



Metro

June 20, 2014

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THROUGH: ARTHUR T. LEAHY *AL*
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

FROM: BRYAN PENNINGTON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR *BNP*
ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION

SUBJECT: HIGH DESERT CORRIDOR UPDATE

ISSUE

Metro and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 7 have been working on the development of the Project Approval and Environmental Document (PA/ED) for the High Desert Corridor (HDC) Project. This report is intended to provide the Board with updates to the HDC's PA/ED and upcoming outreach activities leading to the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Statement (EIR/EIS) to the public in August 2014.

DISCUSSION

Through the development of the Draft EIR/EIS, the project team has coordinated closely with the project partners, which include Caltrans Districts 7 and 8, High Desert Corridor Joint Powers Authority (HDC JPA), Counties of Los Angeles and San Bernardino, San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG), Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), Town of Apple Valley, Cities of Adelanto, Lancaster, Palmdale and Victorville. In addition, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is a Cooperating Agency for the Project.

The following items identify the recent progress on the PA/ED for the HDC:

- The High Desert Corridor Rail Alternative Analysis was completed in April 2014. The Alternative Analysis evaluates side-running, median, and viaduct railway alignments, as well as high-speed rail and commuter rail modes. The Analysis recommends a median railway alignment and high-speed rail technology. An electronic copy of the final report is available on the Project's website: <http://www.metro.net/projects/high-desert-corridor/hdc-high-speed-rail-alternatives-analysis-report>
- Continue to coordinate with the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) for the design and environmental development of the wye connection, which is a triangular rail junction, in the City of Palmdale.

- Complete the Draft Technical Studies and chapters that will be included in the Draft Environmental Document.

Outreach Activities:

- The team has provided HDC project status presentations and/or staffed HDC informational booths at several regional conferences and public events, including the Los Angeles County Air Show, and the High Desert Opportunity Conference.
- The project team continues to present project updates to the HDC JPA and the project partners.
- Six (6) individual city/town/county technical staff briefings were provided from April - May 2014. The purpose of these meetings was for the project team to discuss the HDC proposed alternatives in detail with staff from each jurisdiction within the HDC Study Area. The project team has encouraged the city and town managers and interested executives to attend these meetings to review highlights from the technical studies and view maps of the proposed alignments. Follow-up meetings will be scheduled, as needed.
- Three (3) City and Town Council Presentations, May – June 2014. The purpose of these presentations was to provide the councils a project overview, status update on the environmental process, and information about upcoming public meetings, including the formal hearings on the Draft EIR/EIS. Additional presentations to City and Town Councils as well as presentations to Metro and SANBAG Boards will be provided, as needed.

Upcoming Outreach activities:

- Three (3) HDC Variation Workshops, June 2014. These workshops will provide an opportunity for the local community to review the four (4) alignment variations currently under study and provide input.
- Two (2) Elected Officials Briefings, July – August 2014. One elected official briefing will be held in Los Angeles County and the other in San Bernardino County to provide elected officials from each respective County a high-level overview of the information that will subsequently be shared with their constituents and communities during the Public Hearings.
- Draft EIR/EIS Release and public comment period, August – September 2014. Metro and Caltrans will release the Draft EIR/EIS in August 2014

and proceed with the public hearings in September 2014. Caltrans has provided for a 60 day formal review and public comment period. We will also host four public hearings, two of which will include a webcast component (one in each county) in order to provide stakeholders the opportunity to participate either remotely or in-person.

- Barring unforeseen events and unknowns inherent in projects involving extensive third-party coordination and multiple agency reviews, the updated HDC schedule is as follows:
 - Rail Alternative Analysis – Completed April 2014
 - Review of Technical Studies – Completed Spring 2014
 - Circulate Draft Environmental Document – Summer 2014
 - Public Hearings – Fall 2014
 - Final Environmental Document – Spring 2015
 - Record of Decision/Notice of Determination – Winter 2015

NEXT STEPS

Metro and Caltrans staff will continue working on the Project Report and environmental clearance work for the project, and provide outreach and community engagement opportunities that exceed the legally required outreach under CEQA/NEPA. Staff will provide updates to the Board as work progresses.