

## FINDINGS

(As Amended by the City Planning Commission at its meeting on September 14, 2023)

### Land Use Findings

In accordance with **City Charter Section 556**, the proposed Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Transportation Communication Network (TCN) Ordinance is in substantial conformance with the purposes, intent, and provisions of the General Plan and is in conformity with public necessity, convenience, general welfare and good zoning practice. The proposed ordinance furthers the following objectives and policies of the General Plan:

#### Framework Element ([Chapter 7 Economic Development](#))

**Policy 7.8.1** Place the highest priority on attracting new development projects to Los Angeles which have the potential to generate a net fiscal surplus for the City.

The proposed Metro TCN Ordinance would allow Metro to erect up to 46 digital display structures throughout the City as part of their TCN project. These digital displays, which will be located along freeways and major intersections, will be used for off-site advertising, as well as to show traffic and public transit information, travel alternatives, and public safety messaging. In January 2022, Metro and the City signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) which outlines both Metro's and the City's responsibilities related to the TCN project. Under the MOA, the City and Metro will each receive 50 percent of net revenue generated from off-site advertising by TCN digital displays located within City boundaries for 20 years. The funds will be overseen by the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), and will be utilized solely for transportation related projects and amenities near transit. According to its January 2023 Metro Board report, Metro staff estimate the TCN project will generate between \$300 million and \$500 million over the 20-year term of the MOA. As such, the proposed Metro TCN Ordinance and project will generate a net fiscal surplus for the City that can be utilized for transportation infrastructure and amenities freeing up other unrestricted funds for other priorities and programs within the City.

#### Mobility Element ([Mobility Plan 2035](#))

**Policy 2.15** Allocation of Transportation Funds: Expand funding to improve the built environment for people who walk, bike, take transit, and for other vulnerable roadway users.

The proposed Metro TCN Ordinance will consist of up to 46 digital display structures, which would display off-site advertising, in addition to traffic and public transit information and public messaging. Under the MOA, the City and Metro will each receive 50 percent of the net revenue generated from off-site advertising. The funds will be overseen by LADOT. The MOA further requires the City to spend this revenue exclusively on transportation-related projects, services, equipment, and studies. Among these projects, as noted in the MOA, are those that may promote pedestrian and cyclist safety in the general vicinity of transit stops and that benefit bus

riders in the City, with a focus on low-income persons of color. Bus ridership in Los Angeles is highest among low-income persons of color and essential service workers. In addition, the takedown of static billboards as agreed upon in the MOA will reduce blight within Equity Focus Communities (EFCs). EFCs, as defined by Metro in its 2018 Equity Platform, are communities with higher concentrations of resident and household demographics associated with mobility barriers, such as low-income households, people of color, and lack of car ownership. As such, the Metro TCN Ordinance and project directly expand funding to improve the built environment for people who walk, bike, take transit, and for other roadway users.

**Policy 4.1** New Technologies: Support new technology systems and infrastructure to expand access to transportation choices.

Aside from digital displays, the TCN structures will also contain new technology systems to collect transportation data, promote Metro's services, and plan for future road improvements utilizing data collected by each TCN structure. The TCN structures will assist Metro and the City in increasing the quantity and speed of data collection of real-time travel and traffic data, which will be shared with different governmental agencies. This data will be anonymized and no identifying information will be collected. This data could be used to support improved traffic signaling timing and facilitate signal priority for buses. Relevant traffic and transit updates and travel alternatives, including public transit alternatives, will also be shared with drivers and commuters. The TCN structures will also include 5G technology and live video and security feeds to supplement the limited number of existing cameras on freeways and street corridors. The TCN project will be designed to support future innovations such as autonomous vehicles, smart energy grids, and high-speed wireless cameras.

**Policy 4.2** Dynamic Transportation Information: Support a comprehensive, integrated transportation database and digital platform that manages existing assets and dynamically updates users with new information.

The TCN structures will be located along freeways and major intersections and be used to broadcast relevant traffic and public transit updates and public messaging, alongside off-site advertising. Traffic and public transit updates will provide drivers and commuters with real-time information to help maximize the City's road network efficiency. Furthermore, these updates will increase the visibility and accessibility of Metro's services, such as its bus and rail network. The digital displays will also allow the City and Metro to maximize efficiency of the road network by promoting public awareness of travel alternatives. These alternatives may include alternative driving routes, carpooling alternatives, and public transit opportunities.

