



BRIEFING: APRIL 12, 2016 BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM #8

TO: Chairman Richard and Board Members

FROM: Michelle Boehm, Southern California Regional Director

DATE: April 12, 2016

RE: Report on the Burbank to Los Angeles Supplemental Alternatives Analysis

Purpose

The purpose of this agenda item is to update the Board and public on work accomplished on the Burbank to Los Angeles project section since the release of the 2014 Palmdale to Los Angeles Supplemental Alternatives Analysis (SAA) and the July 2014 scoping notice that provided for separate environmental documents for the Palmdale to Burbank and Burbank to Los Angeles project sections. This work is presented in the 2016 SAA that is included as an attachment to this Board item.

The 2016 SAA reflects the adopted plans and projects for the corridor, including the 2012 and 2014 Business Plans' approach to system construction and operation in order to achieve optimal integration with existing systems. The proposed alternatives have been developed and refined based on additional data collection and field studies, as well as outreach to communities, agencies, and stakeholders. This process, and the refinement of the alignments, are documented in the aforementioned 2016 SAA and presented here to inform the Board and public about the process and the current status of activities on the Burbank to Los Angeles project section.

This is an information item only. Staff work efforts on this section are being presented to the Board for its information, but no Board action is involved at this time.

Background

In 2001, the Authority, in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), started a tiered environmental review process for the statewide high-speed rail system. The 2005 first-tier California High-Speed Rail Program Environmental Document described the program alignment, which included a corridor between Palmdale and Los Angeles. The timeline of activities since then includes the following:

- The 2007 release of public scoping notices and scoping meetings presented the proposed Palmdale to Los Angeles project section study area to receive agency and public

comments on the issues that should be analyzed in the environmental document. The 2007 Scoping Report summarized the scoping process, documented the comments received during the process, and outlined the next steps in the development of the environmental document.

- The 2010 Palmdale to Los Angeles Preliminary Alternatives Analysis presented and evaluated the initial alignment alternatives systematically using established criteria. Two subsequent SAA documents for this project section, prepared in 2011 and 2012, further developed the alignment alternatives and station options based on stakeholder feedback.
- The May 2014 SAA further refined alignment alternatives and station options and discussed the evaluation of Palmdale to Burbank and Burbank to Los Angeles as two separate project sections.
- The July 2014 scoping notices amended the 2007 Palmdale to Los Angeles scoping notices, providing for separate environmental documents for the Palmdale to Burbank and Burbank to Los Angeles project sections.
- The 2016 SAA included as an attachment to this Board item presents the latest project refinements and alternatives under consideration.

In addition, the Authority has continued to coordinate with regional agencies and corridor operators to advance early investment projects within the Burbank to Los Angeles section that will eventually be necessary to facilitate high-speed rail service. This collaboration focuses on improving the corridor for all stakeholders including passenger and freight rail providers with safety and mobility projects that deliver immediate benefits. This approach will modernize the existing urban rail corridor from Burbank to Los Angeles making it safer, quieter, more efficient, and more connected to the transportation network. These improvements will support high-speed rail service, increase mobility in and around some of our most vulnerable communities, and improve air quality.

Additionally, in October 2015, the Metro Board approved the concept of integrating high-speed rail at Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS) as part of the implementation of their LAUS Master Plan and Southern California Regional Interconnector Project (SCRIP). Metro has advanced project development activities for both projects over the past few years, and the design and analysis work is being updated in order to fully integrate high-speed rail. In tune with the objectives of the Draft 2016 Business Plan, the Authority Board approved moving forward with Metro on this collaborative path in February 2016 to partner on LAUS improvements, with up to \$15,000,000 to support the integration of the high-speed rail at LAUS on the project plans.

Discussion

Since July 2014, the Authority has engaged in a comprehensive public discussion and engagement program for the Burbank to Los Angeles project section. The meetings held have included: seven public scoping meetings, eight open houses, one stakeholder working group, and various community & business presentations and information tables. These community engagement activities help to share information, gather input, hear concerns, and identify potential alignment refinements.

Highlights of the specific work conducted on the Burbank to Los Angeles project section since the 2014 (Palmdale to Los Angeles) SAA and incorporated in the 2016 SAA are presented in the table below.

2016 SAA Highlights	
Alameda Ave to SR-2 (Refinement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce potential right-of-way (ROW) impacts
SR-2 to LAUS (Refinement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce noise, visual, and residential and commercial impacts • Advance both a dedicated and a shared track configuration in the existing rail corridor with consideration for improved operations of existing and future rail providers
LAUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate long distance, regional and commuter rail services with high-speed rail in the LAUS rail yard to provide enhanced regional connectivity • Coordinated approach with SCRIP and LAUS Master Plan to maximize investments and improve constructability

The 2016 SAA advances:

- Two station configurations at Burbank Airport Station
- Two alternatives from Burbank Airport Station to Alameda Avenue
- One at-grade alternative from Alameda Avenue to LAUS (with shared and dedicated options for operation)
- Station platforms in the LAUS rail yard

The development of the environmental document for the Burbank to Los Angeles project section will advance based on the information collected and presented in all of the documents described above. Currently, the draft of this document is anticipated for release in December 2017. The release of the draft environmental document will be accompanied by public meetings as well as agency and public comment as required. Throughout this process comments from the public are collected and used, in conjunction with resource agency comments and technical studies, to support the development of the alternatives and ultimately the selection of a preferred alternative.

Next Steps

- Complete technical studies on the range of alternatives presented in 2016 SAA (subject to regulatory agency concurrence) and prepare draft environmental document.
- Engage regulatory agency partners, stakeholders, and the community during the preparation of the technical studies and environmental documentation to support work activities.

Attachments

– *Supplemental Alternatives Analysis Report: Burbank to Los Angeles (April 2016)*

Exhibit 1. Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section Map

