



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

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PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
November 18, 2009

SUBJECT: STATE ROUTE 2 TERMINUS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION

- A. Receive and File the State Route 2 Freeway Terminus Improvement Project Draft Initial Study/Environmental Assessment Report (DIS/EA). The document is available upon request.
- B. Adopt the Hybrid Alternative as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA), inclusive of the proposed improvements that enhance vehicular and pedestrian safety and create community open space in the State Route 2 (SR-2) Terminus project area described in Attachment A.
- C. Authorize the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate and execute Modification No. 3 to Contract No. 4320-1699 with ICF Jones and Stokes Associates to extend the contract for a period of five months and increase the Total Contract Value in the not to exceed amount of \$225,260 from \$1,578,719 to \$1,803,979 for the preparation of required environmental analysis and preliminary engineering of the Hybrid Alternative for inclusion in the Final Environmental Document (FED) and Project Report (PR).
- D. Authorize the Chief Executive Officer to recommend the LPA to Caltrans District Director for approval upon completion and review of the required environmental analysis and preliminary engineering.

ISSUE

The DIS/EA for the State Route 2 Terminus has been completed. In order for work to commence on the project's final environmental document and the project report, the Board must approve a preferred alternative for recommendation to the Caltrans District 7 District Director.

In January 2002, a Preliminary Study Report-Preliminary Development Support (PSR-PDS), in cooperation with Caltrans and the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), was completed. The PSR-PDS developed 4 alternatives to manage traffic

flow at the terminus, enhance vehicular movement, and increases pedestrian mobility and safety in the vicinity of the SR-2 terminus. Subsequently, the MTA Board approved the inclusion of a fifth alternative as proposed by a local community group, stemming from community review of the PSR-PDS. The five build alternatives and a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) required no-build option, were evaluated in the Initial Study/Environmental Assessment Report (IS/EA).

Following the public review process, the technical agencies involved in the project met on two occasions to reach agreement on a LPA but did not reach consensus. Subsequently, we met with Caltrans and LADOT in September 2009 with the result that the three agencies agreed to support and recommend a hybrid alternative that resolved the traffic and safety issues identified during the public review process. In order to recommend the Hybrid Alternative for Caltrans approval and to include it in the FED and (PR) for the SR-2 project, the alternative requires additional environmental analysis and preliminary engineering that was not part of the original and amended contract.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The recommended action is consistent with the Board's previous direction to environmentally clear a project that helps resolve traffic conflicts and community issues caused by the SR-2 ending at Glendale Blvd. The proposed SR-2 terminus improvement project is consistent with Board policy focus on the area in the immediate vicinity of the SR-2 freeway terminus.

OPTIONS

The Board could choose to select one of the five build alternatives or the No-Build alternative that were carried forward in the DIS/EA, or not move forward with any option.

These options are not recommended because of the lack of consensus by Caltrans, LADOT, and the community for any of the alternatives studied in the DIS/EA. Deferral for further study would delay selection of the locally preferred alternative and may preclude further efforts to obtain federal funding grants needed to complete construction of the project.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Funding of \$700,000 for this project is included in the FY10 budget in cost center 4320 (Central Area Team) in project 420004 (MTA Sponsored Call-for-Projects) account 50316 (Services Professional/Technical). The recommendation to increase the Total Contract Value is included in this budgeted funding amount. The environmental work for the SR-2 project will be completed by March 2010.

Impact to Bus and Rail Operating and Capital Budget

This project is funded with Prop C 25% Streets and Highway Funds and these funds are not eligible for bus or rail operating and capital expenditures. No other source of funds was considered for this project. This project will not have an impact on Metro bus or rail operations.