**Policy 4.7** Performance Evaluation: Evaluate performance of new transportation strategies through the collection and analysis of data.

The TCN structures will contain new technology systems to collect transportation data and plan for future road improvements. The TCN structures will assist Metro and the City in increasing the quantity and speed of data collection of real-time travel and traffic data, which will be shared

with different governmental agencies. This data could be used to support improved traffic signaling timing and facilitate signal priority for buses. The TCN project will be designed to support future innovations such as autonomous vehicles, smart energy grids, and high-speed wireless cameras. The proposed ordinance also contains provisions that would allow the City, namely LADOT, to evaluate structures after they have been in operation for five years during a required Plan Approval process. During this review, traffic and collision data collected near the non-freeway sites may result in future operational changes within the TCN project.

**Policy 4.11 Cohesive Regional Mobility:** Communicate and partner with the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), and adjacent cities and local transit operators to plan and operate a cohesive regional mobility system.

The Metro TCN project is a collaborative effort between the City and Metro to broadcast pertinent traffic and public transit information and public safety messaging, collect comprehensive traffic data, and generate revenue for transportation projects. This collaboration began with a signed MOA in January 2022, which outlines the City's and Metro's role in the Metro TCN project. The broadcasting of traffic and public transit information will help maximize the efficiency of the road network and improve the visibility and accessibility of Metro's services, such as its bus and rail network. The TCN structures will also collect real-time traffic data which will be shared among Metro, the City, and other government agencies to improve the City's traffic and transportation systems. In addition, once the proposed ordinance is adopted, Metro will have to undergo approval processes with the City in order to start building the structures. Lastly, revenue generated through these structures will be used for transportation projects, which will fund and help plan and operate a cohesive regional mobility system.

## **Environmental Findings**

### **CEQA Findings**

Approval of the proposed Metro TNC Ordinance is supported by the Final Environmental Impact Report (ENV-2022-5286-EIR) prepared and approved by Metro, the lead agency for the Transportation Communication Network Project ("Project"), in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines.

Below is a list of the key determinations that were included in the initial Draft EIR analysis:

- *Impacts Considered Less than Significant:* The Draft EIR found that the Project would result in a "less than significant" impact with no mitigation required for: Air Quality, Energy, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Transportation, and Electric Power.
- *Impacts Considered Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated:* The Draft EIR found that impacts to Biological Resources, Archaeological Resources, Paleontological Resources, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Noise, and Tribal Cultural Resources would be reduced to a "Less Than Significant Level" with mitigation

measures incorporated. With the mitigation measures identified in the EIR, the Project was found to be less than significant in these CEQA resource areas.

- *Impacts Considered Significant and Unavoidable:* The Draft EIR found that the Project would have “Significant and Unavoidable” environmental impacts related to a subset of the TCN Structures for the following resource areas: Aesthetics, Historical Resources, and Land Use and Planning. Specifically, four site locations (NFF-2, NFF-3, NFF-16, and NFF-21) would result in significant impacts associated with views, visual character, and setting of historical resources.

Review of potential measures to reduce the Project’s significant impacts, such as modification to the size and height of the signs was considered. However, such modifications would not materially reduce these impacts. Rather, the primary way to substantially reduce these impacts would be to eliminate or relocate the subset of the site locations that are associated with these significant and unavoidable impacts. The Draft EIR included Alternatives that would eliminate the significant and unavoidable impacts:

- Alternative 1 - No approval of the Project.
- Alternative 2 - Elimination of impacts relating to historical resources.
- Alternative 3 - Elimination of all significant and unavoidable impacts.

### **Final EIR**

Section 15088 of the CEQA Guidelines requires the lead agency, Metro, to evaluate comments on environmental issues received from public agencies and interested parties who review the Draft EIR and provide written responses. The Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft EIR was circulated for public comment from September 9, 2022 to October 24, 2022. The lead agency received written comments on the Draft EIR and responses to all comments received during the comment period are included in the Final EIR. The Metro Board of Directors voted unanimously to certify the EIR, with Alternative 3 to eliminate the four aforementioned signs with impacts to historical resources and aesthetics as well as removing one sign near the Ballona Wetlands Preserve due to coastal proximity (FF-29), on January 26, 2023.