

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: December 4-5, 2019

From: SUSAN BRANSEN, Executive Director

Reference Number: 2.2c.(7), Action

Prepared By: Brigitte Driller
Assistant Deputy Director

Published Date: November 22, 2019

Subject: Approval of Project for Future Consideration of Funding – Final Environmental Impact Report for the Metro Red and Purple Line Core Capacity Improvements Project (Resolution E-19-103)

Issue:

Should the California Transportation Commission (Commission), as a Responsible Agency, accept the Final Environmental Impact Report and Statement of Overriding Considerations for the Metro Red and Purple Line Core Capacity Improvements Project (Project) in Los Angeles County and approve the Project for future consideration of funding?

Recommendation:

Commission Staff recommends the Commission accept the Final Environmental Impact Report and Statement of Overriding Considerations and approve the Project for future consideration of funding.

Background:

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority is the California Environmental Quality Act lead agency for the Project. The Project will widen the facility and modify the tracks to allow improved access to the current Division 20 Yard enabling increased train frequency on the Metro Purple and Red Lines. The Project is located at 300 South Santa Fe Avenue near 4th Street in Downtown Los Angeles.

On October 18, 2018, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board of Directors adopted the Final Environmental Impact Report and Statement of Overriding Considerations. The Final Environmental Impact Report determined that impacts related to cultural resources, noise, and vibration would be significant and unavoidable.

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board of Directors found that there were several benefits that outweigh the unavoidable adverse impacts of the project. These overriding benefits include economic, legal, social, and technological considerations that outweigh the identified significant effects on the environment. Specifically, the Project benefits include:

- Improved regional transit capacity.
- Reduced vehicle miles traveled and associated emissions (in combination with the Purple Line Extension, the proposed project would result in an annual net reduction of approximately 19,960 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent).

On October 15, 2019, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority confirmed that the preferred alternative set forth in the final environmental document is consistent with the Project scope of work programmed by the Commission.

The Project is estimated to cost \$781,750,000 and is fully funded through construction with Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program Funds (\$69,209,000), and Local Agency Funds (\$712,541,000).

Construction is estimated to begin in Fiscal Year 2019-20.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Resolution E-19-103
- Attachment B: Statement of Overriding Considerations
- Attachment C: Notice of Determination
- Attachment D: Project Location Map

**CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
Resolution for Future Consideration of Funding**

**7 – Los Angeles County
Resolution E-19-103**

- 1.1 WHEREAS, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority has completed a Final Environmental Impact Report and Statement of Overriding Considerations pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines for the Metro Red and Purple Line Core Capacity Improvements Project (Project) in Los Angeles County; and
- 1.2 WHEREAS, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority has certified that the Final Environmental Impact Report has been completed pursuant to CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines; and
- 1.3 WHEREAS, the Project is located at 300 South Santa Fe Avenue near 4th Street in Downtown Los Angeles; and
- 1.4 WHEREAS, the Project will widen the facility and modify the tracks to allow improved access to the current Division 20 Yard enabling increased train frequency on the Metro Purple and Red Lines; and
- 1.5 WHEREAS, the California Transportation Commission, as a Responsible Agency, has considered the information contained in the Final Environmental Impact Report and Statement of Overriding Considerations; and
- 1.6 WHEREAS, on October 18, 2018, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board of Directors adopted the Final Environmental Impact Report; and
- 1.7 WHEREAS, on October 18, 2018, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board of Directors determined that impacts related to cultural resources, noise, and vibration would be significant and unavoidable; and
- 1.8 WHEREAS, on October 15, 2019, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority confirmed that the preferred alternative set forth in the final environmental document is consistent with the Project scope of work programmed by the Commission; and
- 1.9 WHEREAS, the Commission, as a Responsible Agency, has considered the information contained in the Final Environmental Impact Report and Statement of Overriding Considerations.

- 2.1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Commission does hereby accept the Final Environmental Impact Report and Statement of Overriding Considerations for the above-referenced Project to allow for future consideration of funding.

service times at Union Station. For these reasons, Metro finds that the No Project Alternative is not feasible.

