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Dave Sotero February 27, 2023

Contract will employ innovative, progressive design-build methodology and includes provisions to ensure Metro's contractor has well-defined "Cultural Competency" approach for interacting across different cultures, languages in San Fernando Valley

LOS ANGELES —The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Board of Directors has approved a \$31 million pre-construction services contract with San Fernando Transit Constructors, a Joint Venture of Skanska USA Civil West California District, Inc and Stacy and Witbeck, Inc. (SFTC), for the East San Fernando Valley (ESFV) Light Rail Transit Line Project. Provisions within the contract will ensure SFTC implements a robust plan to interact cross-culturally with the many diverse communities along the project corridor.

The new 6.7-mile light rail is planned to include 11 new light rail stations along Van Nuys Boulevard and will improve connections to and access between Van Nuys and Pacoima. Several Equity Focus Communities, which are census tracts that have a significant concentration of underserved populations, are close to the planned rail line.

Progressive Design-Build

Metro is planning to employ Progressive Design-Build (PDB), an innovative and potentially cost-efficient construction methodology, to build the light rail line. PDB has become more common in public-sector projects in recent years and has proven to help decrease project change orders, delays and cost overruns. PDB allows design, engineering and construction teams to work together during the earliest stages of project development, rather than the traditional design method that utilizes a more siloed approach, enabling greater engagement, transparency and collaboration between all parties on a project. PDB can also help reduce scope and schedule creep by addressing the highest risk elements much earlier in the process, well before construction begins.

SFTC will also utilize the Board-approved PDB contract method for its pre-construction services contract.

"This contract approval confirms our commitment to moving forward on this transformational project in the most efficient and cost-effective way" said Glendale City Council Member and Metro Board Chair Ara J. Najarian. "We're employing an innovative method to do this pre-construction work, as well as requiring a 'cultural competency' component – a first of its kind at Metro – that will help us ensure we engage nearby communities in a manner that is equitable, inclusive and culturally sensitive to their needs."

Cultural Competency Built-In

In addition to its significant experience with PDB, as well as technical experience in similar transit projects, SFTC had the highest-rated plan for "cultural competency" in its contract proposal. SFTC's cultural competency plan best encompassed consideration of race, ethnicity, gender, immigration status, languages spoken, socioeconomic and public transportation dependency, among others. The joint venture firm identified at least 20 community-based stakeholder organizations to engage as part of the pre-construction design-build process, with a particular focus on Spanish-language outreach.

"The communities that surround the new East San Fernando Valley Light Rail corridor are highly transit-dependent and predominantly Latino," said L.A. City Council President and Metro Board Member Paul Krekorian. "That's why it's especially important that our contractor be committed to community-specific approaches like language translation and interpretation so all residents clearly understand the planned pre-construction services work as well as the overall benefits this new line will bring to their communities."

"Approval of this contract is an important next step in building a transformative transit project to connect the San Fernando Valley, which has not had local stop rail service for seven decades," said Los Angeles County Supervisor and Metro Board Member Lindsey P. Horvath. "This project will engage the communities along the route, create local jobs in the next phase, and will support healthier communities by taking cars off the road. I join in celebrating advancement of this much-needed investment in the San Fernando Valley."

With Board approval of this contract, SFTC will as part of Phase 1 review existing design work, conduct constructability review, value engineering, bottoms-up cost estimate and schedule. During Phase I, SFTC will complete design validation, identify and negotiate early works packages, such as advanced utility relocations and final design, and develop the scope of work and price for Phase 2. Phase 1 will end if Metro and SFTC agree to a guaranteed maximum price and Metro will issue a supplement to the project contract to proceed to Phase 2, kicking off the construction portion of the project.

"On the East San Fernando Valley Light Rail project, Metro is pioneering innovative delivery methods that are key to reducing risk, saving time, and avoiding costly change orders," said Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins. "We've also learned from previous projects that partnerships with the community are key to a project's success; that's why cultural competency was such an important part of this procurement. We're thankful to the Board for its action today, and we're looking forward to the next phase of this transformative project."

About the East San Fernando Valley Line

The rail line's first segment will travel along the median of Van Nuys Boulevard and include 11 new stations that will connect the cities of Van Nuys, Panorama City, Arleta and Pacoima. Destinations available along the new line will include the Van Nuys Civic Center, Panorama Mall, Van Nuys multi-residential housing complexes and Arleta High School, among others. The rail line will also provide key linkages with Metro bus lines, including the G Line (Orange) in Van Nuys and municipally operated bus lines.

The second planned segment will potentially turn northwest into the Metro-owned right-of-way along San Fernando Road and connect to the City of San Fernando.

In December, Metro held a groundbreaking for advanced utility work on the first segment of the project. Metro has also been working with the Federal Transit Administration on federal funding and last month received a \$600 million grant through the state Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP). Metro has also been holding community open houses to offer more information about upcoming construction activities and what to expect, small business support programs and introduction of project staff.

This project will improve transit equity for Valley commuters by bringing cost-effective mobility options and greater access to opportunity for its residents, which along the project corridor are lower income and highly transit dependent.

East San Fernando Valley Light Rail Transit Line Project is funded by 2008 Measure R and 2016 Measure M transportation sales tax measures, as well as funding from county, state and federal resources.

For more information about the project, please visit: [metro.net/projects/east-sfv/](https://www.metro.net/projects/east-sfv/). (<https://www.metro.net/projects/east-sfv/>)

