



Conceptual artwork

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## LINK UNION STATION (LINK US) – Frequently Asked Questions

### 1 What is the Link US project?

Link Union Station (Link US) project comprises several key components:

1. New lead tracks, elevated rail yard and platforms
2. New concourse-related improvements, including new escalators, elevators and canopies
3. New run-through tracks (including the possibility of a loop track) south of the Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS), over US-101
4. Accommodation of California High-Speed Rail Authority's (CHSRA) planned high-speed rail (HSR) system on common infrastructure<sup>1</sup> to support future HSR trains
5. New rail communications, signals and safety improvements
6. Off-site improvements to BNSF Malabar Yard in the City of Vernon

### 2 Why is Link US needed and how is it valuable to the region?

By 2040, over 200,000 passenger trips through LAUS each weekday are expected to occur. Link US is to meet the multi-modal transportation demands at LAUS by:

- > Increasing the regional and intercity rail service capacity of LAUS;
- > Improving schedule reliability at LAUS through the implementation of a run-through tracks configuration and elimination of the current stub-end tracks configuration;
- > Preserving current levels of freight rail operations;
- > Accommodating the planned HSR system in Southern California;
- > Increasing the passenger/pedestrian capacity; and,
- > Enhancing the safety of LAUS through the implementation of a new passenger concourse.

Multiple track alignments were considered in the development of the build alternatives for Link US. The build alternatives would include the reconstruction of up to seven lead tracks to match the new grade for an elevated rail yard, which is required to facilitate the run-through tracks and supporting viaduct structure over U. S. 101. Up to 10 new run-through tracks (including the possibility of a loop track) would be constructed south of LAUS and along Commercial Street to facilitate connections for regional/intercity rail trains and future HSR trains to the main line tracks on the west bank of the Los Angeles River. The build alternatives would also include new passenger platforms with canopies above the elevated rail yard.

The proposed concourse-related improvements would increase passenger capacity, improve connectivity, and enhance accessibility and safety. The expanded passageway (140 feet wide) or the at-grade passenger concourse (300 feet wide) would include space for waiting areas, restrooms, transit-related retail areas and other passenger amenities, while also providing sufficient pedestrian capacity to meet the 2040 forecasted increase in LAUS passenger trips. The expanded passageway or at-grade passenger concourse would provide similar transfer times and travel convenience as the existing passageway, with enhanced pedestrian access and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility to the platforms. Enhanced access would be achieved by replacing the existing ramps with elevators and escalators and enable them to meet current fire and life safety requirements.

### 3 Who is working on the project?

The Link US team comprises a number of agency partners working collaboratively to make this project a success. Metro is the local project sponsor, lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and a joint-lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). CHSRA serves as the lead federal agency under NEPA, as well as other federal environmental laws for the project, pursuant to 23 United States Code<sup>2</sup> (USC) 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding between the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the State of California, executed on July 23, 2019. Other federal, state, regional and local agencies with responsibility to advise and provide feedback throughout the project include the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA), Amtrak, Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Agency, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and the Cities of Los Angeles and Vernon.

### 4 How are the tracks at LAUS currently configured?

LAUS is a stub-end, or dead-end, station where all regional and intercity trains enter and exit through a five-track throat (or station lead tracks) at the north end of the station. These stub-end tracks require trains to be pushed into and then pulled out of the station through the throat, increasing travel times for passengers and limiting operational capacity at the station.



## 5 What is the source of funding?

Through planning, environmental and preliminary engineering work, Metro has received commitment from other state and regional funding partners for a total of \$950 million to date. The major funding sources include:

- > **\$423M** – In March 2020, Metro and CHSRA entered into a Memorandum of Understanding regarding potential future agreements required for the \$423 million Proposition 1A contribution to the Link US Project.
- > **\$398M** – A total of \$398 million has been awarded and programmed to the Link US Project from the 2018 Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Grants.
- > **\$129M** – Other local, state and federal sources total \$129 million.

Based on available funding to date, Metro plans to implement an interim two-track, run-through configuration at LAUS to enable regional and intercity rail trains (Metrolink and Amtrak) to realize early benefits. The Link US team is pursuing additional funding, including federal funding sources, to enable construction of the new lead tracks, elevated rail yard with additional run-through tracks, and concourse-related improvements.

