



# CALIFORNIA High-Speed Rail Authority

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## **California High-Speed Rail** **NOVEMBER 20, 2025, BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM #5**

**TO:** Chair Richards and Board Members  
**FROM:** Stefan Galvez-Abadia, Director of Environmental Services  
Brett Rushing, NEPA Assignment Manager  
**DATE:** November 20, 2025  
**RE:** **Informational Update** on the LA Metro Link US Final Environmental Impact Statement/Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (Final EIS/SEIR) and Record of Decision (ROD)

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### **Summary**

Staff is providing an Informational Update to the Board on the LA Metro Link Union Station (Link US) proposed Combined Final Environmental Impact Statement/Record of Decision (Combined FEIS/ROD).

The Authority, pursuant to its 2019 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the State of California and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) that was renewed in 2024, assumed responsibility for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) through 2034 for the Link US Project. In the MOU and renewal, FRA approved NEPA Assignment for the Link US Project to the Authority. LA Metro is the lead agency under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the Authority is the federal lead agency under NEPA pursuant to the FRA NEPA Assignment Program. To comply with NEPA and CEQA, LA Metro and the Authority circulated the Draft EIS/SEIR for a 45-day public comment period that began on June 21, 2024, and ended on August 9, 2024. LA Metro, as the lead agency under CEQA certified the SEIR and approved the 8-track LINK US Project on October 23, 2025. The Authority is preparing the Combined Final EIS/ROD under NEPA.

### **Background**

#### **Authority NEPA Assignment for Locally Sponsored Projects**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Federal Railroad Administration and the State of California prepared in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 327 and executed on July 23, 2019, (and renewed July 22, 2024) explicitly identified the Link US Project as a locally-sponsored project for which the Authority has assumed the role of lead federal agency for NEPA.

Local agencies may prepare Categorical Exclusions, Environmental Assessments, EISs, or Reevaluations for which the Authority will serve as a lead federal agency under NEPA and other relevant federal environmental laws. FRA approved NEPA Assignment for LA Metro's Link Union Station Project to the Authority as a part of the executed July 2019 NEPA MOU between FRA and the Authority. Previously the NEPA Lead Agency for the Link US Project since the Project's 2016

federal Notice of Intent, FRA transitioned the NEPA lead agency role to the Authority following the Link US Project's assignment to the Authority in 2019.

### Link US Project Background

LA Metro is proposing the Link US Project to address existing capacity constraints at Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS), to improve regional and intercity rail service capacity, and to accommodate HSR at and through LAUS (the project study area is as depicted on Exhibit A).

In September 2020, the Authority issued a revised Notice of Intent (NOI) for the Link US Project, describing the project's purpose as to increase the regional and intercity rail service capacity of the Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS) and to improve schedule reliability at LAUS through the implementation of a run-through tracks configuration and elimination of the current stub-end tracks configuration while 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. The 2020 revised NOI described off-site improvements to the BNSF Malabar Yard in the City of Vernon as a part of the proposed project to restore and offset the loss of storage track capacity at the BNSF West Bank Yard.

The Project consists of transforming LAUS from a stub end tracks station into a run-through tracks station. The Link US Project Draft EIS analyzed a No Build Alternative and a Build Alternative (the Preferred Alternative). The Draft EIS Preferred Alternative extends ten platform tracks south of LAUS Platforms 2 through 6 that would merge into a minimum of four tracks on the U.S. Highway 101 (US-101) viaduct and continue south to connect to mainline tracks along the west bank of the Los Angeles River, replacing the existing pedestrian passageway under the LAUS platforms and tracks with a new expanded passageway, and establishing 10 new run-through tracks for regional/intercity trains and future high-speed rail trains south of LAUS (as depicted on Exhibit B). The Preferred Alternative also includes off-site railroad improvements to BNSF Railway's Malabar Yard in the City of Vernon. The Malabar Yard railroad improvements consist of the closure of the 49th Street at-grade railroad crossing and a new track connection between two existing track segments along 46th Street in the City of Vernon (as depicted in Exhibit C).

### Discussion

LA Metro is the lead agency under CEQA and the Authority is the federal lead agency under the FRA NEPA Assignment Program.

In May 2016, pursuant to the requirements of NEPA and CEQA, FRA (federal lead agency at the time) and LA Metro issued a Notice of Intent/Notice of Preparation to prepare a joint EIS/EIR for the Link US Project. In October 2018, LA Metro elected to prepare a standalone Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in compliance with CEQA and certified the Final EIR on June 27, 2019. In September 2020, a revised Notice of Intent (NOI) was issued to seek comment on modifications to the project. In April 2023, the Authority and LA Metro agreed to prepare a joint EIS/Supplemental EIR to complete the NEPA and CEQA process.