BACKGROUND

SR-2 was originally planned and constructed in 1959 to connect I-5 with US 101 through the neighborhoods of Silver Lake and Echo Park. In 1962, as a result of local community opposition, the full build-out plan was rescinded and construction was halted at the present SR-2 terminus near Glendale Boulevard and Duane Street, thus creating traffic congestion along Glendale Boulevard. There have been three relevant studies concerning the SR-2 terminus. In 1992 Metro prepared a study to develop a course of action regarding future traffic and transportation plans for SR-2 and Glendale Blvd. that reviewed existing traffic conditions and proposed transportation improvements and recommendations for implementation of the improvements. The general location of SR-2 is shown in Attachment B.

In 1994, Metro and LADOT completed the Glendale Boulevard Corridor Preliminary Planning Study, Phase II that analyzed existing constraints and opportunities in the corridor and developed urban design strategies and recommendations to improve conditions along Glendale Boulevard, including alternative reconfigurations of the SR-2 terminus. In March 2002, a Project Study Report/Project Development Support (PSR/PDS), that addressed alternatives for reconstruction of the southern terminus, was approved. The build alternatives ranged from widening the existing north and south bound ramps to new configurations to link with Glendale Boulevard. The request for additional design alternatives stemmed from community review of the PSR/PDS. To accommodate the community request, MTA undertook the Initial Study/Environmental Assessment study.

Public Review Process:

A series of three public scoping meetings for the proposed project were held on April 11, April 19, and April 20, 2006. Following the scoping meetings, an on-going series of focus group community meetings have been held starting on June 28 2006. The most recent focus group meeting was held on August 24, 2009.

Between May 18 and July 2, 2009 the Initial Study/Environmental Assessment was circulated for 45 days for public review and comment. Two public workshops were held on June 9 and June 11, 2009 in the Silverlake and Echo Park communities, respectively, during which the project alternatives, environmental findings and steps forward were presented to the public. The public hearing was held on June 16, 2009. A total of 140 comments were received during the public review process. There were thirty-three comments recorded during the three meetings and we received 107 written comments. Ninety-one of the total comments received expressed a preference for Alternative D, with the balance spread over the other alternatives.

Purpose and Need:

The SR-2 Terminus provides ingress and egress to the densely populated communities of Echo Park and Silver Lake and is a major thoroughfare for the surrounding area. This segment of SR-2 also provides a vital link for commuters traveling from communities in the northern and eastern parts of the Los Angeles Basin to downtown Los Angeles. Among the major problems at the SR-2 Terminus is traffic congestion in both AM and PM Peak periods, severely impeded traffic flow due to the existing configuration of the SR-2 terminus, and safety and access constraints for pedestrians and bicycles during peak and off-peak periods. During off-peak periods, the southbound direct connector often sees traffic merges onto southbound Glendale Boulevard at a high rate of speed.

The purpose of the project was developed by Caltrans, MTA, and LADOT, with the cooperation of members of the community. The purposes, or objectives, of the project are to:

1. Better manage traffic flow at the terminus;
2. Enhance accessibility and safety in the vicinity of the SR-2 terminus; and
3. Develop a freeway terminus design that is compatible with existing residential and commercial uses in the immediate vicinity.

Selecting a Preferred Alternative:

Upon completion of the public circulation of the environmental document, it appeared that many of the community members preferred Alternative D. Both Caltrans and LADOT, however, had reservations about some of the safety aspects of that Alternative. In September 2009, we met with Caltrans and LADOT to work on a solution that could result in a consensus alternative. We agreed to recommend a Hybrid Alternative which is described in Attachment A and discussed below.

Hybrid Alternative: Realign Southbound Off-Ramp East – Maintain Overpass

The recommended alternative improves directional signage and realigns lanes between the I5/SR-2 interchange and the SR-2 terminus for southbound traffic. The flyover will be modified to install traffic calming devices and metering to improve traffic flow and safety at the merger with Glendale Blvd. The existing two-lane southbound off-ramp will be de-commissioned to become part of new open space in the community, and be relocated to the east side of the flyover and delineated as a right-turn only off-ramp to northbound Glendale Blvd. Landscaped median and parkway treatment will be installed between the north- and south-bound ramps to the existing freeway median and along Glendale Blvd. between the Allesandro St. and the Waterloo St. intersections. The alternative includes construction of enhanced crosswalks and intersection paving on Glendale Blvd. at both the Allesandro St. and the Waterloo St. intersections, as well as traffic calming devices and signage. Attachment C shows the general locations of these improvements.