## 6 How will construction of the project impact downtown Los Angeles?

The majority of project construction would occur on the LAUS campus or properties owned by Metro. Construction would also occur over and adjacent to US-101 and Center, Main and Commercial Streets for bridge and road improvements. Multiple track improvements would extend south within the railroad right-of-way (ROW) along the west bank of the Los Angeles River.

Metro will work closely with the affected local communities, City Council Districts 1 and 14 for the City of Los Angeles, and the rail and transit operators to avoid and minimize construction-related impacts on surrounding communities. Mitigation measures will be finalized and included in the final NEPA decision documents.

## 7 How does this current study under NEPA differ from the previous study completed under the California Environmental Quality Act?

Link US is formerly known as the LAUS Run-Through Tracks Project (2006) and Southern California Regional Interconnector Project (SCRIP) (2014). In October 2015, the Metro Board approved the expansion of SCRIP to include a new passenger concourse and potential accommodation of the planned HSR system at LAUS. In March 2017, the Metro Board approved the build alternatives to be further studied in an environmental document, and also requested staff develop a new lower-cost, above-grade passenger concourse option, in addition to the at-grade option.

In October 2018, Metro elected to prepare a stand-alone environmental impact report (EIR) in compliance with CEQA. In November 2018, the Metro Board of Directors approved the designation of the proposed project, prior to circulation of the Draft EIR for public review in January 2019. Metro certified the Final EIR for Link US on June 27, 2019.

<sup>1</sup> Common infrastructure corresponds to structures and embankments to support run-through service for Metrolink, Amtrak and future HSR trains.

Metro and CHSRA are resuming the analysis necessary to complete an environmental impact statement (EIS) in compliance with NEPA. A key element of the NEPA process is evaluating a reasonable range of alternatives at an equivalent level of detail. These alternatives will include components of the approved CEQA proposed project in the certified Final EIR. NEPA also requires the analysis of impacts not considered under CEQA, such as environmental justice, socioeconomics and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The EIS will also include a Section 4(f) analysis, which is not a component of the CEQA process. For additional updates on the NEPA and CEQA processes for Link US, visit [metro.net/linkus](http://metro.net/linkus).

## 8 What is the Revised Notice of Intent (NOI) and how does it relate to the Draft EIS?

On May 31, 2016, FRA published an NOI in the Federal Register pursuant to the requirements of NEPA. In 2016, Metro and FRA conducted a formal scoping process to collect public and agency feedback on the scope of environmental analysis for the Link US Project joint EIS/EIR. Since 2016, Metro has advanced preliminary engineering, and in coordination with CHSRA, following NEPA Assignment, has identified a need for improvements to the BNSF Malabar Yard in the City of Vernon to restore and offset the permanent loss of freight storage capacity that would occur at the BNSF West Bank Yard north of First Street. A Revised NOI is published in the Federal Register to address the new project component proposed in the City of Vernon.

The Revised NOI can be found on Metro's website: [metro.net/linkus](http://metro.net/linkus).

## 9 What types of improvements are being proposed in the City of Vernon?

Link US would result in the permanent loss of approximately 5,500 track-feet of intermodal railcar storage capacity at BNSF's West Bank Yard near LAUS. This impact renders the facility effectively useless as a stub-end storage yard because BNSF would lose the ability to store longer intermodal railcar sets in close proximity to the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, and west of two critical BNSF intermodal facilities (IMF): Hobart and Commerce IMFs.

To restore and offset the loss of freight storage capacity from the BNSF West Bank Yard, off-site improvements to the BNSF Malabar Yard are proposed in the City of Vernon. In its existing condition, BNSF Malabar Yard cannot be used to compensate for the loss of intermodal railcar storage capacity without the following physical infrastructure improvements:

- > Closing the at-grade railroad crossing at 49th Street
- > Adding a 1,000-foot track connection along 46th Street between Pacific Boulevard and Seville Avenue

## 10 Why was the BNSF Malabar Yard location selected?

BNSF's operations require an intermodal storage yard to be readily available in close proximity to nearby ports in the region and west of BNSF's Hobart and Commerce Intermodal Facilities (IMF). Due to its location and ability to accommodate longer train car sets, BNSF Malabar Yard in the City of Vernon was selected as the preferred location to offset the loss of storage capacity at the West Bank Yard.

<sup>2</sup> The environmental review, consultation and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being or have been carried out by the State of California pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated July 23, 2019, and executed by the Federal Railroad Administration and the State of California.

## CONTACT US

For more information, questions, comments or requests to join the mailing list, please contact:



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