To comply with NEPA and CEQA, LA Metro and CHSRA circulated the Draft EIS/SEIR for a 45-day public comment period that began on June 21, 2024, and ended on August 9, 2024. Following public review of the Draft EIS/SEIR, LA Metro and the Authority considered and responded to a total of 140 comments received from 7 agencies, 9 organizations, and 123 individuals, and revised the EIS to address public comments and various design refinements.

The proposed Combined Final EIS/ROD will identify the environmentally preferable alternative as well as select an alternative (“Selected Alternative”) for NEPA lead agency decision and approval. The Selected Alternative need not be the environmentally preferable alternative or the Preferred Alternative, provided the EIS has adequately studied the Selected Alternative’s NEPA impacts.

The Draft EIS Link US Project Build Alternative comprised several key components:

- New lead tracks with an elevated rail yard with new platforms and canopies
- New concourse-related improvements, including a 140-foot-wide expanded passageway below the rail yard with new escalators and elevators
- Ten run-through tracks south of the LAUS over US-101, including HSR tracks that will extend through to the proposed northern terminus of the Los Angeles to Anaheim HSR project section.
- Accommodation of the Authority’s planned high-speed rail (HSR) system on common rail infrastructure (e.g. construction of a viaduct) to support future HSR trains
- New rail communications, signals, and safety improvements

At the BNSF West Bank Yard, dedicated lead tracks for Amtrak trains and BNSF trains, in combination with implementation of common rail infrastructure would result in permanent loss of freight rail storage track capacity at the north end of BNSF West Bank Yard (5,500 track feet). As proposed mitigation to offset the permanent loss of freight storage tracks at the BNSF West Bank Yard, Metro would implement two railroad improvements at BNSF’s Malabar Yard in the City of Vernon, as described below:

- Closure of the at-grade railroad crossing at 49th Street; and
- New 1,000-foot track connection along 46th Street between Pacific Boulevard and Seville Avenue.

Following receipt of public comments on the Draft EIS, LA Metro undertook value engineering design refinement review. As a result of that review, the Link US Project Supplemental EIR and proposed Final EIS/ROD also studied a new design variant, the Build Alternative Design Option which consisted of the following design reductions in scope (and depicted on Exhibit D):

- Vignes Street Bridge – No reconstruction required versus full reconstruction
- Cesar Chavez Bridge – Partial reconstruction versus full reconstruction
- Partially Elevated Rail Yard – 9 to 12-foot raise versus 15-foot raise
- Fewer Raised Platforms – 4 platforms raised versus 6 platforms raised
- Reduced Extent of Concourse-Related Improvements – 100-foot wide Expanded Passageway versus 140-foot wide Expanded Passageway; Removal of West Plaza and Grand Canopy Design Option
- Fewer Run-Through Tracks on Single Aerial Viaduct from LAUS to West Bank/LA River – 8 run-through tracks versus 10 run-through tracks from LAUS to the 101-viaduct, a Narrower structure over US-101, four run-through tracks (instead of six) at the southern edge of the viaduct, two HSR/regional rail shared run-through tracks (instead of four run-through tracks with two exclusive to HSR) from the southern edge of the viaduct to the northern edge of the Los Angeles to Anaheim HSR project section, and an all viaduct structure versus combination of bridges and embankments
- Less construction activity with reduced environmental impacts
- Reduction of cost

The Project's benefits include increasing regional/intercity rail capacity, improving transit connectivity, enabling one-seat rides on the regional/intercity rail systems across Southern California and accommodating the planned HSR system at LAUS.

LA Metro, as the lead agency under CEQA approved the SEIR on October 23, 2025. The Authority is now preparing to issue the Final EIS/ROD under NEPA. Following presentation of this information item and consistent with the Board Delegation of Authority, the Authority CEO may choose to execute a Combined Final EIS/ROD at any time thereafter, subject to MOU-required concurrences as to legal and technical sufficiency.

### **Legal**

NEPA counsel in the Office of the Chief Counsel have been involved in the development and review of the Final EIS and the documents presented in the attachments to this briefing. As required by the Authority's NEPA Assignment MOU, NEPA counsel concurrence as to the NEPA legal sufficiency of the Final EIS and ROD (Combined Final EIS/ROD) will be required before the NEPA documents may be executed or published.

