



Board Report

File #: 2019-0430, File Type: Agreement

Agenda Number: 28.

PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE JUNE 19, 2019

SUBJECT: LONE HILL TO WHITE DOUBLE TRACK

ACTION: APPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION

CONSIDER:

- A. DETERMINING that the Lone Hill to White Double Track Project is Statutorily Exempt, pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15275 (a) and (b); and,
- B. DIRECTING staff to file a CEQA Notice of Exemption for the LHW Double Track Project with the Los Angeles County Clerk.

ISSUE

Metro completed environmental review and 30% design for the Lone Hill to White (LHW) Double Track Project in August 2017. The Southern California Regional Rail Authority (also known as Metrolink) and the cities of San Dimas and La Verne have requested that the LHW Double Track Project proceed to final design. Staff is requesting Board approval to determine that the LHW Double Track Project is Statutorily Exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and to formally file the CEQA Notice of Exemption (NOE) with the Los Angeles County Clerk.

DISCUSSION

The LHW Double Track Project is located along the Metrolink San Bernardino Line (SBL), in the cities of San Dimas and La Verne (Attachment A). The Metrolink SBL is the busiest commuter rail line, averaging 11,000 weekday boardings on 38 trains per weekday. The rail infrastructure on the Metrolink SBL is comprised of 65 percent single track which is analogous to two way directional traffic on a single lane. As such, there are many single track bottleneck and capacity constraints which impact the service reliability and on-time performance on the SBL.

Completion of the LHW Double Track Project will provide an additional 3.9 miles of continuous double track to further reduce a single train bottleneck. The LHW Double Track Project will improve travel time and efficiency for trains on the Metrolink SBL, reduce delays due to trains waiting on a siding for another train to pass, and provide operational flexibility to recover from delays.

The main components of the project include the following:

- 3.9 miles of second mainline track between Lone Hill Avenue and Control Point (CP) White
- Extension of the existing platform at the Pomona Fairgrounds Station to provide more platform capacity for seasonal and special event service.
- Relocation of one industrial track and modification to one industrial track
- Ten new railroad turnouts
- New control point at Lone Hill Avenue with a new train control signal and communication infrastructure to support the LHW Double Track Project configuration
- Twelve at-grade crossings to be modified, all with Quiet Zone Improvements
- Relocated Utilities and drainage improvements
- Fencing at select locations to improve security along the right-of-way (ROW)

Quiet Zone

In addition to the 3.9 miles of new mainline track, 12 at-grade street crossings will include Quiet Zone ready improvements that will no longer require trains passing through these 12 at-grade street crossings to blow their horns which will improve the quality of life for residents along the right-of-way. The Federal Railroad Administration regulation requires that train locomotive horns begin sounding 15-20 seconds before entering public highway-rail grade crossings, no more than one-quarter mile in advance. Only a public authority or government entity such as a city, responsible for traffic control or law enforcement at the street crossing is permitted to create quiet zones. A quiet zone is a section of a rail line that contains at-grade street crossings at which train locomotives are not routinely sounded when trains are approaching the crossings. Because the absence of a routine train horn sounding increases the risk of a crossing collision, a public authority that desires to establish a quiet zone is required to include additional safety improvements such as active warning devices, flashing lights, quad gates, etc. that enhances pedestrian safety.

As part of the preliminary engineering, five at-grade crossings in the City of San Dimas and seven in the City of La Verne were designed to the latest SCRRRA design standards, which are consistent with FRA Quiet Zone Train Horn Rule Quiet Zone Notice of Intent (NOI) requirements. Diagnostic meetings were held with California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) staff and calculations were made to ensure that the improvements would qualify for FRA approval of a future Quiet Zone, should the two cities wish to file the NOI for Quiet Zones.

Both the cities of San Dimas and La Verne were consulted regarding Quiet Zones. Both cities provided letters of support for the LHW Double Track Project advancing to final design (See Attachment C and D).

