



BRIEFING: NOVEMBER 15, 2018 BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEMS #3 & 6

TO: Chairman Richard and Board Members

FROM: Michelle Boehm, Southern California Regional Director
Melissa de la Peña, Project Manager
Mark McLoughlin, Director of Environmental Services

DATE: November 15, 2018

RE: Consider Concurring with the Staff Recommended State Preferred Alternative for the Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section for Identification in the Draft EIR/EIS

Summary of Recommended Action

California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) staff recommends that the Board of Directors (Board) identify the High-Speed Rail Project Alternative as the State's Preferred Alternative for preparing the Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Staff based this recommendation on the conceptual engineering, environmental analysis, and numerous public, stakeholder and agency meetings conducted to date. Staff makes this recommendation because the High-Speed Rail Project Alternative satisfies the Authority's intent to implement the high-speed rail project in the state of California, while selecting the No Project Alternative does not satisfy the Authority's objectives regarding high-speed rail. The High-Speed Rail Project Alternative best serves the need to provide a non-polluting, fast and reliable intercity travel alternative to flying and driving.

With the Board's concurrence, the Draft EIR/EIS will identify the Project Alternative as the State's Preferred Alternative. Identification of the State's Preferred Alternative is neither an approval nor a final decision, and the Authority may change the preferred alternative based on comments received during public and agency review of the Draft EIR/EIS. Staff will return to the Board to request final project approval of an alternative once the Final EIR/EIS has been prepared. The Authority anticipates releasing the Draft EIR/EIS for public and agency review and comment in late 2019, and staff will consider those comments while developing the Final EIR/EIS.

Staff will seek concurrence regarding the Preferred Alternative from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). With FRA's concurrence, the Draft EIR/EIS will identify the Project Alternative as the State's Preferred Alternative and the federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Preferred Alternative.

Background

The Authority evaluated various corridor alternatives for the Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section in the 2005 Program EIR/EIS for the Proposed California High-Speed Train System. Of the various corridor alternatives considered, the Authority ultimately selected the existing Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor rail corridor (LOSSAN Corridor) as the preferred corridor to advance for further consideration. Following the identification of the preferred corridor, the Authority and FRA initiated preparation of a Tier 2 project-level EIR/EIS document to develop and evaluate a range of alignment alternatives within the Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section. Activities conducted during this process included:

- The Authority released a Notice of Preparation, and the FRA published a Notice of Intent to prepare EIR/EIS documents in 2007;
- Scoping for the Project Section in 2007;
- Preparation of a Project Section Alternatives Analysis Report in 2009, which analyzed a shared-track alternative and a dedicated high-speed rail track alternative, along with various subsection alignment and station design options. This report recommended the dedicated track alternative;
- Preparation of a Project Section Supplemental Alternatives Analyses Report in 2010 which analyzed a consolidated shared-track alternative and a refined dedicated high-speed rail track alternative, along with various alignment, station and maintenance facility options. This report recommended advancing both the consolidated shared-track alternative and the refined dedicated track alternative; and,
- Preparation of a Project Section Supplemental Alternatives Analysis Report in 2016, which analyzed a shared-track alternative and a dedicated high-speed rail and passenger rail track alternative. This report recommended advancing the shared high-speed rail/other passenger rail tracks alternative.

Stakeholder Engagement

Over the course of developing alternatives, the Authority has proactively sought to initiate meaningful dialogue with stakeholders, resource agencies, municipalities, landowners, community leaders, and interested members of the public, going beyond the extent of outreach required by the NEPA and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) processes. The Authority has frequently held public meetings to inform the development of the project design and the preparation of the Draft EIR/EIS. To date, the Authority has held over 200 meetings with stakeholders and community organizations throughout the project section.

Authority staff has engaged with the public in a variety of ways, including responding to questions, one-on-one meetings, small group meetings, public meetings, participation in local events, and presentations at community meetings. Most recently, Authority staff engaged with agencies, stakeholders, and the public to provide information about the staff-recommended State's Preferred Alternative and solicit feedback on the proposed recommendation. These activities included:

- Preferred Alternative briefing with Southern California Regulatory Agencies on August 8, 2018; and,
- Six Community Open Houses between September 8, 2018 and October 23, 2018 in the cities of Montebello, Anaheim, Buena Park, Santa Fe Springs, Commerce and Downtown Los Angeles.

These meetings provided participants a forum to ask questions and share comments and concerns about the staff-recommended State's Preferred Alternative and the project section in general. Approximately 250 community members participated in the Open Houses, and a few community members participated in a live streaming of the City of Los Angeles Open House. The Downtown Los Angeles and Santa Fe Springs open houses included an English and Spanish presentation as well as a live webcast. Public questions and concerns expressed in these meetings included, but were not limited to: noise and vibration, right-of-way acquisition, operations and maintenance, travel time, trip frequency, project cost, station locations, safety features, design features, and cultural resources.

