



ITEM ID: 2024-168-0

TRANSMITTAL DATE: May 17, 2024

MEETING DATE: May 24, 2024

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 located on Metrolink's San Bernardino Line, providing connections to Metrolink's network.

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 center median of 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. A thoroughly integrated effort on the part of both BLW and the Authority is required for seamless connection between Brightline West and Metrolink services.

Discussion

Since the last update to the Board, SCRRA and BLW have been working to advance several different initiatives:

BLW Funding and Implementation Schedule – SCRRA and BLW support each other through mutual support in the pursuit of grant funds at the federal level. For example, BLW pursued a grant from the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail program. The Authority issued a letter of support in BLW's application. In December 2023, the USDOT awarded \$3 billion in grant funds from the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program, a program of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The Authority also provided testimony in support of private activity bond issuance for Brightline. In January 2024, USDOT approved the issuance of \$2.5 billion in private activity bonds authority, on top of \$1 billion previously approved. With the significant funding support, BLW has indicated that construction will commence in early 2024, with a construction duration of approximately 4 years. Metrolink representatives have been invited to attend a BLW groundbreaking ceremony scheduled for April 22 in Las Vegas.

Design Coordination at Rancho Cucamonga Station – BLW staff refined preliminary design plans for the Rancho Cucamonga Station and highlighted the vertical circulation designed for the station platforms. The latest designs shared with Metrolink staff indicate an entire floor of the BLW-constructed garage will be dedicated to Metrolink passenger use. Furthermore, an additional floor of parking was added, raising the height of the garage. Design coordination also covered more detailed site conditions. Authority staff in the Project Delivery Department coordinated with BLW to provide right of entry (ROE) for initial investigations by BLW for geotechnical, utilities potholing, and survey. Design coordination meetings were held to solidify future access to the existing communications house at Rancho Cucamonga Station.

Next Steps

Authority staff will refine ridership forecasts to develop refined passenger load estimates. This

will allow staff to assess the impacts upon service and vehicle fleet requirements. Discussions related to BLW system staffing and loading of luggage on trains will continue.

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