CEQA Determination

CEQA provides for Statutory Exemptions for certain activities and specified actions. According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15275, CEQA does not apply to the following mass transit projects: 15275 (a) "The institution or increase of passenger or commuter service on rail lines or high-occupancy vehicle lanes already in use..."; and 15275 (b) "Facility extensions not to exceed four miles in length

which are required for transfer of passengers from or to exclusive public mass transit guideway or busway public transit services.” Upon approval of the staff recommendations, the CEQA Notice of Exemption will be filed with the Los Angeles County Clerk (refer to Attachment B).

Community Meetings

During the preliminary engineering phase, community meetings were held with the cities of San Dimas and La Verne in November 2016 and May 2017. Approximately 200 people attended the four combined meetings. A wide range of comments and insightful suggestions about the LHW Double Track Project were received. The LHW Double Track Project was generally well received, with 64 neutral or positive comments towards the project and 13 expressing concerns having to do with noise and vibration, and/or the desire to implement Quiet Zones.

Metrolink SCORE

In 2018 SCRRA received \$876 million in funding from the State for the first phase of its Southern California Optimized Rail Expansion (SCORE) program. When fully built out, the \$10 billion SCORE program will provide 15 to 30 minute bi-directional service and a major expansion of service by 2028. In SCRRA’s application to the State for SCORE funding, the LHW Double Track Project was identified as a key early completion project, to provide reliability and capacity, leading to 30 minute bi-directional service along the San Bernardino Line.

Metrolink anticipates heavy utilization of the Metrolink San Bernardino line for the 2028 Olympics. Mountain biking events will be hosted in San Dimas near the Metrolink San Bernardino Line station in Pomona. Additionally, the San Bernardino Line will be an important feeder line to enable people in the San Gabriel Valley to easily get to downtown Los Angeles to access the many Olympic venues in the greater Los Angeles area. The LHW Double Track Project will provide important additional capacity that will enable the San Bernardino Line to maintain reliable on-time performance, and add future service, subject to funding availability, consistent with demand and regional planning documents.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

Once constructed, the LHW Double Track Project will reduce the risk of train-on-train collisions. Safety improvements at the 12 crossings will benefit cars, trucks, pedestrians, communities and Metrolink riders. Extension of the Pomona Fairground Station platform will prevent Metrolink trains from blocking Arrow Highway.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact should the Board approve Recommendation A, to determine that the LHW Double Track Project is Statutorily Exempt, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15275 (a) and (b). There is also no financial impact should the Board approve Recommendation B, to direct staff to file a CEQA NOE for the LHW Double Track Project with the Los Angeles County Clerk.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Staff’s recommendations A and B support strategic plan goals 1, 3 and 4. These actions support

Metro's partnership with other rail operators to improve service reliability and mobility, provide better transit connections throughout the network and serves to implement the following specific strategic plan goals:

- Goal 1.2: Improve LA County's overall transit network and assets;
- Goal 3.3: Genuine public and community engagement to achieve better mobility outcomes for the people of LA County; and
- Goal 4.1: Metro will work with partners to build trust and make decisions that support the goals of the Strategic Plan.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The alternative would be for the Board to not approve the CEQA Statutory Exemption for the LHW Double Track Project. This is not recommended since environmental review and preliminary engineering have been completed and the LHW Double Track Project qualifies for a CEQA Statutory Exemption. Additionally, the LHW Double Track Project is identified as an early investment project as part of SCRRA's SCORE Program. Finally, the region would lose an opportunity to advance an important capacity project which provides reliability and on-time performance benefits, and enhanced safety and community benefit, with the advancement of 12 Quiet Zone ready crossings.

