



Metro

October 14, 2013

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

FROM: DOUGLAS R. FAILING, P. E. *DF*
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HIGHWAY PROGRAM

SUBJECT: HIGH DESERT CORRIDOR UPDATE

ISSUE

Metro entered into a Funding Agreement with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 7 to develop the Project Approval and Environmental Document (PA & ED) for the High Desert Corridor (HDC). This report will provide the Board with the HDC's recent activities and progress for the period between May 2013 and September 2013.

DISCUSSION

The HDC project is a proposed 63 mile, east-west corridor linking State Route (SR) 14 in Los Angeles County through US-395, I-15 and SR-18 in San Bernardino County. The HDC has been identified as a Strategic Multipurpose Corridor that can accommodate a highway, an energy production and/or transmission facilities and a high speed rail feeder service line.

The HDC is included in Metro's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The project is also part of the Measure R Accelerated Highway Program, which provides funding to the project. The scope of work in the Funding Agreement executed in April 2010 between Metro and Caltrans includes a project report, alternative analyses, technical assessments, modeling, conceptual and preliminary engineering, a Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR).

The following items identify the recent activities and progress on the PA & ED for the project:

- In September 2013, Metro and San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG) completed a Project Funding Agreement, enabling the transfer

of \$4.4 million from SANBAG to Metro for the environmental phase of the High Desert Corridor.

- In July 2013, Metro and Caltrans hosted a media briefing, two elected official briefings and four public outreach meetings for the HDC project. These outreach efforts were designed to provide a project update and discuss the rail connections at Palmdale Transportation Center and potential Xpress West station in Victorville. The incorporation of rail, bike, and green energy multipurpose components was emphasized. These meetings served as the fourth round of public outreach since the project's inception in 2011. A total of 390 stakeholders participated and provided verbal and written comments. Stakeholder attendees were generally supportive of the HDC project and encouraged Metro and Caltrans to move forward as scheduled.
- Metro and Caltrans plan to conduct HDC Variation Workshops in late Fall 2013. These workshops will provide an opportunity for the local community to closely review the four alignment variations currently under consideration and subsequently provide their input.
- There continues to be conceptual and preliminary engineering for a wye rail connection in the City of Palmdale, vehicle access from Palmdale Boulevard to the project's highway alignment, and bicycle connectivity to the Palmdale Transportation Center.
- Coordination efforts continue with the California High Speed Rail Authority for the wye rail connection in the City of Palmdale and the proposed rail Xpress West station in the City of Victorville.
- Progress has been developed for the conceptual and preliminary engineering of the project's alignment north of the rail spur that is adjacent to the Southern California Logistics Airport while minimizing impacts to sensitive cultural sites and access to the Federal Prison in the City of Victorville.
- A request was made by the City of Palmdale to provide for northbound connectivity from Palmdale Boulevard to the HDC. In addition, further analysis is being conducted for ramp locations within the City of Palmdale. This analysis will require an additional four months to conduct the work. This delay is reflected in the schedule below:
 - Rail Alternative Analysis – Fall 2013
 - Technical Studies – Winter 2014
 - Draft PA & ED – Summer 2014
 - Public Hearings – Summer 2014
 - Final PA & ED – Spring 2015

NEXT STEPS

Metro and Caltrans staff will continue working on the environmental clearance work for the project. As work progresses, staff will provide updates to the Board periodically.