



ITEM ID: 2023-170-0

TRANSMITTAL DATE: April 21, 2023

MEETING DATE: April 28, 2023

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Paul Hubler, Chief Strategy Officer

SUBJECT: Update on Cooperative Planning Initiatives between SCRRA and DesertXpress Enterprises, LLC, a Nevada limited liability company d/b/a Brightline West ("BLW")

Issue

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is in effect to guide the process and outcomes for coordination between the Brightline West (BLW) System and the Metrolink system, particularly related to transfers between the Brightline West System, which is planned to operate between Las Vegas, Nevada and the Rancho Cucamonga Station on Metrolink's San Bernardino Line, which provides connections to central Los Angeles at Los Angeles Union Station.

Recommendation

Receive and file.

Strategic Commitment

This report aligns with the Strategic Business Plan commitment of:

- **Connecting and Leveraging Partnerships:** We will forge new and enhanced relationships with private and other public partners to provide a seamless connection between the Southern California region through the Metrolink network and Las Vegas through the BLW service, thus providing better and more sustainable alternatives to driving and air travel in a highly traveled corridor.

Background

BLW proposes to construct a privately owned and operated electrified high-speed passenger railroad between Southern California and Las Vegas, Nevada. The fully grade-separated line will be constructed and operate primarily within the median right of way along Interstate 15 (I-15). The high-speed rail service will operate between Rancho Cucamonga and Las Vegas (the "BLW System"), with one-way trips taking about two hours. BLW is working closely with the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the Nevada Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), and other stakeholders to advance the BLW System.

The Authority's Board authorized the Metrolink CEO at its meeting on September 23, 2022 to sign an MOU to identify and advance discussions about topics related to maximizing the benefits for both organizations and their respective passengers who will transfer between BLW and Metrolink trains at Rancho Cucamonga Station. Topics to explore include paths of travel for transferring passengers, location and general design of customer waiting areas, accommodations for baggage, dwell times at Rancho Cucamonga Station, and baggage management. Since many passengers are anticipated to begin or end their journeys at Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS), this cooperative effort explores better connections and customer amenities between Rancho Cucamonga and LAUS.

A thoroughly integrated effort on the part of both BLW and the Authority is required for seamless connection between Brightline West and Metrolink services. Construction of BLW infrastructure is anticipated to commence this year. An opening date for the line has not been confirmed but reports indicate an intent to commence service before the 2028 Olympics.

Because of the prominence of the BLW project and the far-reaching impacts to and opportunities for the Metrolink network, Chair Larry McCallon has identified progress on this partnership one of his top priorities and, as such, has requested regular updates to the Board.

Discussion

As part of the presentation to the Board on April 28, Sarah Watterson, the President of Brightline West is anticipated to present highlights of BLW's progress and its business plan.

At the staff level since the signing of the MOU, SCRRA and BLW have been working to advance several different initiatives:

- **Schedule Coordination** – One of the most significant items that SCRRA and BLW have achieved is a re-alignment of the service schedule for BLW trains to an hourly schedule for trains rather than one train every forty-five (45) minutes. While this may represent a decrease in frequency of the initial opening day schedule for BLW, this provides for a more intuitive customer-friendly schedule and ensures that ALL BLW trains can align their arrival and departure times at Rancho Cucamonga to have an exact, pulsed transfer with the Metrolink San Bernardino Line, which is also planned to have departures and arrivals at Rancho Cucamonga stations on an hourly pulsed frequency. This ensures minimum transfer times for ALL passengers transferring between the two systems. The alignment at an hourly pulse also means that as service grows on both systems, they can continue to have aligned transfer times as both services can match each other with service at a train every half-hour. These patterns align with the principles of the 2018 California State Rail Plan to target matched frequencies to minimize transfer

times at major connection points.

- **BLW Implementation Schedule** – BLW is pursuing a grant from the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail program that is proposed to provide significant funding for the project. If funding from the program is secured, BLW expects to break ground in Calendar Year 2023 once its project package is financed (including through the grant award) and design challenges can be overcome.

Design for Pedestrian Flow at Rancho Cucamonga Station – BLW staff shared preliminary design plans for the Rancho Cucamonga Station that feature transfers between the two separate station platforms via a set of ramps. The design is now being reviewed by Metrolink staff to ascertain compatibility with design criteria, consistency with operational practice, and intuitive wayfinding.

Next Steps

Staff will continue to work with BLW to define passenger interfaces between the two systems and to refine project designs. Now that the schedules of the two systems have the same hourly interval and consistent timed transfers are possible, Authority staff will refine ridership forecasts to develop refined passenger load estimates. This will allow staff to assess the impacts upon vehicle fleet requirements and explore the opportunity to include BLW-sponsored and branded passenger cars to the San Bernardino Line trains.

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Approved by: Paul Hubler, Chief Strategy Officer

Attachment(s)

[Presentation - Brightline West Coordination](#)