Additionally, Authority staff has engaged in extensive consultations with corridor owners including BNSF, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Southern California Regional Rail Authority and

Orange County Transportation Authority. Design and operational issues have been the primary topics of consultation.

Prior Board Action

- On June 4, 2009, Authority staff presented the alignments and station alternatives under study in the Los Angeles – Anaheim Project Section via the Los Angeles to Anaheim Alternatives Analysis Report (July 2009). This was an update only and the Board took no action.
- On July 8, 2010, Authority staff presented an update of the alignments and station alternatives under study in the Los Angeles – Anaheim Project Section via the Los Angeles to Anaheim Supplemental Alternatives Analysis Report (July 2010). This was an update only and the Board took no action.
- On March 3, 2011, Authority staff presented an update of the alignments and station alternatives under study in the Los Angeles – Anaheim Project Section. This was an update only and the Board took no action.
- On April 12, 2016, Authority staff presented an update of the alignments and station alternatives under study in the Los Angeles – Anaheim Project Section via the Los Angeles to Anaheim Supplemental Alternatives Analysis Report (April 2016). This was an update only and the Board took no action.

Project Alternative Design Overview

The Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section EIR/EIS proposes a single project alternative. The High-Speed Rail Project Alternative proposes new and upgraded track, maintenance facilities, traction power, grade separations, drainage improvements, communications towers, electrical interconnections, security fencing, passenger train stations, and other necessary facilities to introduce high-speed rail service. New and upgraded tracks would allow other trains to share tracks with high-speed rail. The Project Alternative footprint would primarily be within the existing LOSSAN railroad right-of-way, typically 100 feet wide, and include both a northbound and southbound electrified track for high-speed trains. All electrified tracks would include an overhead contact system.

The Project Alternative would provide four mainline tracks by adding one or two new tracks to the existing corridor, as needed. Some existing tracks would be realigned to optimize the available right-of-way. The railroad right-of-way would consist of up to six tracks, but the majority of the corridor would consist of two electrified, and two non-electrified mainline tracks. The Project Alternative would include high-speed rail stations in Los Angeles, Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs, Fullerton and Anaheim.

The majority of the existing railroad is currently at-grade, but many of the crossings of roads, railroads, and other transportation facilities are grade separated. The scope of this alternative includes grade separating the high-speed rail alignment at 10 existing at-grade crossings and closing roadways at two existing at-grade crossings. The High-Speed Rail Project Alternative includes a combination of at-grade, elevated, and below-grade tracks, depending on corridor and design constraints. The project section would include a light maintenance facility of approximately 60-acres on the west bank of the Los Angeles River.

Discussion

In general, the construction of a complex and innovative project, such as high-speed rail, will alter the physical landscape and character, even in an urbanized area or existing rail corridor. The following describes the relative benefits and challenges the Project Alternative would have, relative to not constructing the Project at all. The attached staff report details these benefits and challenges. In summary these include:

- Transportation – high-speed rail would provide a new, fast, reliable intercity travel mode that meets future travel demand; thus meeting the projects purpose, needs, and objectives.
- Air Quality – Although temporary construction activities are predicted to have short-term air quality effects, the High-Speed Rail Project Alternative is expected to have a regional net beneficial effect in terms of long-term operational emissions, including a net decrease of pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions compared to the No Project Alternative. Therefore, the High-Speed Rail Project Alternative would result in long-term beneficial effects to regional air quality and global climate change.
- Noise/Vibration – Generally, high-speed rail trains would be quieter than existing diesel trains currently using this corridor. However, an indirect noise impact would be generated due to moving existing tracks (which carry the diesel trains) closer to sensitive receptors along the corridor to make room for high-speed rail tracks.
- Hazardous Materials and Wastes – Potential impacts from hazardous emissions or the handling of hazardous materials during construction of the Project Alternative; this is especially relevant since this corridor has been an industrial use for several decades. However, the project would remove and remediate a large amount of contaminated soils in this corridor.
- Safety and Security – Beneficial effect to public safety due to reduced public service response times, fewer crashes, and less automobile idling (thereby improving air quality) because of grade-separated railroad crossings.
- Socioeconomics and Communities – Adverse impacts would occur under the Project Alternative from displacements to local businesses and residences, however, beneficial effects would occur due to creation of additional direct, indirect, and induced jobs.

Performance Information

The following table presents alignment length and speed capacity for the Project Alternative.

