



California High-Speed Rail Authority **BREIFING: MAY 16, 2024, BOARD MEETING** **AGENDA ITEM #2**

TO: Board Chair Richards and Board Members

FROM: LaDonna DiCamillo, Southern California Regional Director

DATE: May 16, 2024

RE: Consider concurring with the Staff Recommended State Preferred Alternative, the Shared Passenger Track Alternative A, for the Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section for Identification in the Draft EIR/EIS

Summary

California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) staff recommends that the Board of Directors (Board) identify the Shared Passenger Track Alternative A 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, preliminary environmental analysis, and numerous public, stakeholder and agency meetings conducted to date.

With the Board's concurrence, the Draft EIR/EIS will identify the Shared Passenger Track Alternative A as the State's Preferred Alternative. Identification of the State's Preferred Alternative is not an approval of the adoption of the Shared Passenger Track Alternative A as the final project. The Draft EIR/EIS will also study the Shared Passenger Track Alternative B. Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs and Fullerton Intermediate Station Design Options will be considered for both options. The Authority may change the Preferred Alternative based on comments received during the public and agency review of the Draft EIR/EIS.

Background

On November 15, 2018, the Authority Board of Directors identified the 2018 High-Speed Rail Project Alternative as the Preferred Alternative for the Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section (2018 HSR Project Alternative). The 2018 HSR Project Alternative would begin at LAUS and end at ARTIC with an intermediate station in Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs or Fullerton, or intermediate station at both locations. In 2020, the Authority conducted a Revised Scoping process in the Los Angeles to Anaheim alignment that proposed two new project components of the 2018 HSR Project Alternative, the BNSF Colton Intermodal Facility (IMF) and BNSF's Lenwood Staging Tracks. The Colton IMF was proposed to accommodate the future growth of passenger rail operations on dedicated passenger tracks by shifting some freight operations outside of the project corridor.

Public and Stakeholder Engagement, raised substantial opposition to and concern for introducing a new IMF far outside the project corridor. Interested parties in the Inland Empire expressed concerns about the Colton Component's environmental impacts with the added concern that the benefits of HSR and its associated

improvements would not reach them. In addition, BNSF's support of the 2018 HSR Project Alternative waned, and BNSF no longer agreed to operate the Colton Component. For these reasons, the Authority considered additional alternatives that could eliminate the need to intercept trains and redirect trucks to a new IMF in San Bernardino County.

As a result of concerns raised during public scoping and subsequent meetings with partner agencies and key stakeholders, the Authority released the 2023 Supplemental Alternatives Analysis (SAA) in November 2023, which considers three new build alternatives that do not include an IMF and proposes the Shared Passenger Track Alternative for further consideration. The Shared Passenger Track Alternative resembles the current 2018 HSR Project Alternative and best meets the Project's purpose and need by serving the most potential passengers in the most cost-effective manner, while also reducing impacts to the environment, existing rail operations, and communities.

While the SAA demonstrated that the Shared Passenger Track Alternative performed better than the other alternatives based on the evaluation criteria, minimizing environmental impacts, and maximizing ridership, some design options and components were not fully developed within the document. The Preliminary Impacts Assessment Report attached to this memo and that will be discussed during the May 16, 2024, Board Meeting, further evaluates and refines the Shared Passenger Track Alternative with consideration of the grade crossing approach within Anaheim, LMF site options, and the inclusion of potential intermediate stations options within the project section.

Projects Alternatives Design Overview

The Shared Passenger Track Alternative would follow the same alignment as the 2018 HSR Project Alternative but would not include the Colton or Lenwood Components. Unlike the 2018 HSR Project Alternative, the proposed staging tracks outside the project corridor would be provided as mitigation for freight rail performance impacts resulting from HSR construction and operations. Operationally, the Shared Passenger Track Alternative would reduce the peak service level for HSR trains to two trains per hour per direction. The Authority would build one additional mainline track within the corridor, and up to ten BNSF freight trains a day would be able to utilize the two passenger rail tracks (i.e., tracks are no longer dedicated for passenger rail service only). Two of the four mainline tracks would be electrified.

The Shared Passenger Track Alternative also proposes a LMF located at either 15th Street or 26th Street, consideration of none or one intermediate station in either Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs or Fullerton, and a new approach to grade crossings within Anaheim.

