

**BRIEFING: APRIL 17, 2018 BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM #4**

**TO:** Chairman Richard and Board Members

**FROM:** Michelle Boehm, Southern California Regional Director  
Mark McLoughlin, Director of Environmental Services

**DATE:** April 17, 2018

**RE:** Schedule for Future Decisions on Southern California Alignments

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**Background**

In April 2016, the Authority presented Supplemental Alternatives Analysis (SAA) Reports for each of the Phase 1 project sections in Southern California: Bakersfield to Palmdale, Palmdale to Burbank, Burbank to Los Angeles, and Los Angeles to Anaheim. Each SAA Report described the range of alternatives considered for that section, provided recommendations on which alternatives to advance for additional evaluation in the project development process, and included recommendations on which alternatives to withdraw from further consideration.

Since that time, the Authority has continued project development work in each Southern California project section. The purpose of this update is to provide the Board a current status on each section and identify next steps and the schedule for Board decisions.

**Discussion**

The Authority is partnering with agencies, corridor cities, interested stakeholders and the public to bring the nation's first high-speed rail system to Southern California and to implement a statewide rail modernization program. Preparation of environmental documents is underway for all project sections from Bakersfield to the Los Angeles/Anaheim area. Key activities taking place include coordination with rail partners on the advancement of statewide rail modernization and state rail plan initiatives, advancing critically needed bookend/connectivity projects, and project development for the five project sections. Highlights of these activities are provided below. Progress to date has been made possible through partnerships with local and regional transportation providers and cities, counties, and resource agencies that continue to collaborate with the Authority to advance high-speed rail in Southern California.

***Statewide Rail Modernization / Early Implementation Program***

The Authority is working with regional partners to implement a statewide rail modernization program that will invest billions of dollars in local and regional rail lines and mobility projects to meet California's 21st century transportation needs. Funding has been dedicated to several key projects that will reshape mobility in Southern California, contribute to the statewide rail modernization program and prepare for the arrival of high-speed rail. Senate Bill 1029, Proposition 1A Connectivity Projects are contributing to high-speed rail development in

Southern California, including: Metro's Regional Connector, Metrolink's Positive Train Control system, Metrolink's new Tier IV locomotives. In addition, an initial investment from the \$76.6 million in Bookend funding has supported the completion of the Rosecrans/Marquardt grade separation in the City of Santa Fe Springs.

### ***Bakersfield to Palmdale Project Section***

Connects the Central Valley to the Antelope Valley, closing the existing passenger rail gap over the Tehachapi Mountains, providing convenient access between the Central Valley and Southern California. The approximately 80-mile project section will travel through or near the communities of Edison, Keene, Tehachapi, Rosamond, Lancaster and Palmdale with stations in Bakersfield and at the Palmdale Transportation Center.

#### **Status:**

- Completed Draft Preliminary Engineering to support the environmental analysis
- Evaluating route alternatives in the environmental document and conducting supporting technical studies
- Robust stakeholder and community engagement to support the planning and environmental process
- Completed geotechnical and seismic field investigations in the Tehachapi mountains, providing information on ground conditions for tunneling

### ***Palmdale to Burbank Project Section***

Connects the Antelope Valley to the San Fernando Valley, bringing high-speed rail to the urban Los Angeles area. The approximately 40-mile project section will connect stations at the Palmdale Transportation Center to a new high-speed rail station at the Hollywood Burbank Airport. The corridor travels through extremely diverse areas from rural and mountainous to suburban and dense urban environments.

#### **Status:**

- Completed six deep geotechnical borings in the Angeles National Forest, providing critical information about the ground conditions for tunneling
- Collaboration with institutions of higher learning to make data from the geotechnical drilling program available for research
- Evaluating route alternatives in the environmental document and conducting supporting technical studies
- Robust stakeholder and community engagement to support the planning and environmental process

### ***Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section***

Links high-speed rail to two key multi-modal transportation hubs, the Hollywood Burbank Airport and Los Angeles Union Station, providing an additional link between Downtown Los Angeles, the San Fernando Valley and the rest of the state. The approximately 12-mile project section proposes to utilize the existing railroad right-of-way to the extent possible, adjacent to the Los Angeles River, through the cities of Burbank, Glendale and Los Angeles.

#### **Status:**

- Coordinating with Metro's Link US project at Los Angeles Union Station to accommodate future high-speed rail service

- Member of regional operators group focused on maximizing the efficiency of the urban corridors consistent with State Rail Plan goals and objectives and reducing the capital investment required to increase service for all users in the corridor and introduce high-speed rail
- Evaluating route alternatives and conducting technical studies to support the draft environmental document
- Robust stakeholder and community engagement including targeted grade separation workshops and engagement with various Los Angeles River groups

### ***Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section***

Connects Los Angeles and Orange counties by traveling from Los Angeles Union Station to the Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center (ARTIC), creating a shared urban mobility corridor. The approximately 30-mile corridor travels through the cities of Los Angeles, Vernon, Commerce, Bell, Montebello, Pico Rivera, Norwalk, Santa Fe Springs, La Mirada, Buena Park, Fullerton and Anaheim.

