

**Metro**Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation AuthorityOne Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952213.922.2000 Tel
metro.net**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
JANUARY 14, 2009****SUBJECT: REGIONAL CONNECTOR TRANSIT CORRIDOR STUDY****ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS****RECOMMENDATIONS**

- A. Approve the Regional Connector Transit Corridor Study Alternatives Analysis (AA) Study. Attachment A contains the Executive Summary. The full AA Study Report is available upon request;
- B. Approve the alternatives recommended below, in addition to the No Build and TSM alternatives, for further study in the AA in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report (DEIS/EIR) including Advanced Conceptual Engineering;
 1. Alternative #3A/B - At-Grade Alternative via Second Street with a Couplet on Main and Los Angeles Streets (Attachment B1);
 2. Alternative #5 - Underground Alternative via Second Street crossing First Street and Alameda at-grade (Attachment B2);
- C. Authorize the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to:
 1. Exercise the following:
 - a. An option to Contract No. PS 4320-1985 with Camp Dresser & Mckee (CDM) to prepare the Draft EIS/EIR including Advanced Conceptual Engineering in the amount of \$9,965,853 increasing the total contract amount from \$2,091,969 to \$12,057,822;
 - b. An option to Contract No. PS-4320-1988 with The Robert Group to conduct the facilitation of community outreach in the amount of \$835,453 increasing the total contract amount from \$192,269 to \$1,027,722;
 - c. Contract modifications for up to 15 percent of the above amounts to cover the cost of any potentially unforeseen issues that may arise during the above phases.

RATIONALE

Measure R provides \$160 million (plus escalation) for the Regional Connector Transit Corridor. By moving forward with the Draft EIS/EIR, it will enable the Regional Connector project to be ready for available funding on the timeline identified in the Measure R Expenditure Plan.

In June 2007, the Board approved contracts with CDM and The Robert Group to prepare the Regional Connector AA Study. The contracts contained four options listed below for the environmental clearance and community outreach respectively.

- Base Contract – AA Study (Phase I)
- Option A – Draft EIS/EIR/ACE (Phase 2)
- Option B – Final EIS/EIR (Phase 3)
- Option C – Environmental Services to support Full Funding Grant Agreement, design services during construction and supplemental environmental services during construction (Phase 4)

The AA Study (Phase I) has now been completed. Board action is necessary to approve the AA Study and authorize the CEO to execute the contract option A and community outreach for the next phase of work.

The AA Study provides the criteria to select the most cost effective fixed guideway transit investment in the Regional Connector Transit Corridor study area. The AA Study has been prepared in compliance with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Starts Program guidelines and standards. Selection of the candidate alternatives and initiation of the second phase of the study helps to ensure a fixed guideway transit project in this major transit corridor and is a necessary step in securing a funding grant for the project.

During the past year, the project team has been conducting the AA. The purpose of this effort is to identify a range of alternatives for environmental analysis for transit improvements in this corridor. The Study Area (Attachment A) includes most of Downtown Los Angeles between Interstate 110 (west), US 101 (north), Alameda Street (east), and 9th Street/Los Angeles Street/7th Street (south). The area of influence extends well beyond the Study Area as the project is a systems improvement for all LRT lines approaching Downtown Los Angeles and, potentially, joins these lines into a single network.

Alternatives Analysis (AA) and Early Scoping

A set of 35 preliminary alternatives were identified for consideration during Early Scoping, including a No-Build and a Transportation System Management (TSM) alternative. The remaining 33 alternatives were developed as “Build” Alternatives that include variations in transit modes, alignments or routes, and potential station locations.

Based on a review of a range of technologies, it was determined that Light Rail Transit (LRT) technology is the most practical Build Alternative transit mode for operation within the Regional Connector Transit Corridor given the high projection of up to 15,000 boardings at new stations and up to 10,000 new transit riders systemwide. The Build Alternative would increase ridership on all the LRT lines up to ten percent and decrease crowding on the Heavy Rail Transit (HRT) by up to 25,900 daily riders during peak hours as a consequence of eliminating the transfers at Union Station and 7th Street/Metro Center Station.

