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August 30, 2024

Roger Martin, Project Manager
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
One Gateway Plaza, Mail Stop 99-22-5
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: K Line Northern Extension (KNE)
Project – Draft Environmental Impact
Report (DEIR)
SCH# 2021040368
GTS #07-LA-2021-04582
Vic. LA 2 PM 10.7
LA 10 PM R11.4
LA 101 PM 7.85

Dear Roger Martin,

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the review process for the above referenced project. The project would extend the Metro K Line (formerly the Crenshaw/LAX Line) north from the Metro E Line (Expo) to the D Line (Purple) and B Line (Red) Lines, with a terminus at the Hollywood/Highland Station. The project includes the evaluation of the following three KNE underground alignments, as directed by the Metro Board of Directors (Metro Board): San Vicente–Fairfax Alignment, Fairfax Alignment, and La Brea Alignment.

This DEIR also analyzes the Hollywood Bowl Design Option, which would extend any of the three alignments farther north to an alternate terminus at the Hollywood Bowl. KNE would be constructed from south to north in two or three sections depending on the selected alignment.

The Fairfax Alignment is the proposed project in the Draft EIR because it is the alignment that has been historically studied and advanced over time, dating back to the 1983 Los Angeles Rail Rapid Transit Project. This term does not, however, convey any preference or recommendation as to the alignment or design option, and all alignments are evaluated equally in the DEIR. Metro staff will prepare a recommendation for the Metro Board to consider in regard to selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative based on findings from the Draft EIR, public comments made during the comment period, technical analysis,

“Provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment.”

stakeholder input, and other factors such as project objectives, cost, and ridership. The Metro Board will vote at a public meeting to select a Locally Preferred Alternative.

After reviewing the DEIR, Caltrans has the following comments:

The DEIR's analysis has reasonably determined that the construction and operation of the three alternatives would result in less than significant Transportation impacts and that there will not be any conflict with current plans, programs, ordinances, policies, VMT thresholds, geometric design features, or emergency access.

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. The proposed project is in alignment with the California Transportation Plan 2050, Draft State Rail Plan, Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI), and the Caltrans Strategic Plan. It will enhance the multimodal transportation network providing new north-south connections and closing the regional network gap between the Metro K, E, D, and B Lines and six of the busiest bus lines in the County.

- **KNE San Vicente–Fairfax Alignment:** The KNE San Vicente–Fairfax Alignment would serve destinations throughout west and central Los Angeles, including the Midtown Crossing Shopping Center, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), the Original Farmers Market/the Grove, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, the commercial districts along Santa Monica Boulevard in West Hollywood, and Hollywood. The estimated ridership for the alignment is forecasted to be 59,700 daily project trips in 2045. Based on Metro's travel demand model, the alignment is forecasted to result in a net reduction for the Los Angeles County region of approximately 135,479 daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT) compared to 2045 without Project Conditions. After accounting for amortized construction emissions, the operation of the alignment would result in an estimated net GHG emissions reduction of 9,288 MTCO_{2e} annually in 2045.
- **KNE Fairfax Alignment:** The KNE Fairfax Alignment would serve destinations such as the Midtown Crossing Shopping Center, LACMA, the Original Farmers Market/the Grove, commercial districts along Santa Monica Boulevard in West Hollywood between Fairfax Avenue and La Brea Boulevard, and Hollywood. The estimated ridership for the alignment is forecasted to be 52,900 daily project trips in 2045. Based on Metro's travel demand model, the alignment is forecasted to result in a

net reduction for the Los Angeles County region of approximately 127,467 daily VMT compared to 2045 without Project Conditions. After accounting for amortized construction emissions, the operation of the alignment would result in an estimated net GHG emissions reduction of 9,391 MTCO_{2e} annually in 2045.

