High Speed Rail Authority (CAHSR) high speed rail service to Los Angeles and northern California
  - Current Metrolink commuter rail Antelope Valley Line
- Project benefits include:
  - Improved regional rail connectivity throughout southern California and to Las Vegas
  - Reduce Vehicles Miles Traveled and greenhouse gas emissions
  - Equity benefits to underserved, low-income and disadvantaged communities
- Metro is a member of the 6 member HDC JPA Board of Directors
- Measure R provided \$33M to conduct environmental clearance
- Measure M provides \$2.015B to further advance the High Desert Corridor
  - \$1.98B is for construction in 2063 - 2067

# High Desert Corridor Key Activities for FY 26

- Complete the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process – HDC JPA will work with CAHSR, lead agency, to finalize and submit the environmental document to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). Record Of Decision expected 2026.
- Continued grants pursuits – HDC JPA will await the award of grants through the Federal-State Partnership program and continue to pursue future grant opportunities.
- Update the Service Development Plan (SDP) – HDC JPA will provide technical analysis and support for Metro to submit the final SDP Gap Analysis for the FRA for final approval in 2026.
- Consultant Services – HDC JPA will provide program management, engineering, and financial advisory services, as the HDC JPA mobilizes towards 30% design, plus HDC JPA management.

# Metro Service Development Plan

- Metro worked closely with key agency stakeholders to complete ridership and revenue forecasting, conduct operations modeling, Palmdale Transportation Center station planning, conceptual engineering and financial analysis for the High Desert Corridor.
- In January 2023, the draft SDP was submitted to the FRA for comment. FRA delayed full review as the HDC JPA entered the new Corridor Identification and Development Grant Program.
- The current SDP requires a Gap Analysis and cost updates, per FRA direction due to the alignment, structural, and operational changes made to the Project since January 2023.
- FRA is reviewing the final Gap Analysis, with approval expected in 2026.

# Next Steps

- Execute funding agreement between Metro and the HDC JPA for the FY 26 \$11.9M work program for
  - NEPA Reevaluation work and Record Of Decision (ROD)
  - Analysis to support the Metro Service Development Plan Update
  - Engineering Design and Financial Advisory Services
  - HDC JPA Management and Administration
- High Speed Rail Project environmental clearance/ROD is expected from the FRA Fall 2026
- The HDC JPA will seek additional grant funding opportunities
- Staff will continue to brief the Board as the Project advances