11.4 FINDINGS FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6 requires that an “environmentally superior” alternative be selected among the alternatives that are evaluated in the EIR. As described in the Draft EIR, the No Project Alternative has been found to have the least amount of environmental impacts and is the environmentally superior alternative. If the No Project Alternative is identified as the environmentally superior alternative, the next-best environmentally superior alternative must be identified. In the case of the Proposed Project, Alternative 2 was identified in the Draft EIR as being the environmentally superior alternative because it would avoid the cultural resources impact to the 1st Street Bridge. Nevertheless, Alternative 2 would create significant unavoidable construction noise and vibration impacts comparable to those of the Proposed Project.

CEQA Guidelines requires alternatives to be analyzed with respect to their ability to satisfy the objectives of a proposed project. As referenced above, Alternative 2 does not provide operational redundancy in its points of failure. Failures at the double slip switch to the storage yard access points would render the facility unusable until the issue is addressed. This deficiency would conflict with the Proposed Project Objective #2, which is to provide new tracks and switches that will allow trains to provide faster service times at Union Station. For this reason, Metro finds that the environmentally superior alternative, Alternative 2, does not adequately satisfy the objectives of the Proposed Project and is therefore infeasible.

11.5 FINDINGS FOR MITIGATION MEASURES

Metro has considered every mitigation measure recommended in the EIR. To the extent that these Findings conclude that the mitigation measures outlined in the EIR are feasible and have not been modified, superseded or withdrawn, Metro hereby binds itself to implement or, as appropriate, require implementation of these measures. These Findings, in other words, are not merely informational, but rather constitute a binding set of obligations that will come into effect when Metro adopts a resolution approving the Proposed Project. The mitigation measures are referenced in the MMRP adopted concurrently with these Findings and will be effectuated through the process of constructing and implementing the Proposed Project.

12. STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15093, if a project’s EIR and administrative record substantiate that the project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts, then the lead agency is required to balance the project’s significant and unavoidable impacts against its economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits. If these benefits outweigh the significant and unavoidable impacts, then the significant and unavoidable impacts may be deemed acceptable. In such a case, the lead agency must state, in writing, the specific reasons that support this conclusion. This section presents the Proposed Project potential significant

and unavoidable impacts followed by a demonstration of how they are outweighed by the Proposed Project's benefits.

12.1 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

The Proposed Project would result in the following localized significant and unavoidable impacts:

Adverse Change in the Significance of a Historical Resource. The Proposed Project would remove two of the 1st Street Bridge's bents and widen two bents and one pylon. The removal of these character-defining features is not consistent with the SOI Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The Proposed Project would also demolish the eastern portion of the remnants of the Citizens Warehouse/Lysle Storage Company building (in the location of the former Pickle Works building listed on the CRHR). Lastly, the Proposed Project would demolish the National Cold Storage facility, which is listed as historically significant on SurveyLA, the City of Los Angeles' official historical resources survey. Mitigation measures have been added to the MMRP to reduce these impacts to the extent possible. However, these permanent alterations of "historical resources", as defined in Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines, would still constitute significant and unavoidable impacts.

Demolition and Construction Noise and Vibration. The Proposed Project would generate noise levels in excess of FTA standards during demolition and construction. This would adversely affect sensitive receptors at the OSF. Furthermore, all commercial and industrial uses within 20 feet of the Proposed Project's heavy-duty equipment would also be subject to adverse effects.

The Proposed Project would also expose persons to excessive groundborne vibration during demolition and excavation. These activities require the use of heavy-duty equipment that cannot be avoided based on applicable construction methods. Mitigation measures have been added to the MMRP to reduce these impacts to the extent possible. However, due to standard demolition and construction procedures and the proximity of sensitive receptors to the area of demolition and construction work, these adverse effects would constitute significant and unavoidable impacts.

12.2 DETERMINATION

Given the following reasons, Metro concludes that the overall benefits of the Proposed Project outweigh the significant and unavoidable impacts discussed in Section 1.1 Significant and Unavoidable Impacts, and that the significant and unavoidable impacts are thus considered acceptable.