The cost of the recommended Hybrid Alternative is estimated at slightly more than \$18 million in 2011 dollars, exclusive of previous and current planning costs. This cost estimate will be refined during final engineering phase through value engineering. All of the build alternatives are estimated to cost more than the amount of funds remaining in the original Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) High Priority

Highway Project Authorization grant of \$11,916,000. Approximately \$2,400,000 of the original grant has been expended in the preparation of the Project Report and the IS/EA. The balance of approximately \$9,516,000 is available for completion of the environmental process, project engineering and construction. To begin construction of the preferred alternative, additional funds would be required.

NEXT STEPS

Following selection of the LPA, responses to the public comments will be prepared for inclusion in the State Route 2 Terminus Improvement Project's Final IS/EA and Final Project Report for review by Caltrans. Assuming Caltrans has no significant issues/comments in completing the Final IS/EA, Caltrans will sign the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and adopt and sign the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND). The signed FONSI will be sent to the State Clearinghouse and will be published in the Federal Register. This step will complete the NEPA process. Concurrently, the Notice of Determination for the MND will be filed with the Los Angeles County Clerk and the State Clearinghouse. This will complete the CEQA process. We anticipate the environmental process can be completed by end of March 2010 if Caltrans has no significant issues or comments regarding the selected alternative.

During completion of the environmental process, we will commence the procurement process to select the professional services consultant to prepare project engineering, construction documents and refined project cost estimates. We will return to the Board to approve the engineering contract.

We will assist the City of Los Angeles to work with Caltrans to finalize agreement for maintenance of the project's open space components.

ATTACHMENT

- A. Description of State Route 2 Terminus Locally Preferred Alternative
- B. State Route 2 Terminus Project Location
- C. Figure showing State Route 2 Terminus Improvement Locations

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Essential Features of the SR-2 Hybrid Alternative