#### **Status:**

- Partnering on development of Rosecrans/Marquardt Grade Separation project in the City of Santa Fe Springs
- Member of regional operators group focused on maximizing the efficiency of the urban corridors consistent with State Rail Plan goals and objectives and reducing the capital investment required to increase service for all users in the corridor and introduce high-speed rail
- Evaluating route alternatives and conducting technical studies to support the draft environmental document
- Robust stakeholder and community engagement including coordination with corridor cities including the Gateway Cities Council of Governments

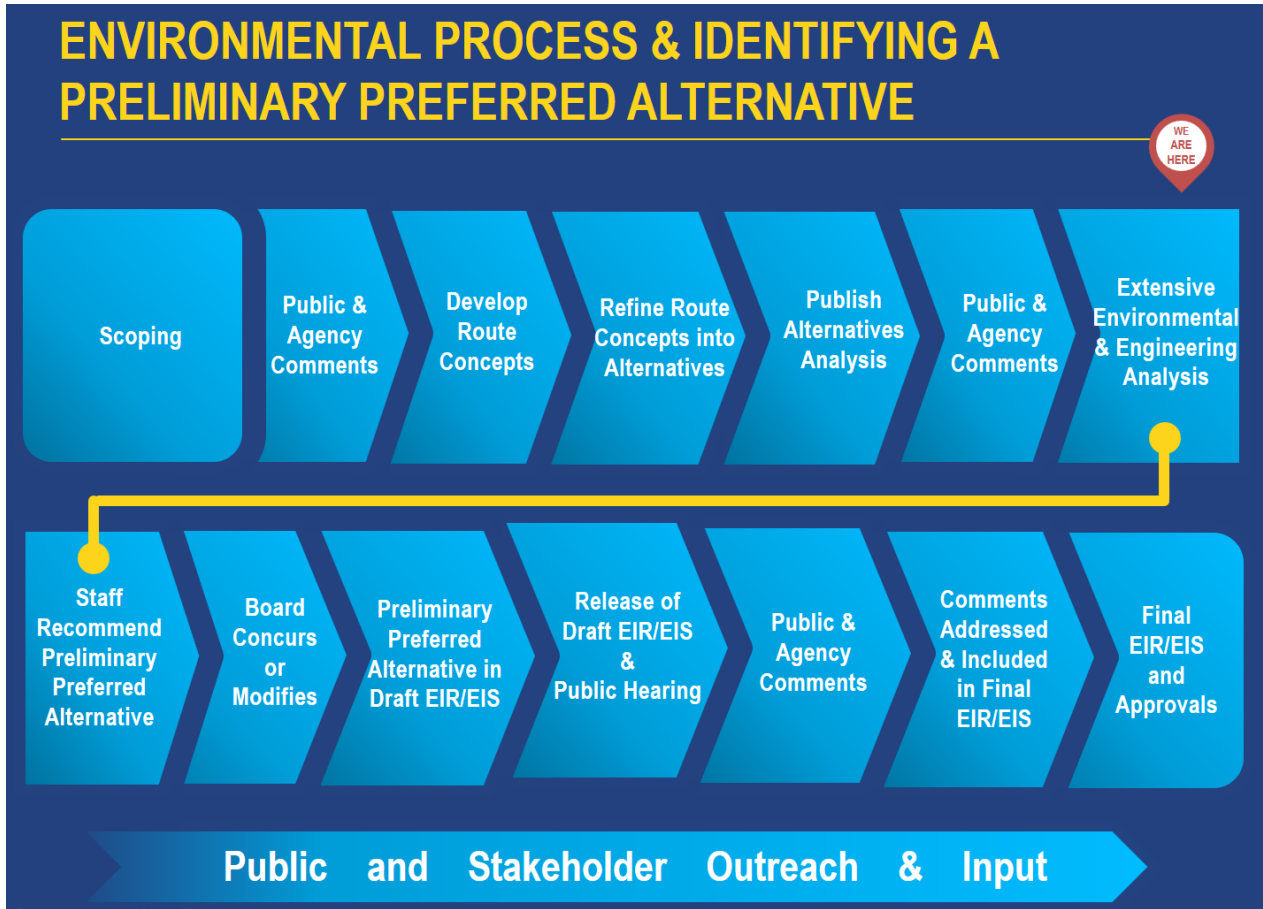
### **Next Steps**

The Authority, working closely with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), remains committed to completing environmental reviews as expeditiously as possible to provide clarity to local communities, stakeholders and regional partners on projected alignments and station locations. While significant work has been completed to date, more remains to be done. Along with conducting robust public and stakeholder outreach as the next formal action, Authority staff will seek concurrence from the Board on a preliminary preferred alternative for each section in advance of release of the draft environmental documents.

As noted in the staff report on the Draft 2018 Business Plan, staff intends to return to the Board at its June meeting with a proposal to adopt the program delivery baseline. As part of that report, staff will present a schedule for environmental review and approval which includes the next step of returning to the Board for the recommendation to concur with preliminary preferred alternatives on all project sections, including those in Southern California. The Authority's commitment is to hold those future meetings of the Board where staff recommended preliminary preferred alternatives are presented for consideration in the communities that are affected by the decision.

Throughout this process, comments from regulatory agency partners, stakeholders and the community will be collected and used to support the selection of a preferred alternative. The release of the draft environmental documents for each section will be accompanied by public hearings as well as agency and public comment.

The Authority is committed to making the environment and surrounding communities a top priority through planning and construction, and will build a high-speed program intended to achieve the fewest impacts and greatest benefits. This means engaging in a transparent process that evaluates a full range of alignment alternatives to reach the best possible outcome for communities and natural resources. Local communities are key partners in the advancement and identification of the preferred alternative in each Southern California project section.



**Recommendations**

This is an information item only; staff does not recommend any Board action at this time.