



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

August 9, 2016

Ms. Julianne Polanco
State Historic Preservation Officer
California State Parks
Office of Historic Preservation
1725 23rd Street, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95816

**SUBJECT: Link Union Station (Link US)
Initiation of Section 106 Consultation**

Dear Ms. Polanco:

By way of this letter, the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) would like to initiate consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and its implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800.3(c)) for the proposed Link Union Station Project (Link US, Project, or Undertaking) in Los Angeles, California. FRA is serving as the lead federal agency for the Project under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106, and Metro is the lead state agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Pursuant to NEPA and CEQA, respectively, FRA and Metro will be preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Link US Project. On May 31, 2016, FRA published the Notice of Intent to prepare the EIS.¹ The FRA has determined the proposed Project constitutes an Undertaking as defined at 36 CFR 800.16(y). FRA intends to coordinate Section 106 compliance with the preparation of the EIS.

Background

In January 2004, your office reviewed a precursor to this Undertaking known as the "Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS) Run-Through Tracks Project" (FRA031117A). That project, as originally described in the 2005 EIS/EIR, is no longer being pursued by FRA, and Metro will replace the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) as the CEQA Lead Agency. Since 2004, substantial revisions to the concept, design, and function of the Run-Through Tracks Project have prompted the need for FRA and Metro to approach this as a new project. FRA is authorized to provide, subject to appropriations, funding for intercity passenger and rail capital

¹ <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2016/05/31/2016-12813/environmental-impact-statement-for-the-link-union-station-project-los-angeles-ca>

- ***Throat and Elevated Rail Yard*** – The Undertaking would include new track and subgrade improvements to increase the elevation of the tracks leading to LAUS known as the “throat” and an elevated rail yard that would include new, longer, elevated passenger platforms and canopies.
- ***New Passenger Concourse*** – The Undertaking would include the Link US-related portion of the new passenger concourse, up to 600,000 square feet (passenger circulation and waiting areas, passenger support functions and amenities, and building functional support areas) including up to 100,000 square feet of transit-serving amenities to meet the demands of a multi-modal transit station. The Link US-related portion of the new passenger concourse would enhance Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility at LAUS and include new vertical circulation elements (stairs, escalators, and elevators) for passengers between the elevated platforms and the new passenger concourse under the rail yard.
- ***Run-Through Tracks*** – The Undertaking would include up to 10 run-through tracks with a new viaduct or viaducts over U.S. 101 that extend run-through tracks for regional/intercity rail (Metrolink/Amtrak) and potentially HSR south along the west bank of the Los Angeles River, and a separate overhead viaduct for a loop track(s) turning north to the existing Keller Yard.

The Undertaking would also require: modifications to existing bridges at city streets to accommodate new elevated tracks; modifications to U.S. 101 and local streets to accommodate the run-through tracks overhead viaducts; railroad signal, Positive Train Control, and communications-related improvements; modifications to the Gold Line light rail platforms and tracks; modifications to the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) West Bank mainline tracks; modifications to the existing Keller yard and BNSF Railway West Bank Yard; modifications to the Amtrak lead track; new access roadways to the railroad right-of-way (ROW); additional ROW; and utility relocations, replacements, and abandonments.

Plan to Involve the Public

FRA is preparing an EIS under NEPA. The public will be informed through related public information meetings and opportunities to comment throughout the NEPA process. Public meetings will address Section 106, and will be advertised as such. Section 106 documentation will be available on Metro’s project website (<https://www.metro.net/projects/link-us/>) as the Section 106 process advances.

Consulting Parties

The previous preparation of an EIS/EIR for the LAUS Run-Through Tracks Project identified a number of Native American tribal representatives, local government agencies, and members of the public who are likely to be interested in the effects of the Link US Project on historic properties. FRA is in the process of updating the list of these organizations and persons for purposes of the Link US environmental and Section 106 review.

So far, FRA has compiled a list of consulting parties to participate in the Link US Section 106 process, including the following local government agencies (see Attachment 1):

- Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (the applicant);
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) - District 7;
- City of Los Angeles Planning Department;
- City of Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources; and
- City of Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission.

FRA will seek information about historic properties in the proposed APE from these and other consulting parties including architectural organizations, environmental organizations, preservation organizations, historical societies, museums, and railroad organizations (Attachment 1). FRA will soon be contacting these parties by letter to invite them to be consulting parties in the Section 106 process. We request that you please review the consulting parties list in Attachment 1 and advise us if you are aware of others who FRA should invite to consult in the Section 106 process for the Project.

As part of the NHPA Section 106 review, FRA has requested a list of Native American groups and individuals from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). FRA will send letters to the Native American groups and individuals identified by the NAHC, describing the proposed Project, and soliciting their comments, concerns, or need for further information on the Undertaking. Native American groups and individuals will also be contacted by phone, in an effort to ensure that their concerns are acknowledged for project planning, and to invite them to participate in the Section 106 process, as appropriate. Metro will also concurrently initiate Tribal Consultation as mandated under CEQA's Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52). Metro and FRA intend to coordinate the Section 106 and AB 52 consultation processes.

