

California High-Speed Train System



TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

Aesthetic Review Process for Non-Station Structures TM 200.07

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for the California High-Speed Rail Authority


System Level Technical and Integration Reviews

The purpose of the review is to ensure:

- Technical consistency and appropriateness
- Check for integration issues and conflicts

System level reviews are required for all technical memorandums. Technical Leads for each subsystem are responsible for completing the reviews in a timely manner and identifying appropriate senior staff to perform the review. Exemption to the System Level technical and integration review by any Subsystem must be approved by the Engineering Manager.

System Level Technical Reviews by Subsystem:

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1.0 PURPOSE OF TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

It is a high priority of the Authority to enable consistent, project-wide aesthetic quality for the numerous and diverse California High-Speed Rail non-station structures. To reach decisions on aesthetics which conform to project design guidelines, reflect the unique needs of communities and are sensitive to specific contexts, a consistent, project-wide aesthetic review process is necessary.

This Technical Memorandum establishes a process to facilitate consultation between the Authority, its representatives, and local jurisdictions on aesthetic decisions. The outcome of this process should be clear expression of local aesthetic preferences which will inform procurement documents. This process benefits the Authority by fostering greater local jurisdiction understanding of the scope of work and by supporting the delivery of all parties' expectations.

2.0 DEFINITION OF TECHNICAL TOPIC

Aesthetics refers to a set of principles related to beauty in infrastructure. California High-Speed Rail System structures will be constructed across a diverse range of environmental and geographic conditions. An appropriate aesthetic solution for given structural elements will be influenced by project guidelines, structural conditions, local context and community needs. No single aesthetic solution will be applicable to every structural condition system-wide; context and local needs will lead to different aesthetic preferences from community to community. However, aesthetic quality, as laid out in the Aesthetics Manual for Non-Station Structures, is a minimum for all high-speed rail infrastructure. It is the intent of the Authority to provide a degree of aesthetic consistency and uniformity across regional contexts.

Non-station structural elements may include, but are not limited to, aerial structures, elevated decks, bridges, overpasses, tunnel portals, retaining walls, fences, and sound walls.

3.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The Authority's aesthetic concerns and minimum expectations are described in the Aesthetics Manual for Non-Station Structures. That document establishes broad guidelines for ensuring appropriate aesthetic treatment of non-station structures. A range of acceptable aesthetic treatments, rather than a single prescriptive treatment, allows for the varied conditions in which high-speed train structures will be constructed. To serve as a guide and information piece for local jurisdictions that will be the site of visible high-speed rail infrastructure, the Authority is developing a menu of aesthetic options for infrastructure (forthcoming). These guidelines, along with the Aesthetics Manual, are intended to inform designers and local jurisdictions during development of structural design concepts, to inform communities and other reviewers during preparation and evaluation of contract packages, and to inform contractors during preparation of final design documents. The Authority's aesthetic guidelines provide the standards by which aesthetic proposals will be measured. This TM explains the process of consultation.

4.0 AESTHETIC REVIEW PROCESS

4.1 GENERAL: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Aesthetics Manual for Non-Station Structures, Section 3.5 Roles and Responsibilities, describes the intent of the Authority to consult with local jurisdictions to develop contextually appropriate aesthetic solutions for non-station structures. The content in this memorandum is intended to reinforce and systematize the procedures described in the Aesthetics Manual,



beginning with consultation with local jurisdictions and continuing through the notice to proceed for the Contractor.

Project Phase	Step	Authority	Local Jurisdictions
Environmental Planning and Preliminary Engineering	Step 1 Outreach	Initiate and continue consultation	Initiate and continue consultation
	Step 2 Identification of Key Structures	Develop design features for consideration in the EIR/EIS	Review and confirm acceptance of mitigation
	Step 3 Community Review	Refine mitigation options into design proposals	Participate in consultation Review and confirm acceptance of design proposal
Design for Procurement (post-environmental; pre-bid)	Step 4 Integration of Decisions	Incorporate local preference into procurement documents consistent with EIR/EIS requirements	
Procurement	Continuation of Step 4	Continue consultation and confirm design solutions	Participate in consultation
Construction	Step 5 Implementation	Construct the project according to the agreed-upon design considerations.	Review and confirm acceptable design considerations are being implemented

4.2 REVIEW PROCESS

The process for aesthetic evaluation allows the Authority, local agencies, stakeholders and contractors to collaboratively address high-speed rail aesthetic issues consistently. The process should be completed during the environmental planning and documentation stage, with some refinement prior to issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP). Consultation can continue after an RFP has been issued, if managed within the confines of defined project features and footprint, adopted mitigation measures, and can be included in procurement documents in a timely manner.

The Authority may undertake each step below individually, with local jurisdictions commenting on final recommendations. Or the Authority can collaborate with local jurisdictions to provide input on each step, developing a unique collaborative process with local jurisdictions. The determination of a particular approach will be made by the Authority as it assesses the unique characteristics of each local jurisdiction.

