

**Board Report**

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**REGULAR BOARD MEETING
DECEMBER 6, 2018****Motion by:****SOLIS, HAHN, BUTTS, RIDLEY-THOMAS & DUPONT-WALKER**

The Los Angeles River is currently seeing unprecedented levels of investment. The recently completed Lower Los Angeles River Revitalization Plan (LLARRP) established a vision for the revitalization of the 19-mile south end of the river. Today, Los Angeles County is developing a master plan to reimagine all 51 miles of the Los Angeles River corridor and make it a destination for the county. In conjunction with these efforts, the State has dedicated \$100 million in Proposition 1 bond funding and an additional \$20 million through a budget appropriation for improvements to all 51 miles of the river. Much of this funding will be used to implement the LLARRP which proposes a slew of projects including a signature project at the Los Angeles River/Rio Hondo Confluence that would include a cultural center. The Los Angeles County Flood Control District with support of the First Supervisorial District have engaged a consultant team which includes subconsultant Frank Gehry, the renowned architect behind the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Downtown Los Angeles, to develop the Los Angeles River Master Plan and to plan the Confluence project .

The Confluence area and the surrounding cities make up one of the most disadvantaged and transit-dependent communities in the county with extremely low access to parks and high-quality transit. To address this, Los Angeles County voters passed Measures M and A in 2016 to enhance the county's transportation network and to increase access to parks. Measure A, which was passed with 75 percent voter approval, evaluated each community in the county through the Parks Needs Assessment and ranked the southeast cities as "Very High Need" areas.

Despite these challenges, the Confluence has already become a destination for the local community - the City of South Gate and Speaker of the California State Assembly Anthony Rendon have held movie nights and festivals at the nearby Hollydale Regional Park and the adjacent riverbed, drawing between 200 and 2000 people at each event. The cultural center will further entrench the Confluence as a community anchor and will be accompanied by park and open space improvements as proposed in the LLARRP including an amphitheater, bridge parks, and stormwater treatment facilities. Additionally, nearby developments including the \$470 million Rancho Los Amigos South Campus project are helping to spur economic growth.

The West Santa Ana Branch Transit Corridor passes over the Los Angeles River/Rio Hondo Confluence, which offers a unique opportunity to connect light-rail transit, multi-use trails along the

Los Angeles and Rio Hondo rivers, regional park space, and the cultural arts center all in one location. A new station located along the West Santa Ana Branch Transit Corridor at the Confluence would offer access to each of these amenities for residents from all over the county while spurring economic development.

A preliminary feasibility study cited station costs ranging from \$60 to \$100 million with associated schedule delays of 12 to 24 months. These costs and schedule delays have not been substantiated in detail and the station warrants further study to identify efficiencies. While there are substantial costs associated with the construction of any light-rail station, the costs for the Confluence Station can be minimized by a variety of factors. For example, as-built plans show that the existing railroad bridges over the Los Angeles and Rio Hondo rivers measure approximately 16 and 17.5 feet wide, respectively. To accommodate new tracks for the West Santa Ana Branch Transit Corridor, new railroad bridges would likely need to be constructed and can include a simple concrete-pad station platform as part of their designs. Opportunities for joint parking facilities could be explored at the nearby cultural center to eliminate or minimize costs for a dedicated station parking lot. Inclusion of the Confluence station in the project would also eliminate the need for robust first/last mile connections between the cultural center and the Firestone and Gardendale stations which could total tens of millions of dollars. The schedule delays related to US Army Corps approvals for the station platform would be included as part of the approvals for the construction of new bridges. US Army Corps involvement can be further minimized if station work is mostly located on the Rio Hondo due to this portion of the river being under Los Angeles County Flood Control jurisdiction. Eminent domain proceedings or lengthy acquisition periods can be shortened or eliminated entirely by utilizing one of the several pieces of land nearby owned by Los Angeles County or the City of South Gate.

This station would connect some of the county's most park-poor and disadvantaged communities to world-class transportation and recreational facilities and should not be precluded from being studied as part of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The West Santa Ana Branch Transit Corridor Project Definition should be revised to include an optional station located at the Confluence and re-evaluated after the Draft EIS/EIR is prepared to determine the feasibility of the station.

SUBJECT: WEST SANTA ANA BRANCH TRANSIT CORRIDOR CONFLUENCE STATION

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE motion by Solis, Hahn, Butts, Ridley-Thomas & Dupont-Walker that:

- A. Metro will fund the feasibility study and any necessary environmental clearance for a potential station at the confluence site;
- B. A feasibility study of a station at the confluence site shall commence immediately, with a determination of feasibility and whether to advance into environmental review made after the completion of the environmental documentation process for the Project;

- C. Metro staff shall participate with proponents seeking to design and implement the confluence area vision, which is set forth in the Lower Los Angeles River Revitalization Plan;

- D. Metro will work collaboratively with its state, local and federal partners to secure funding for the capital improvements of the potential confluence site station, should Metro subsequently find the station would provide mobility value after consideration of a future study;

- E. Metro will report back in 6 months on the progress of the feasibility study.