The remainder of this letter provides the following information: a definition of the proposed APE, a brief review of NRHP-listed and eligible properties known in the proposed APE, and a brief summary of the methodology that FRA intends to employ to comply with Section 106. FRA recognizes that this is more information than may typically be shared during the initiation step of the Section 106 process, but because the information is readily available we thought it would be helpful to provide it now.

Proposed Area of Potential Effects (APE)

The proposed APE for archaeological resources includes any ground area that would be disturbed by excavation, grading, construction, demolition, temporary access and staging activities, utility relocation, or railroad track reconfiguration. The proposed APE for architectural and historical resources includes the parcels encompassing the archaeological APE and any nearby parcels containing resources sensitive to permanent visual effects or to noise and vibration effects. Additional properties that may be directly affected as a result of proposed Project changes and additions for Link US are also included. Further, the proposed APE for Link

US includes a vertical APE to take into account the total depth of ground disturbance associated with the construction of the Undertaking. Attachment 2 depicts the proposed Link US APE. FRA requests concurrence from SHPO that the definition and attached maps adequately determine and document the Link US APE.

Identification of Historic Properties

The Link US Project will occupy much of the same space as the former LAUS Run-Through Tracks Project. The EIS/EIR previously prepared for the LAUS Run-Through Tracks Project, as well as work conducted specifically to meet Section 106 requirements, generated a substantial amount of information regarding historic properties present within the proposed area of potential effects (APE) for Link US. This resource-specific information has been used to help define the proposed APE for the Link US Project, described above. Likewise, the existing information leads the FRA to anticipate that the proposed new Undertaking has the potential to effect properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Properties (NRHP), including two NRHP-listed properties: Los Angeles Union Station and Los Angeles Terminal Annex Post Office.

Based on the information from the original Run-Through Tracks Project *Historic Properties Survey Report* (HPSR) and a recent records search, the following historic properties have been previously identified within the proposed Link US APE.

Properties Listed in the NRHP

- **Los Angeles Union Station Passenger Terminal** (LAUS or Union Station, APE Map Reference #1) located at 800 N. Alameda St., listed on the NRHP on November 13, 1980. Contributing elements include the Passenger Terminal Structure tile roof, arcades, stucco wall cladding, clock tower, arched main entrance, decorated beamed ceilings, tile floors, patios, wrought iron railings, wainscot, platforms, butterfly sheds, two concrete undercrossings at Vignes Street and Macy Street (Cesar Chavez Avenue), the Terminal Tower, the southern retaining wall and light fixtures, Car Supply Repair Workshop (current maintenance building), railroad tracks, pedestrian subway, and passenger ramps. The NRHP boundary of the resource is roughly the assessor's parcel boundaries; however, the current work by the Link US team may update the boundary to include additional contributing resources (noted above) associated with LAUS (the Vignes Street Undercrossing and the Car Supply Repair Workshop Building).
- **Los Angeles Terminal Annex Post Office** (Terminal Annex, APE Map Reference #2) located at 900 N. Alameda Street, listed on the NRHP on January 11, 1985.

Properties Previously Determined Eligible for the NRHP

- **William Mead Homes**, 1300 Cardinal Street (APE Map Reference #3). This 449-unit, 24-building housing complex constructed in 1942 was determined eligible for the NRHP

in 2002 as a result of a Section 106 review for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

- **Mission Tower**, 1436 Alhambra Avenue (APE Map Reference #4); determined eligible for the NRHP on January 15, 2004, as a result of original Run-Through Tracks Project intensive level survey.
- **Macy Street (Cesar Chavez Avenue) Viaduct over the Los Angeles River** (Bridge #53C 0130, APE Map Reference #5); previously determined eligible for inclusion in the NRHP in 1986 as a result of the Caltrans Historic Bridge Survey (HBS).
- **First Street Viaduct over the Los Angeles River** (Bridge #53C 1166, APE Map Reference #6); previously determined eligible for inclusion in the NRHP in 1986 as a result of the Caltrans HBS.
- **Fourth Street Viaduct over the Los Angeles River** (Bridge #53C 0044, APE Map Reference #7); previously determined eligible for inclusion in the NRHP in 1986 as a result of the Caltrans HBS.
- **Sixth Street Viaduct over the Los Angeles River** (Bridge #53C 1880); previously determined eligible for inclusion in the NRHP in 1986 as a result of the Caltrans HBS. The Sixth Street Viaduct is presently under complete demolition. The Viaduct is no longer a historic property for purposes of Section 106 or a historical resource for CEQA purposes, and is not included on the APE Map set.
- **Seventh Street Viaduct over the Los Angeles River** (Bridge #53C 1321, APE Map Reference #8); previously determined eligible for inclusion in the NRHP in 1986 as a result of the Caltrans HBS.
- **Ninth Street (Olympic Boulevard) Viaduct over the Los Angeles River** (Bridge #53C 0163, APE Map Reference #9); previously determined eligible for inclusion in the NRHP in 1986 as a result of the Caltrans HBS.