Based on the initial screening evaluation, it was recommended that several alternatives and modes be eliminated from further consideration in detailed screening and NEPA/CEQA environmental analysis. The reasoning behind the recommendation to eliminate these alternatives is explained in Attachment A.

Construction costs for Alternative #3A/B the at-grade alternative via 2nd Street with a couplet on Main and Los Angeles Streets (1.79 miles) were estimated at \$709-\$796 million (2008 dollars). Costs for Alternative #5 the underground alternative via 2nd Street crossing 1st Street and Alameda at-grade (1.58 miles) were estimated at \$910 million (2008 dollars).

As measured by FTA cost effectiveness criteria, Alternative #5 the underground alternative via 2nd Street crossing 1st Street and Alameda at-grade would be more cost-effective than Alternative #3A/B the at-grade alternative via 2nd Street with a couplet on Main and Los Angeles Streets (\$19 per hour of benefit versus \$20-25 per hour of benefit). In general, FTA looks for projects to achieve a cost-effectiveness measure of below \$25 per hour of benefit.

Community Participation

We reviewed the comments received through the outreach effort along with technical analysis prepared by the consultant team and identified eight representative build alternatives that include transit alignments historically studied within the corridor as well as new ideas regarding modes, alignments and profiles suggested by the scoping comments. The majority of public comments expressed a preference for Light Rail Transit (LRT) technology with a predominately underground alignment. Preferred station locations included the Financial District, Bunker Hill, and connections to Historic Broadway and Little Tokyo. Throughout the Alternatives Analysis phase, the Regional Connector project received widespread support to move forward into the next phase of environmental review and clearance. This support was expressed not only by residents and business interests in downtown Los Angeles, but also by transit riders and advocates from across the region.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Funding of \$2,511,600 for the Regional Connector Transit Corridor is included in the FY2009 budget in Cost Center No. 4320, under Project No. 400228, Task 01.02. Since

this a multi-year contract (estimated to be two (2) years for the DEIS/EIR), the cost center manager and Chief Planning Officer will be accountable for budgeting the balance of the costs in the FY 2010 budget.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board has several options it could consider including:

1. Choosing a different set of alternatives for inclusion in the Draft EIS/EIR based on the information presented in the AA report;
2. Selecting additional alternatives for analysis and review in the Draft EIS/EIR;
3. Not authorizing or deferring the start of the Draft EIS/EIR; and
4. Not exercising the current contract options and either re-bidding the contracts or using in-house resources.

These options are not recommended because the technical analysis and community input documented in the AA Study showed that Alternatives 3A/B and 5 were the two technically superior build alternatives worthy of further environmental analysis and they had overwhelming public support. Deferral of further studies would delay the selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative and would preclude further efforts to qualify the project for state and federal funding grants.

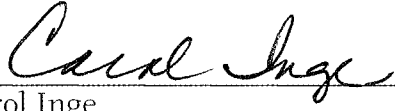
NEXT STEPS

Upon Board approval, the Draft EIS/EIR contract options with CDM and The Robert Group will be awarded. We will coordinate with the FTA to initiate the NEPA environmental clearance activities. As the study progresses, we will provide periodic Board updates.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Regional Connector Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis Study – Executive Summary
- B1. Alternative #3A/B (At-Grade Alternative via Second Street with a Couplet on Main and Los Angeles Streets)
- B2. Alternative #5 (Underground Alternative via Second Street crossing First Street and Alameda at-grade)
- C. Procurement Summary

Prepared by: Dolores Roybal Saltarelli, Transportation Planning Manger, Central Area Planning
Ed Kichi, Senior Contract Administrator
Ann Kerman, Constituent Program Manager, Regional Communications
Robin Blair, Director, Central Area Planning
Diego Cardoso, Executive Officer, Transportation Development and Implementation



Carol Inge
Chief Planning Officer



Roger Snoble
Chief Executive Officer