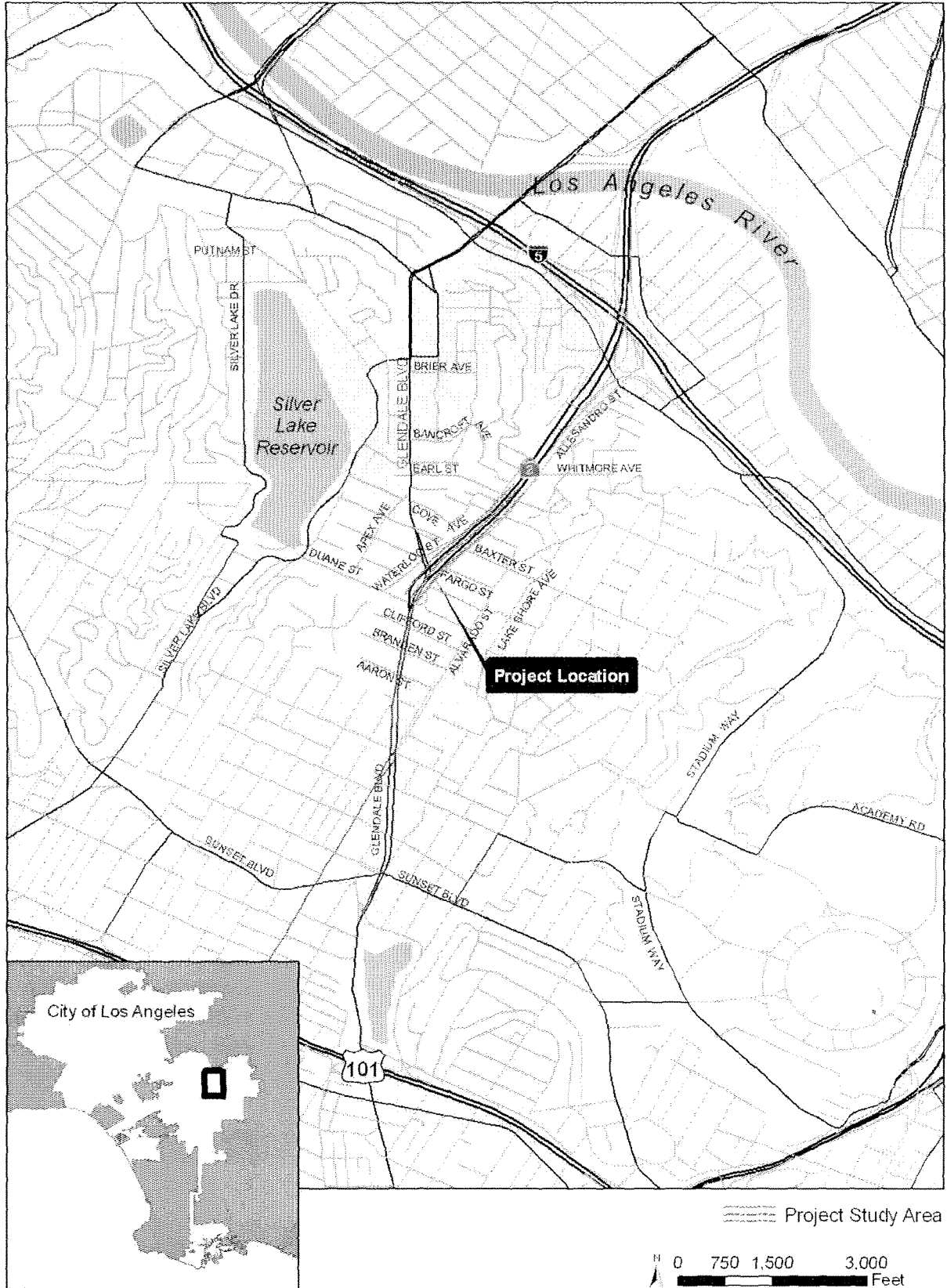
Basic Features

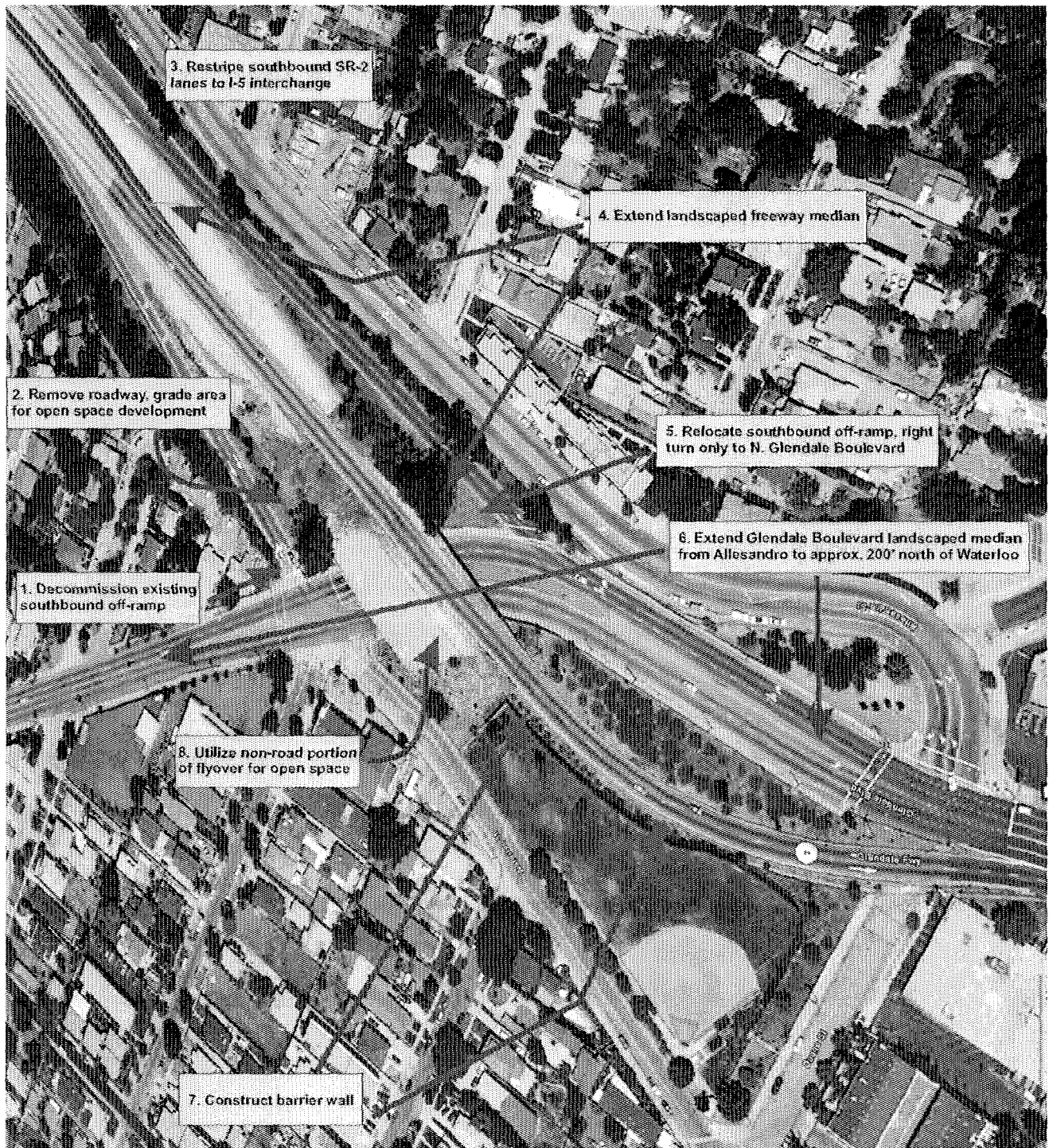
- Retain existing flyover connector for through southbound Glendale Blvd traffic
- Install connector meter on existing flyover connector operating during peak hours
- Enhanced end-of-freeway traffic control devices to slow down off-peak traffic flow
- Realignment of the southbound lanes approaching the terminus beginning at the Route 5/Route 2 Interchange including improved delineation and signage
- Relocation of the off-ramp from the west side of the flyover to the east side of the flyover adjacent to the existing on-ramp with right turn only for traffic destined for northbound Glendale Blvd
- Removal of the sidewalk on the east side of Glendale Blvd between Allesandro Street and the Glendale/Waterloo/Fargo Street intersection
- Reconfiguration of the northbound Glendale Blvd approach to the on-ramp to accommodate the installation of a half-signal for the relocated off-ramp
- Minor modification of the Glendale/Waterloo/Fargo intersection based on the removal of the off-ramp from that intersection
- Availability of excess land generated by the relocation of the off-ramp for future development of community open space
- Remaining half of existing Glendale Blvd overcrossing structure available as future connecting pathway for non-motorized transportation use
- Soundwall installation along edge of R./W within the identified limits of the freeway portion of the route
- Add barrier and extensive landscape improvements within the median of Route 2 from Route 5 to the terminus
- Place enhanced crosswalks and intersection paving at the intersections of Glendale Blvd with Allesandro Street and with Waterloo/Fargo Street

Other Considerations

- Possibility for phased implementation of improvements based on availability of funding in order to facilitate early construction opportunity
- Compatibility with any subsequent improvements considered for future implementation at the Glendale/Alvarado intersection or the Route 5 northbound and southbound connectors to southbound Route 2

State Route 2 Project Location Map





ATTACHMENT C

State Route 2 Hybrid Alternative Improvement Locations