### **Budget and Fiscal Impact**

This is an informational item and by itself does not have a budget or fiscal impact.

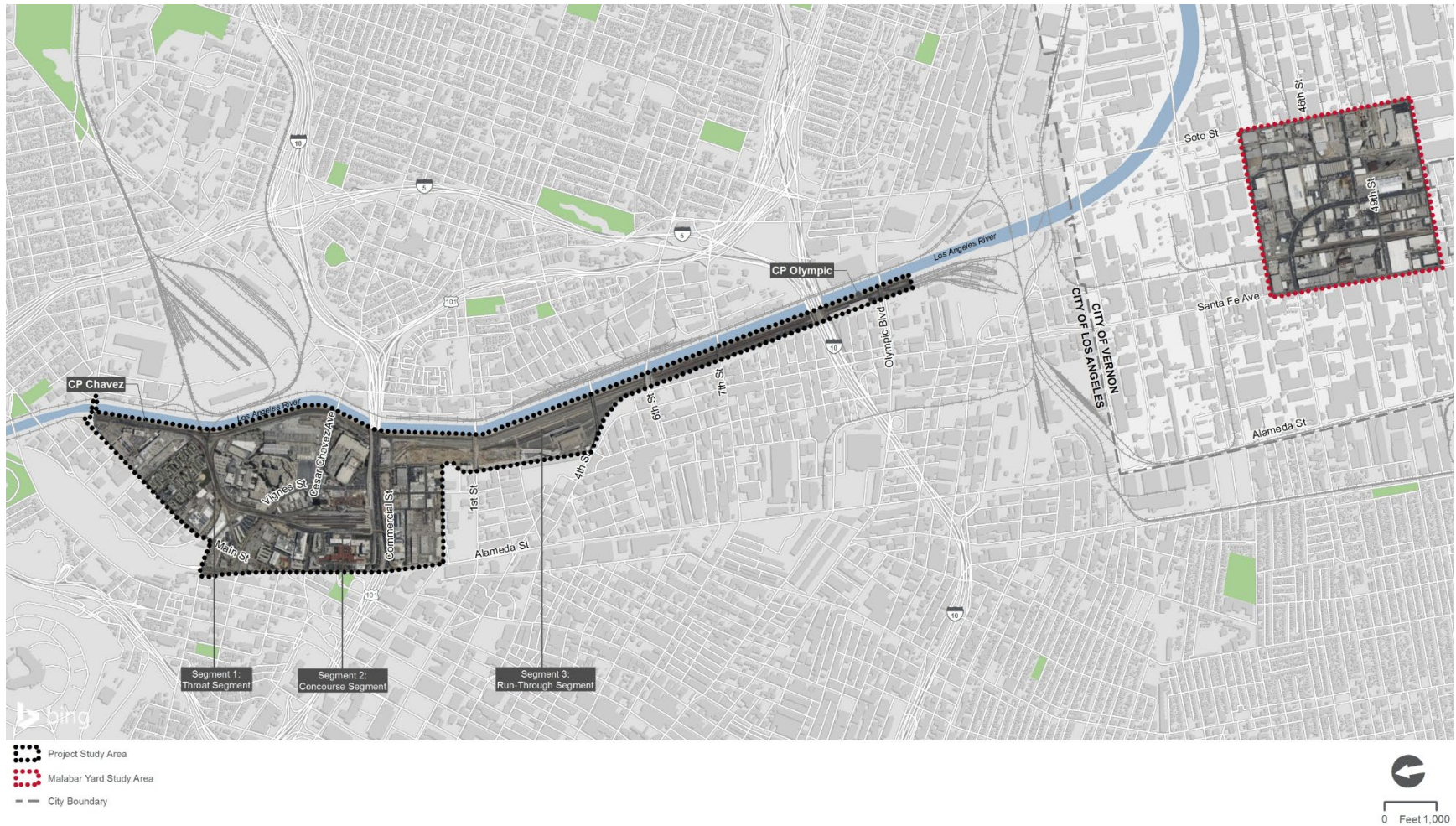
### **Recommendations**

This is an informational item. There are no Board Actions requested at this time.