Criterion	Project Alternative
Alignment Length	30 miles
Speed capacity	110 mph

The table below provides the capital cost estimate in 2018 dollars. The cost estimate includes the total effort and materials necessary to construct the Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section, including stations and modifications to roadways required to accommodate grade-separated guideways. Cost estimates contained in the EIR/EIS document reflect all project features and mitigations required to support high-speed rail operations in year 2040. Therefore, these estimates may differ from estimates that reflect start-up operation and/or interim phases that are carried in other available high-speed rail documents.

Cost	Project Alternative
Total in 2018 Dollars	\$4.8 Billion

This project alternative is the same alternative evaluated in the 2018 Business Plan, but with updated design since the 2018 Business Plan. However, the capital costs outlined reflect a conservative scope and sufficient project footprint to accommodate project refinement through final design for construction documents. This allows the Authority to evaluate maximum impacts in the EIR/EIS and reduces the risk that environmental clearance does not cover all potential impacts. Further, the Authority has not yet applied value engineering and other optimization measures to reduce these costs, including the Early Train Operator benchmarking review, footprint refinement and constructability mitigations.

Based on the above summary information, staff recommends that the Board identify the Project Alternative as the State’s Preferred Alternative.

Shared Urban Railroad Corridor Section

California high-speed rail would operate in a “shared modern urban corridor” alongside BNSF, Amtrak and the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (Metrolink). Features of the corridor would include positive train control, uniform corridor protection including sound walls where warranted, grade separations, and an earthquake early warning system. The High-Speed Rail Project Alternative accommodates other planned increases in freight and passenger railroad operations, and addresses impacts to corridor owners including the BNSF Railway between Redondo Junction and Fullerton Junction. Therefore, a support yard and additional siding and storage tracks further inland are also anticipated to mitigate impacts and enhance overall operational efficiency of this important rail corridor for both freight and passenger service. Extensive coordination with BNSF, LA Metro, Amtrak, LOSSAN, California State Transportation Agency and Southern California Regional Rail Authority is underway and will continue throughout the project development process. The Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section EIR/EIS will include the environmental assessment of these recently identified project components.

Metrolink Station Relocations

To accommodate high-speed rail and future rail volume growth along the corridor, this project includes the relocation of the existing Commerce and Buena Park Metrolink stations. Due to necessary track modification, each station will need moved to alternate locations along the rail corridor, within approximately ½ mile from their current sites. Authority staff have performed a detailed analysis, and solicited public and stakeholder input to arrive at identify the proposed new station sites.

Los Angeles Union Station

The Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro) is currently undertaking a project to improve operations at Los Angeles Union Station via a project labeled Link US. These improvements entail upgraded track configurations and station enhancements, which would also serve to accommodate high-speed rail. Authority staff is currently engaged in advancing this project to ensure it continues to fully satisfy the Authority’s operational needs.

Legal Approval

The Legal Office has confirmed that the Board may take the concurrence action requested by staff.

Budget and Fiscal Impact

The selection of this preferred alternative does not have an additional cost impact on the program-wide cost included in the California High-Speed Rail Authority budget for Phase 1 Record of Decisions (RODs) and reflected in the Capital Outlay Report.

2018-19 Fiscal Year Budget Impact

Contract Name	Contract Number	Current FY Contract Budget	Budget Change	Funding Source
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A



Total Program Budget Impact

Contract Name	Contract Number	Current FY Contract Budget	Budget Change	Funding Source
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

As stated in the description above of this Preferred Alternative, the level of design and the conservative scope used to determine the estimates in the EIR/EIS documents are different from the assumptions in the 2018 Business Plan and therefore capital costs should not be compared on a like-for-like basis. As a result, the estimate included in the Technical Memorandum supporting the capital cost estimate of the 2018 Business Plan differs from the estimate presented in the EIR/EIS documents. The main reasons can be summarized as follows:

- Wider footprint before refinement and optimization;
- Constructability mitigation; and,
- Value engineering and other optimization measures have not been applied in the EIR/EIS estimates

This is consistent with any environmental approach that aims to evaluate the maximal potential environmental impact of the project in the EIR/EIS document.

REVIEWER INFORMATION	
Reviewer Name and Title: Russell Fong Chief Financial Officer	Signature verifying budget analysis: 
Reviewer Name and Title: Tom Fellenz Chief Counsel	Signature verifying legal analysis: 

Recommendations

Based on comprehensive outreach efforts and on the evaluation criteria outlined above, staff recommends that the Board identify the Project Alternative as the State's Preferred Alternative for preparing the Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section Draft EIR/EIS.

The Board is not approving an alternative at this point. Staff will return to the Board with the Final EIR/EIS to request approval of an alternative.

Attachments

- Draft Resolution #HSRA 18-21
- Exhibit 1, Overview of Project Alternative
- Preferred Alternative Staff Report for the Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section

Exhibit 1 Overview of Project Alternative