NEXT STEPS

With Board approval of the staff recommendations, staff will file the CEQA NOE with both the Los Angeles County Clerk and the State Clearinghouse. Staff will return to the Board by September 2019 to request programming of funds to continue the preliminary engineering design to final design to enable a shovel ready project.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Map of LHW Double Track Project Corridor

Attachment B - CEQA Statutory Exemption

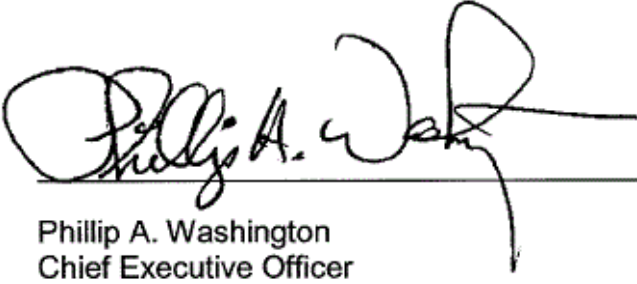
Attachment C - Letter of Support from City of San Dimas

Attachment D - Letter of Support from City of La Verne

Prepared by: Jay Fuhrman, Manager, Transportation Planning, Regional Rail, (213) 418
3179

Jeanet Owens, Senior Executive Officer, Regional Rail (213) 418-3189

Reviewed by: Richard Clarke, Chief Program Management Officer, (213) 922-7557



Phillip A. Washington
Chief Executive Officer

Attachment A: Project Map



Attachment B

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk

County of: Los Angeles

From: (Public Agency): _____
LA County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

One Gateway Plaza, Los Angeles, CA 90012-2592

(Address)

Project Title: Lone Hill to Control Point White Double-Track Project

Project Applicant: Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Project Location - Specific:

The project is located along the San Bernardino Metrolink Line (SBL) between Lone Hill Avenue (MP 26.55) in San Dimas and CP White (MP 30.4) in La Verne within Los Angeles County.

Project Location - City: San Dimas, La Verne Project Location - County: Los Angeles

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The proposed project would involve the double-tracking of approximately 3.9 miles of railroad track and related infrastructure, and associated safety and grade crossing improvements at 12 at-grade crossings. See continuation sheet.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Erika Wilder

Exempt Status: **(check one):**

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: _____
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: CEQA Guidelines §15275(a) and (b)

Reasons why project is exempt:

The proposed project would facilitate the increase of passenger rail service on a rail line already in use. The proposed project also involves improvements to existing stations and parking facilities and does not exceed four miles in length. Therefore, pursuant to §15275(a) and (b), the project is exempt from CEQA.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Erika Wilder Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 213.922.7305

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature: _____ Date: _____ Title: _____

Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Lone Hill to Control Point White Double-Track Project Description

The Lone Hill Avenue to CP White Double-Track Project would include approximately 3.9 miles of double track along the San Bernardino Metrolink Line, one of the busiest commuter rail lines in the Metrolink system. To improve the overall functionality of the line, adding a second track where a single track currently exists, at least along this segment of the San Bernardino Line, would help to increase capacity in the future, improve safety and performance, and reduce delays. In addition to the proposed double tracking, the proposed project would include improvements to ten public at-grade crossings and two private grade crossings, and the extension of the existing platform at the existing Pomona Fairgrounds Station. Other modifications include drainage improvements, relocation of utilities and signal houses, and other associated improvements. The proposed project improvements are mostly within the existing railroad or public right-of-way (ROW), and only partial (corner cut) acquisitions of additional ROW will be required for installation of safety improvements at intersections for quiet zone readiness.

A summary of the major proposed project elements is provided below:

- Design 3.9 miles of second mainline track between Lone Hill Avenue (MP 26.55) in San Dimas and CP White (MP 30.4) in La Verne.
- Design connections to auxiliary tracks that include industrial spur and siding tracks.
- Design 12 roadway at-grade crossings, including two private grade crossings, pier protection at the SR-57 underpass, and associated improvements.
- Relocate and modify train-control signal and communication equipment, including signal houses and communications towers.
- Relocate and/or protect utilities.
- Design culvert and drainage improvements.
- Design pedestrian safety enhancements at all grade crossings.
- Design sidewalk and driveway modifications at grade crossings to accommodate the second track and enhance safety.
- Explore options of adding a second platform or crossover at the Pomona Fairgrounds station to be used seasonally, extending the existing station, or keeping the station platform as is.