4.2.1 Step 1: Outreach to Communities

The Authority program implementation team, in close coordination with the Office of Communications staff and Office of Chief Program Management staff, will identify opportunities to consult with local jurisdictions concerning high-speed rail aesthetic issues. Local jurisdictions and the Authority will mutually agree upon a process consistent with the program.

Prior to release of each Draft Project EIR/EIS, the Authority will seek to develop working relationships with each local jurisdiction within the project section limits. The purpose will



be to identify local aesthetic concerns as well as begin the development of design approaches that are locally acceptable and consistent with local, existing aesthetic standards and consistent with the established project budget. Engagement of local leadership will be a priority.

Output: The Authority will identify a locally appropriate process and engage with appropriate local jurisdictions to participate in aesthetic reviews.

4.2.2 Step 2: Identification of Key Structures

During preparation of the Draft EIR/EIS and using the regional consultants' preliminary design drawings as a basis, the Authority will identify key non-station structures within the project section package and prepare a structures report which identifies 1) structures recommended for visual mitigation in the EIR/EIS visual impact assessment and 2) key structures within the project section for which design-build proposals will be expected to demonstrate aesthetic design expertise, responsiveness to local and project-wide objectives and an understanding of HST aesthetic design guidelines.

Output: A Key Structures Report identifying visually significant structures will be developed by the Authority. This report will inform discussion with communities and be included in procurement documents as an indication of which structures may require aesthetic development by proposers.

4.2.3 Step 3: Community Review

The Authority will present the Key Structures Report to local agencies and stakeholders for discussion and design input in tandem with public and agency review of the Draft Project EIR/EIS (or other relevant environmental decision-support document). This step allows flexibility for varying degrees of local interest. The Authority will look to local jurisdictions to articulate community expectations for aesthetics and provide constructive, reasonable recommendations supported by the broader community.

Local jurisdictions will assist in managing stakeholder engagement to identify aesthetic design guidance, as appropriate.

Output: After the Authority's identification of key structures and engagement with local jurisdictions, local aesthetic expectations and priorities will be documented in a Summary Report. Recommendations from local jurisdictions and stakeholders will be included in the Final Project EIR/EIS.

4.2.4 Step 4: Integration of Aesthetic Decisions into Procurement Documents

Upon completion of Community Reviews, the Authority will explore and identify context-responsive aesthetic design approaches for key structures, using the Aesthetics Manual for Non-Station Structures as a design resource, evaluating local recommendations for potential cost, schedule and operational impacts and for alignment with project-wide aesthetic goals. Recommendations regarding aesthetic treatments will be reviewed and approved by the Office of Chief Program Management in consultation with the local community.

Output: The aesthetic requirements of the Final Project EIR/EIS (including avoidance and minimization measures and mitigation measures), the Aesthetics Manual, and local jurisdiction review process will be included in the construction procurement documents. Proposers will be expected to address these recommendations in proposals.



4.2.5 Step 5: Implementation

During final design and construction, the Contractor will implement the aesthetic requirements as specified in the procurement documents. Per direction in the general provisions of the contract, the Contractor will engage with the local jurisdictions to review designs and confirm that the local jurisdictions aesthetic expectations, expressed in the Final Project EIR/EIS and as approved by the Office of Chief Program Management, have been met with the proposed and final design.

Output: Final design plans and constructed infrastructure consistent with the requirements from Step 3 and 4, community design review meetings.

4.3 ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

The Authority will consider recommendations coming out of the aesthetic review and evaluation process when developing mitigations for the Draft EIR/EIS. By working collaboratively with a local jurisdiction on aesthetic design details, the local agency will be able to influence the CEQA and NEPA requirements and provide stakeholder engagement with development of visual mitigations.

4.4 COSTS FOR AESTHETICS

The Aesthetics Manual for Non-Station Structures, Section 3.5 describes responsibilities for capital costs and maintenance for design and construction of high-speed rail infrastructure. Costs may be influenced by aesthetic solutions requested by communities. Local agencies will be expected to pay fair share capital costs for improvements not included in the scope of the project or for project aesthetic improvements above and beyond those set forth in the Aesthetics Manual or required as part of project environmental mitigation.

4.5 AESTHETIC DESIGN DURING DESIGN-BUILD PHASE

After a contract has been signed between the Authority and a Contractor, the Contractor will be responsible for implementing aesthetic design and visual resource mitigations as specified in the contract. As appropriate, the Authority will request the Contractor to conduct reviews with the Authority during final design to ensure the Contractor has successfully implemented the recommendations developed during the aesthetic review process and fully implemented the mitigation measures specified in the Final EIR/EIS. The Authority may request local jurisdictions to participate in these reviews of design development documents at specified milestone dates and will work with local agencies to establish a review schedule consistent with the design-build contract objectives.

END