The 2023 SAA concluded that the Shared Passenger Track Alternative had the best balance among the project objectives, environmental impacts on natural resources and community concerns, and stakeholder input. In response to input from community stakeholders, businesses, local agencies, and elected officials, the Authority has further refined the design of the Shared Passenger Track Alternative. Authority staff recommends that the Shared Passenger Track Alternative be split into two alternatives:

Shared Passenger Track Alternative A: includes mostly at-grade crossings within the City of Anaheim, the Southern California LMF at 26th Street, and no intermediate station.

Shared Passenger Track Alternative B: includes mostly at-grade crossings within the City of Anaheim, the Southern California LMF at 15th Street, and no intermediate station.

Both Shared Passenger Track Alternatives A and B would consider either the Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs Intermediate Station Option or the Fullerton Intermediate Station Option as design options within the EIR/EIS. This would allow the Board to elect an intermediate station later in the planning process. Additionally, both

Shared Passenger Track Alternatives A and B would study staging tracks within the Hesperia and Victorville areas as mitigation for freight rail impacts due to HSR construction and operation.

Stakeholder Engagement

Upon the release of the SAA in November 2023, the Authority initiated a public outreach program to share information and receive feedback utilizing a variety of tactics. The public outreach program focused on sharing the details about the Shared Passenger Track Alternative and the proposed changes from the 2018 HSR Project Alternative. Information was shared throughout the project area, with emphasis in communities where there are proposed project changes, including: the proposed LMF located at either 15th Street or 26th Street, consideration of No Intermediate Station, Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs Intermediate Station Option or Fullerton Intermediate Station Option, and a new approach to grade crossings in Anaheim.

Additionally, the Authority reached out to the cities, counties, transportation planning agencies, elected officials and leaders/organizations, representing a variety of sectors within the project area. As conducted for prior project milestones, the Authority hosted the project section Legislative/Elected (Staff) Group Briefing and the Stakeholders Working Group, with supplemental one-on-one coordination meetings provided upon request. Throughout the series of public engagement activities, project staff addressed questions related to stations and connectivity, noise and vibration, property impacts, traffic and circulation, safety, and opportunities for the public to comment on the Project. Table 1 and Table 2 provide a summary of the public engagement activities conducted within the Los Angeles to Anaheim High-Speed Rail Project Section.

TABLE 1 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

#	Date	Meeting
1.	11/29/23	Supplemental Alternatives Analysis Open House
2.	12/05/23	Southern California Light Maintenance Facility – 26th Street Option Information Session
3.	12/06/23	Southern California Light Maintenance Facility – 15th Street Option Information Session
4.	12/07/23	Anaheim Grade Crossings: Information Session
5.	12/11/23	Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs Intermediate Station Option and Santa Fe Springs Grade Crossings: Information Session
6.	12/14/23	Fullerton Intermediate Station Option and Orangethorpe Crossing: Information Session
7.	4/3/24	High Desert Staging Tracks Mitigation: Information Session

TABLE 2 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ENGAGEMENT

#	Date	Meeting
1.	11/18/23	City of Commerce Turkey Trot Activity Center: Information Booth
2.	11/22/23	Fullerton Farmer's Market: Information Booth
3.	11/25/23	Whittier Neighborhood Information Table: Pop Up
4.	12/02/23	Santa Fe Springs Tree Lighting: Information Booth
5.	12/03/23	Anaheim Tree Lighting: Information Booth
6.	12/08/23	Las Posadas in Santa Fe Springs: Information Booth
7.	3/21/24	Victorville Farmers Market

Stakeholder and public feedback is presented within the 2024 Preliminary Impacts Assessment Report and summarized as follows: regarding a preference between the two proposed Southern California LMF sites (15th and 26th Street), stakeholders that represented different areas along the corridor did not express a considerable preference toward a specific location. Regarding a potential intermediate station, residents attending the information sessions for both Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs and Fullerton expressed interest in having a station in their communities. Community opinion was mixed on the adequacy of current passenger train service between Los Angeles and Anaheim. While some stakeholders agreed that introducing HSR in the area will help improve connection, especially on the weekends, others stated there were currently other services such as Metrolink and Amtrak trains that stopped at these stations. Feedback was provided supporting additional connectivity and identifying interagency collaboration as key to improving mobility along the corridor. Most stakeholders also seemed to understand the efficiencies gained by adding none or only one, and not both intermediate stations. Feedback related to the proposed approach to Anaheim grade crossings was met with support as stakeholders and members of the public expressed relief over the reduced impacts on properties and the surrounding community associated with leaving crossings at grade. While there is an interest in bringing HSR into the region, stakeholders are concerned about the potential impacts (property acquisition, noise, vibration, air quality, and traffic), that construction could cause and are interested in learning about the mitigation measures that will be studied during the environmental process.