Purpose and Need/Project Objectives

1. Construct a second track and associated railroad improvements to improve Metrolink passenger rail and freight service to eliminate the current bottleneck and improve travel time along this portion of the SBL, thereby improving operational reliability.
2. Improve safety and accessibility at the existing at-grade crossings by upgrading 12 public and private at-grade roadway crossings and add pier protection at the SR-57 undercrossing.
3. Facilitate the potential for implementation of Quiet Zones in the future by designing the project to meet Quiet Zone standards.



City Council
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RYAN A. VIENNA, Mayor Pro Tem
EMMETT BADAR
DENIS BERTONE
JOHN EBINER

City Manager
KENNETH J. DURAN

Assistant City Manager of
Community Development
LAWRENCE STEVENS

Director of Public Works
KRISHNA PATEL

Director of Parks and
Recreation
HECTOR M. KISTEMANN

City Attorney
JEFF M. MALAWY

June 11, 2019

Phillip A Washington
Chief Executive Officer LA Metro
1 Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. Washington:

The City of San Dimas appreciates the Metro initiated Lone Hill to White Double Track Project. We would like to reiterate our support in advancing this project to final design because we see the potential positives to lessen train noise and improve crossing safety. If the project advances to final design, we look forward to continued participation in the review of this project to explore further noise analysis measures and mitigations as part of the final design for this project.

During final design we look forward to further discussions regarding the following concerns our Community has specifically:

- The final design phase of the project will involve further detailed noise analysis. We look forward to reviewing that analysis. We encourage the installation of sound mitigations beyond the minimum FRA requirements when those additional mitigations can provide a significant difference to an adjacent resident or neighborhood along the alignment in terms of quality of life and well-being.
- We also request further risk management review of the transfer of liability associated with the sponsorship of a Quiet Zone Crossing. The operator currently bears the liability associated with the existing crossings - the new Quiet Zone crossings will be much safer and present a lower liability risk. We desire to explore these issues further because we believe there is an opportunity for an effective approach to the transfer of liability issue.

We continue to support advancing the Lone Hill to White Double Track Project into final design. The quiet zone and additional noise mitigation improvements represent a means to address some issues of significant community concern. We look forward to continued participation in the final design process.

Sincerely,

Curt Morris
Mayor
City of San Dimas

Attachment D



CITY OF LA VERNE CITY HALL

3660 "D" Street, La Verne, California 91750-3599
www.ci.la-verne.ca.us

June 13, 2019

Metro
Attn: Phillip A. Washington
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Confirmation of Support for Double Track and Quiet Zone Project to Fulton Road

Dear Mr. Washington,

I have been made aware that the Metro Board will be considering moving the Double Track and Quiet Zone Project through San Dimas and La Verne on the Metrolink San Bernardino line forward to receive funding for the final design. I would like to reiterate the City of La Verne's support for that effort.

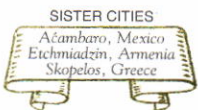
In September of 2017 the City provided a letter supporting the Lone Hill Avenue to Fulton Road Double Track Project. I have attached a copy of the letter signed by Mayor Don Kendrick as the City's support still remains unchanged as previously stated.

We want to thank you and the LA Metro Board in advance for consideration of prioritizing the funding for this project and look forward to our continued work with the metro staff through any aspects of the final design.

Sincerely,

Bob Russi
City Manager

Attachment: Support Letter from La Verne 9/2017



General Administration 909/596-8726 • Water Customer Service 909/596-8744 • Parks & Community Services 909/596-8700
Public Works 909/596-8741 • Finance 909/596-8716 • Community Development 909/596-8706 • Building 909/596-8713
Police Department 909/596-1913 • Fire Department 909/596-5991 • General Fax 909/596-8737