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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Nov 10 2020

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

November 10, 2020

Cory Zelmer
LA County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
One Gateway Plaza, Mail Stop 99-22-6
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Los Angeles Aerial Rapid Transit Project –
Notice of Preparation (NOP)
SCH# 2020100007
GTS# 07-LA-2020-03382
Vic. LA-110 PM 24.729

Dear Cory Zelmer:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced project. The proposed Project would connect Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS), Los Angeles State Historic Park, Dodger Stadium, and Elysian Park via an aerial gondola system, reducing traffic congestion and expanding mobility options for transit riders. The proposed route would travel generally along Alameda Street, Spring Street, and Bishops Road from LAUS to Dodger Stadium. The proposed Project includes options for an intermediate station to provide additional transit service adjacent to the Los Angeles State Historic Park and the location where the proposed Project flies over portions of the Park (the Spring Street Alternative and Broadway Alternative). The proposed aerial gondola system would include aerial cables, passenger stations, a non-passenger junction, towers to support the aerial cables between the stations/junction, and gondola cabins for the passengers. When complete, the proposed Project would have a maximum capacity of approximately 5,500 people per hour per direction, and the travel time from LAUS to Dodger Stadium would be approximately six or seven minutes. Public benefits being considered for the proposed Project include support for a pedestrian bridge between North Broadway and the Los Angeles State Historic Park.

The nearest State facility to the proposed project is SR-110. After reviewing the NOP, Caltrans has the following comments:

Based on the information provided, both the Spring Street and Broadway alternatives greatly enhance the transportation network and help Caltrans meet its statewide goals. Caltrans considers the following project elements to be especially important to creating an equitable addition to Los Angeles' transit network:

*"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system
to enhance California's economy and livability"*

- A high-quality transit option for people walking and biking to and from Elysian Park and Los Angeles State Historic Park.
- A mobility hub at the Dodger Stadium station which greatly improves the accessibility to, from, and within Elysian Park.
- A high-capacity rapid transportation option for events and games at Dodger Stadium, which should significantly reduce noise and greenhouse gas emissions in the surrounding neighborhoods.
- A pedestrian bridge connecting North Broadway to Los Angeles Historic Park is critical to the project's success, as it will allow communities North and South of the Park to access the intermediate station regardless of which alignment is chosen.

Caltrans encourages projects of this nature that create high quality transportation alternatives for local and inter-regional trips. State-level policy goals related to sustainable transportation seek to reduce the number of trips made by driving, reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG), and encourage alternative modes of travel. Caltrans' Strategic Management Plan has set targets of tripling trips made by bicycle and doubling trips made by walking and public transit, as well as achieving a reduction in statewide, per capita, vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Similar goals are embedded in the California Transportation Plan 2040, Draft California Transportation Plan 2050, and Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Connect SoCal (2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy). Statewide legislation such as AB 32 and SB 375, as well as Executive Order S-3-05 and N-19-19, echo the need to pursue more sustainable development. Projects, like the one proposed, can help California meet these goals.

Additionally, both the Spring Street and Broadway alternatives involve the direct aerial crossing of SR-110. As a result, the project will require extensive collaboration with Caltrans staff for various permits and design approvals. Caltrans looks forward to reviewing the forthcoming Draft Environmental Impact Report for additional project analysis as well as confirmation that the project will result in a net reduction in per capita VMT.

Finally, in the spirit of cooperation, Caltrans staff is available to work with your planners and traffic engineers for this project, if needed. If you have any questions, please contact project coordinator Anthony Higgins, at anthony.higgins@dot.ca.gov and refer to GTS# 07-LA-2020-03382.

Sincerely,



MIYA EDMONSON
IGR/CEQA Branch Chief
cc: Scott Morgan, State Clearinghouse