Prior Related Board Action

Significant Board Actions related to Southern California include the following:

1. **FINAL RESOLUTION #HSRA 13-27** Award of RC Contract for Los Angeles to San Diego Project Section
2. **FINAL RESOLUTION #HSRA 16-03** Agreement with LA Metro for LAUS Planning
3. **FINAL RESOLUTION #HSRA 17-13** Approval of Rosecrans Marquardt Funding Plan
4. **FINAL RESOLUTION #HSRA 18-21** Preferred Alternative for the LA-Anaheim Project Section
5. **FINAL RESOLUTION #HSRA 20-01** Approval of Link Union Station Funding Plan
6. **FINAL RESOLUTION #HSRA 22-07** Approval of the Project Management and Funding Agreement for the Los Angeles Union Station (Link US) Project, a major capital investment for High-Speed Rail

Discussion

Staff established a range of criteria to use in the identification of the new preferred alternative. These criteria were applied to evaluate the key differentiators between the Shared Passenger Track Alternatives A and B, including the approach to grade crossings within the City of Anaheim, LMF site location, and inclusion of an intermediate station. These criteria included community factors, environmental issues, and meeting project objectives (including capital cost). Each criteria features multiple components and is further explained within the Preliminary Impacts Assessment Report. A summary of the differentiating factors is provided below.

Anaheim Grade Crossings

The 2018 HSR Project Alternative suggests separating existing at-grade crossings in Anaheim with significant impacts on cost, environmental resources, and construction timelines. Staff recommends the Mostly At-Grade Anaheim Option for the Shared Passenger Track Alternative because of various factors, such as consistency with FRA regulations for trains moving at speeds less than 125 mph, reduced community disruption, and reduced cost. The Mostly At-Grade Anaheim Option is also more consistent with approaches used in other project sections of the HSR system and reduces the overall project cost by about \$376 million in 2023 dollars. Environmental clearance is recommended for select grade separations at Cerritos Avenue and State College

Boulevard to accommodate layover tracks, while maintaining all other at-grade crossings from Fullerton to the Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center (ARTIC) to minimize potential impacts.

Light Maintenance Facility

The Southern California LMF – 26th Street Option offers various advantages, such as operational advantages and access to the layover yard and more trackage within the footprint. While the 15th Street LMF Option is closer to LAUS and has a smaller footprint, it poses greater potential impacts on historic bridges and cultural resources. Additionally, it lacks bidirectional access, increasing track fouling risks and operational issues.

Stations

Selecting the No Intermediate Station Option offers various advantages, including its smaller project footprint, which aligns with the City of Fullerton’s Transportation Specific Plan, and reduced community impacts. The No Intermediate Station Option also presents the lowest costs compared to either the Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs Intermediate Station Option or the Fullerton Intermediate Station Option. While both Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs Intermediate Station and Fullerton Intermediate Station offer advantages in terms of transit-oriented development, they would result in greater construction and environmental impacts. Additionally, existing passenger rail service already provides connection among LAUS, Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs, Fullerton, and ARTIC stations. Because Proposition 1A limits the number of HSR stations that can be built, the construction of either the Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs Intermediate Station Option or the Fullerton Intermediate Station Option could preclude future station development in Phase 2.

Capital Costs

Table 3 shows the costs of the Shared Passenger Track Alternative from Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section in 2023 dollars. The cost estimates for the Shared Passenger Track Alternatives A and B include the total effort and materials necessary to build the project section, including the Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs Intermediate Station Option or the Fullerton Intermediate Station Option, maintenance facilities, and modifications to roadways required to accommodate grade-separated guideways. Note: The Authority is currently developing updated capital cost estimates as part of the Draft EIR/EIS process.