Regional Transit Capacity. The Proposed Project will substantially improve capacity of the Metro Red and Purple Lines. In November 2016, over 70 percent of Los Angeles County's voters voted in support for Metro's Measure M ballot measure to raise sales taxes to pay for critical transportation improvements. The improvements to the Division 20 Rail Yard will provide core capacity improvements to accommodate increased service levels previously approved for the Metro Red and Purple Lines and allow trains to provide faster service times

at Union Station. Metro Red and Purple Lines ridership is expected to increase by approximately 49,000 following the Purple Line Extension to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs West Los Angeles Medical Center. In order to effectively serve the additional patronage during weekday peak hours, planned service improvements include operating trains every four minutes on each line – which is every two minutes in the trunk portion of the system – and expanding the fleet. Currently, eastbound trains in the trunk portion of the system use special trackwork at Union Station to reverse directions (i.e., ‘turnback’). However, the capability of turning back trains is capped at 7.5 minutes on each line, or 3.75 minutes combined due to the original design of Union Station. In addition to improving Metro Red Line service, the Proposed Project would provide quicker turnaround times and capacity for storing trains for the full build-out of the Purple Line Extension Transit Project.

Reduced Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and Associated Emissions. The Proposed Project would allow for the increase in service and expansion of the geographical reach of the Metro Red and Purple Lines. This would increase the appeal and viability of heavy-rail transit as a mode of transportation in Los Angeles County. Such improvements to alternative modes of transportation would provide the opportunity for reductions in regional single-occupancy vehicle VMT and their associated air pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions. In combination with the Purple Line Extension, the Proposed Project would result in an annual net reduction of approximately 19,960 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. The entirety of the Purple Line Extension was incorporated into the Southern California Association of Governments Regional Transportation Plan. Enhancing and expanding the public transit network is at the crux of reducing regional VMT and associated GHG emissions, which is the top priority of the regional and local transportation and sustainability plans, as well as the California Air Resources Board Scoping Plan. The Proposed Project would contribute to regional efforts to improve sustainability and reduce VMT.

Though the Proposed Project’s would result in potential significant and unavoidable impacts related to cultural resources and noise and vibration, the Proposed Project would create regional economic and social benefit of providing more frequent transit service as well as the overall environmental and social benefit of cleaner air and reduced greenhouse gases. Thus, although the Proposed Project has the potential to create significant and unavoidable impacts, these impacts would be greatly outweighed by the benefits that it would bring to the region.

NOTICE OF DETERMINATION

To: Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: California Transportation Commission
Attn: Jose Oseguera
1120 N Street, MS 52
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 653-2094

Subject: Filing of Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21108 of the Public Resources Code.

Project Title: Metro Red and Purple Line Core Capacity Improvements Project

2017101034	June Susilo	(213) 922-5232
State Clearinghouse Number	Lead Agency Contact Person	Area Code/Telephone

Project Location (include county): The project located at 300 South Santa Fe Avenue near 4th Street in Downtown Los Angeles, Los Angeles County.

Project Description: The Project will widen the facility and modify the tracks to allow improved access to the current Division 20 Yard enabling increased train frequency on the Metro Purple and Red Lines.

This is to advise that the California Transportation Commission has approved the above described project on

(Lead Agency/ Responsible Agency)

December 4-5, 2019, and has made the following determinations regarding the above described project:

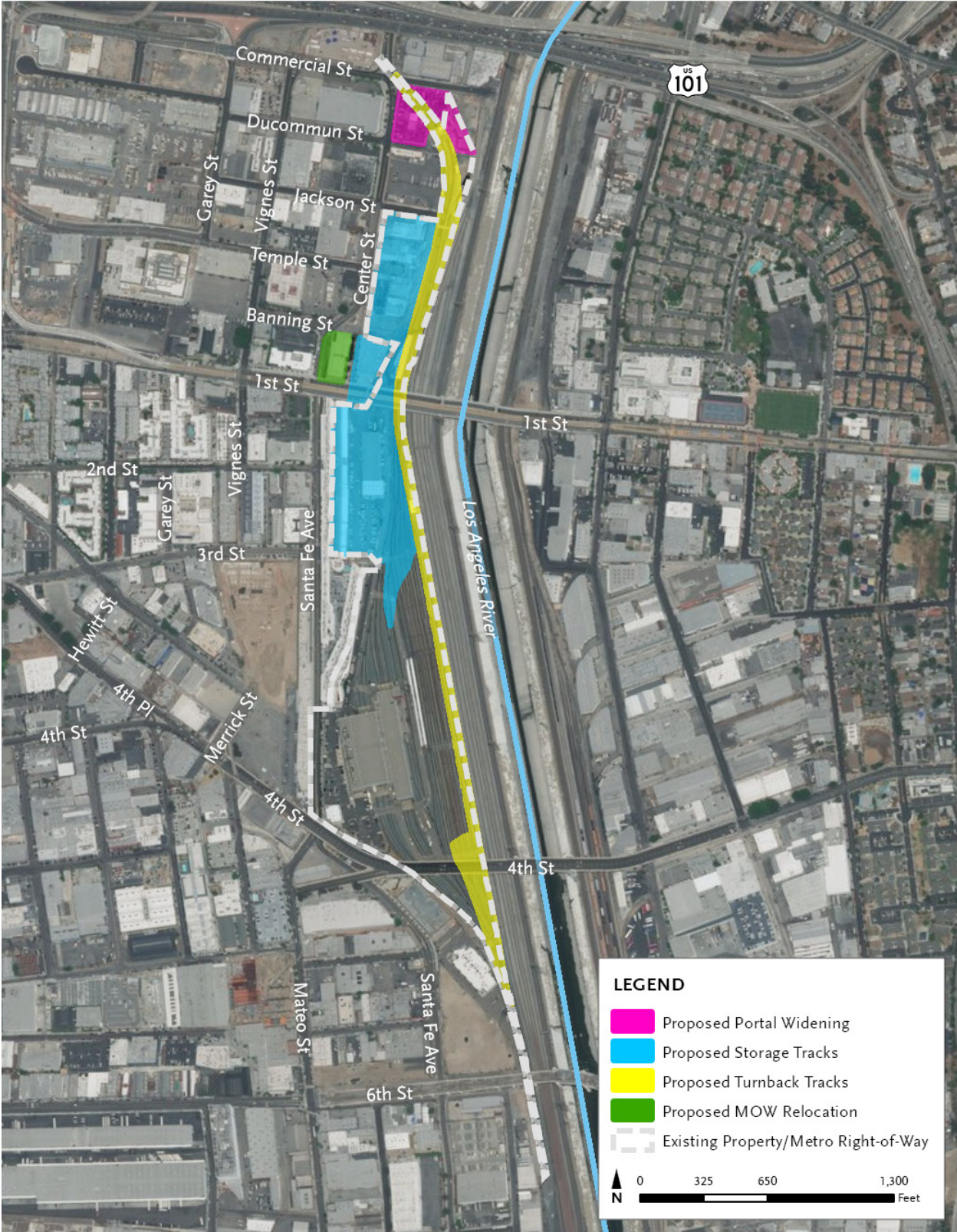
1. The project (will/ will not) have a significant effect on the environment.
2. An Environmental Impact Report was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
 A Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
3. Mitigation measures (were/ were not) made a condition of the approval of the project.
4. Mitigation reporting or monitoring plan (was / was not) adopted for this project.
5. A Statement of Overriding Considerations (was / was not) adopted for this project.
6. Findings (were/ were not) made pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.

The above identified document with comments and responses and record of project approval is available to the General Public at: Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, One Gateway Plaza, Los Angeles, CA 90012

SUSAN BRANSEN		Executive Director California Transportation Commission
<hr/> Signature (Public Agency)	<hr/> Date	<hr/> Title

Date received for filing at OPR:

Metro Red and Purple Line Core Capacity Improvements Project



NOTE: Exact location of storage tracks and turnback tracks to be determined.
Source: Terry A. Hayes Associates Inc., 2018.