Known Archaeological Properties within the APE

The original Run-Through Tracks Project HPSR identified two archaeological properties in the APE that have not been formerly determined eligible for the NRHP:

“One (1) property previously recommended as eligible for the National Register, CA-LAN1575/H, the historic Euro-American and Chinatown neighborhood, and prehistoric cemetery found surrounding Union Station; and

One (1) property identified as potentially eligible for the National Register under Criterion D as a result of this identification effort, but which requires further study. CA-LAN-1369H is the single track Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe (ATSF) railroad siding found in Commercial Street and in Block 17 on the southwest corner of the intersection of Commercial and Garey. The site requires further

study at the start of project construction to properly apply the National Register criteria for evaluation.”

Archaeological site CA-LAN-1575/H is a multi-component site that extends across the majority of the proposed APE, representing archaeological manifestations of portions of:

- Historic Los Angeles Chinatown;
- Early Spanish and Mexican era remains associated with the original El Pueblo de Los Angeles;
- Native American cultural materials and human remains possibly associated with the ethnographic Gabrielino Village of Yaan’ga; and
- Prehistoric Native American materials, some of which have been found buried up to 4.5 meters below the present ground surface of the APE near the existing LAUS terminal building.

FRA previously evaluated the site as eligible for listing in the NRHP, but the site’s eligibility has not been formally concurred on by your office. As this matter has been outstanding since at least 2002, FRA, as part of this initial consultation, seeks your concurrence that site CA-LAN-1575/H is eligible for listing in the NRHP, per Criterion D of the National Register eligibility criteria at 36 CFR 60.4. FRA’s current evaluation of site CA-LAN-1575/H is Attachment 3 to this letter.

Methodology

For background reference, the letter from SHPO dated January 15, 2004, in which SHPO concurred with FRA’s determinations of eligibility for the original Run-Through Tracks Project, is attached (Attachment 4). FRA will compile and generate information sufficient to fulfill the steps of the Section 106 review process per 36 CFR 800.4 –800.6. FRA is proposing to incorporate pertinent data and background information from the original LAUS Run-Through Tracks Project cultural technical studies into the analysis for Link US. This includes pre-existing historic context information, where applicable, and updating Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) Series 523 forms for all previously evaluated properties with unchanged NRHP eligibility status.

Additionally, FRA will update the records search at the South Central Coastal Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System. FRA will again consult with those parties identified in Attachment 1 and others your office may recommend. FRA has requested that the NAHC update its previous Sacred Lands file search and FRA will attempt to consult with contacts provided by the NAHC.

Considering the known presence of buried archaeological sites within and in the close vicinity of the proposed Link US APE, FRA will synthesize data associated with those archaeological discoveries within and adjacent to the APE. The goal will be to produce a predictive 3D model to

assess the potential subsurface archaeological sensitivity of the Link US Project, an urban environment that largely precludes exploration for buried archaeological resources. The methods and results of the 3D modeling will be included in the Archaeological Survey Report and provided to your office for review.

An identification effort is underway for any properties that were not included as a result of the previous Run-Through Tracks Project and the results will be provided to your office for review. FRA will use full DPR 523 form sets to evaluate any other properties in the Link US APE that are 50 years of age or older, that are approaching 50 years of age, or have a changed NRHP eligibility status. Because it is anticipated that Caltrans will be a CEQA Responsible Agency, to aid in their review of the documents, the technical studies will generally follow the guidance and format described in Caltrans' Standard Environmental Reference, including the *Historic Properties Survey Report*, the *Archaeological Survey Report*, the *Historic Resources Evaluation Report* (HRER), and the *Finding of Effect (FoE)*.

Conclusion

In conclusion, FRA requests the following from your office regarding the Link US Project:

(1) comment regarding FRA's definition of the proposed APE; (2) identification of any additional parties that FRA should consult in the Section 106 process; and (3) concurrence that archaeological site CA-LAN-1575/H is eligible for listing in the NRHP.

FRA looks forward to continuing Section 106 consultation with your office regarding the Link US Project. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Stephanie Perez at FRA (stephanie.perez@dot.gov or 202-493-0388) or Vincent Chio at Metro (ChioM@metro.net or 213-922-7597).

Sincerely,



Laura Shick
Federal Preservation Officer
Environmental and Corridor Planning Division
Office of Railroad Policy and Development

Enclosures:

1. Consulting Parties List
2. Link US APE Map(s)
3. NRHP Evaluation of CA-LAN-1575/H
4. January 15, 2004 SHPO concurrence letter for the original LAUS Run-Through Tracks Project

cc: Stephanie Perez, FRA

Lyle Leitelt, FRA
Jeanet Owens, Metro
Vincent Chio, Metro
Tom Kim, HDR
Patrick O'Neill, HDR
Nina Delu, HDR