TABLE 3 CAPITAL COST OF ALTERNATIVES AND OPTIONS

Shared Passenger Track Alternatives	Cost (2023 Dollars)
A: LAUS* to ARTIC with no intermediate station and Southern California LMF at 26th Street with mostly at-grade crossings	\$6,654,000,000
A1: LAUS* to ARTIC with Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs Intermediate Station Option and Southern California LMF at 26th Street with mostly at-grade crossings in Anaheim	\$6,775,000,000
A2: LAUS* to ARTIC with Fullerton Intermediate Station Option and Southern California LMF at 26th Street with mostly at-grade crossings in Anaheim	\$6,908,000,000
B: LAUS* to ARTIC with no intermediate station and Southern California LMF at 15th Street with mostly at-grade crossings in Anaheim	\$6,654,000,000
B1: LAUS* to ARTIC with Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs Intermediate Station Option and Southern California LMF at 15th Street with mostly at-grade crossings in Anaheim	\$6,775,000,000

Shared Passenger Track Alternatives	Cost (2023 Dollars)
B2: LAUS* to ARTIC with Fullerton Intermediate Station Option and Southern California LMF at 15th Street with mostly at-grade crossings in Anaheim	\$6,908,000,000

* LAUS included (and environmentally cleared) within the Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section

Legal Approval

The Legal Office has confirmed that the Board is legally authorized to take the action being requested by staff. The Legal Office is not aware of any outstanding legal issues that would prevent consideration and action by the Board.

Budget and Fiscal Impact

This item does not affect the costs in the current Program Baseline Budget adopted by the Board in January 2024, because that budget is limited to funded scope and this segment is currently unfunded beyond environmental clearance costs and the identified bookend funding for Los Angeles Union Station and the Rosecrans-Marquardt Grade Separation Project.

Cost estimates are identified earlier in this document for Shared Passenger Track Alternatives and range from \$6.65 billion to \$6.91 billion in 2023 dollars. The Authority will further update these costs as part of the Draft EIR/EIS process. As a comparison, the 2018 HSR Project Alternative carries a cost estimate of \$9.17 billion in 2023 dollars. So, the new proposed alternative is expected to lower costs by over \$2.0 billion.

As was also stated in the 2024 Business Plan, environmental analysis to date suggests costs for this segment will likely exceed the \$3.52 billion cost range that has been carried in recent Annual reports. As is evident here, costs can fluctuate significantly during the environmental process as mitigation determinations are made and scope is further defined, and further inflation adjustments are incorporated. Pursuant to Board Policy HSRA 24-1135, cost estimates for sections outside the Central Valley must be updated in the Annual Report (Project Update Report or Business Plan) that follows Board approval of the Final Environmental Clearance for the given segment.

REVIEWER INFORMATION	SIGNATURE
Reviewer Name and Title: Brian Annis Chief Financial Officer	Signature verifying budget analysis:
Reviewer Name and Title: Alicia Fowler Chief Counsel	Signature verifying legal analysis:

Recommendations

Based on the above summary information, staff recommends the Board identify the Shared Passenger Track Alternative A (with mostly at-grade crossings within the City of Anaheim, the Southern California LMF at 26th Street, and no intermediate station) as the State's Preferred Alternative.

Authority staff also recommends that Shared Passenger Track Alternative B (with mostly at-grade crossings within the City of Anaheim, the Southern California LMF at 15th Street, and no intermediate station) be studied within the environmental document and that both Shared Passenger Track Alternatives A and B consider either

the Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs Intermediate Station Option or the Fullerton Intermediate Station Option as design options. This would allow the Board to elect an intermediate station later in the planning process.

If the Board accepts the staff recommendation, Shared Passenger Track Alternative A will be identified as the State Preferred Alternative in the Draft EIR/EIS. The Authority will release the Draft EIR/EIS for public and agency review and comment and will take those comments into consideration in developing the final environmental document.

The Board is neither adopting nor approving the final project at this time. No alternative will be approved until completion of the final environmental document. Staff will return to the Board in the future to consider approving an alignment for the project section, informed by the final environmental document.

Attachments

Draft Resolution #HSRA24-06

Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section Preliminary Impacts Assessment Report (2024)

Presentation