- **KNE La Brea Alignment:** The KNE La Brea Alignment would serve destinations including the Midtown Crossing Shopping Center, Miracle Mile, Hancock Park, and Hollywood. The estimated ridership for the alignment is forecasted to be 47,200 daily project trips in 2045. Based on Metro's travel demand model, the alignment is forecasted to result in a net reduction for the Los Angeles County region of approximately 135,492 daily VMT compared to 2045 without Project Conditions. After accounting for amortized construction emissions, the operation of the alignment would result in an estimated net GHG emissions reduction of 10,777 MTCO_{2e} annually in 2045.

Given the information above, Caltrans would like to express support for the KNE San Vicente–Fairfax Alignment, and the KNE Fairfax Alignment as a secondary choice, as they offer the best potential for expanding connectivity, promoting sustainability, advancing equity, improving safety, and driving economic growth. While the KNE La Brea Alignment provides similar benefits, improvements to the corridor are currently underway through the La Brea Ave Bus Priority Lanes Project, a partnership between LA Metro and the Los Angeles Department of Transportation. Lastly, Caltrans concurs with LA Metro's plan to engage in first/last mile planning with local jurisdictions to improve the safety and access for pedestrians and bicyclists to all stations.

Caltrans also supports the optional Hollywood Bowl extension:

- Venues, like the Hollywood Bowl, host events that draw large numbers of people to a single location, creating a concentrated peak demand that only high-frequency public transit can sufficiently accommodate. Cars and trucks are too inefficient in terms of space and travel time to continue relying on them for these kinds of trips.
- Special events, like the ones hosted at the Hollywood Bowl, create ideal opportunities for people to experience public transit for the first time. This can raise awareness about the ease and efficiency of public transit, driving greater future ridership.
- Building the extension now would create the opportunity for a head start on any future northward expansions of the K Line into the San Fernando Valley. A northern extension would create valuable connections to the North Hollywood to

Pasadena BRT Line, the Burbank Airport, the Metrolink Ventura County Line, the Metrolink Antelope Valley Line, and Amtrak services.

Due to the Hollywood Bowl extension's proximity to US 101, please ensure that the existing signal operations at the interchange of SB US-101 and Highland Ave. and all major intersections in the vicinity of the Project can safely accommodate the additional multimodal trips in the area. For any traffic signal and curb ramp upgrades, the Project would be responsible for payment of applicable costs, and Caltrans is not responsible for any fair-share contribution to the improvements.

Caltrans also recommends building out junction boxes to facilitate future transit network expansions without disrupting ongoing service. There will never be a more cost-effective time to do so than during the construction of this project.

- To accommodate a future Santa Monica Blvd line, add a junction box at San Vicente/Santa Monica Blvd, heading southwest, and a junction box at Highland/Santa Monica Blvd, heading east.
- If the San Vicente-Fairfax alignment is chosen, then the La Brea alignment could also be built in the future with a junction box at La Brea/Santa Monica, heading south, and a junction box at San Vicente/Redondo, heading north.

Please note that depending on which alternative is chosen (San Vicente-Fairfax, Fairfax, La Brea, Hollywood bowl), the route will run across, within, or along the ROWs for I-10, SR 2, and US 101. All three project alternatives identified will cross the I-10, and two of the three project alternatives would traverse under SR 2 (Santa Monica Blvd.) from PM 10.621 (just east of La Brea Ave.) eastward to PM 10.896 (Highland Ave. intersection). Any project work proposed within or near Caltrans ROW will require extensive collaboration with the Office of Permits. Final design requirements for any proposed changes to infrastructure within or along Caltrans Right-of-way will be determined by the Office of Permits. At the time of application there will be rounds of review and corrections to ensure all design, Right-of-way, access management, water runoff, environmental, and statutory requirements are being addressed.

Caltrans District 7 Office of Permits

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Finally, regarding operational and construction best management practices, Caltrans concurs with PM TRA-1 and PM TRA-2, as both include robust coordination with local agencies and Caltrans at all phases of project development.

If you have any questions, please contact project coordinator Anthony Higgins, at anthony.higgins@dot.ca.gov and refer to GTS #07-LA-2021-04582.

Sincerely,



Anthony Higgins
Acting LDR Branch Chief

Cc: State Clearinghouse