### **Exhibits**

- Exhibit A: Project Study Area
- Exhibit B: Major Project Components of the Link US Build Alternative
- Exhibit C: Overview of Malabar Yard Railroad Improvements (City of Vernon)
- Exhibit D: Major Project Components of the Link US Build Alternative Design Option

## Exhibit A. Project Study Area\*



\*The Project Study Area is non-contiguous and comprises a portion in the City of Los Angeles and a portion in the City of Vernon.

**Exhibit B. Major Project Components of the Link US Build Alternative (without Design Option)**

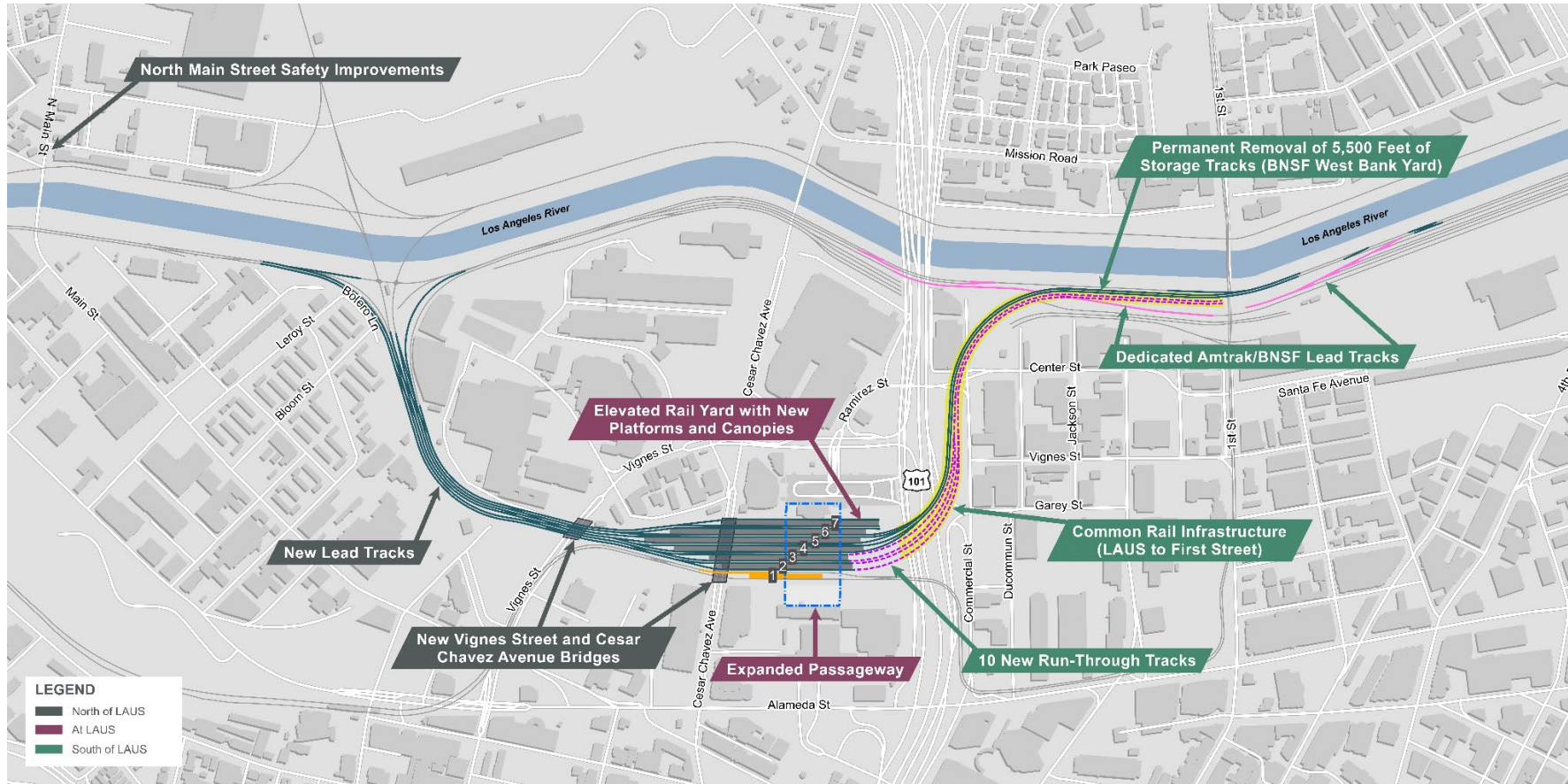


Exhibit C. Overview of Malabar Yard Railroad Improvements (City of Vernon)



**Exhibit D. Major Project Components of the Link US Build Alternative Design Option**

