CALIFORNIA High-Speed Rail Authority

Briefing: October 28–29, 2026, Board Meeting Agenda Items #9, 10, and 11

TO: Board Chair Kawa and Authority Board Members

FROM: LaDonna DiCamillo, Northern and Southern California Regional Director
Stefan Galvez-Abadia, Director of Environmental Services

DATE: October 28, 2026

RE: Consider certifying the Los Angeles to Anaheim Final EIR and taking actions as required by CEQA and NEPA for Selecting the Preferred Alternative for the Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section

Summary

Staff recommends that the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) Board of Directors (Board) take three actions, as described in more detail in this memorandum:

- Certify the high-speed rail (HSR) project Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section (project section) Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR). (Agenda Item #9)
- Approve the Preferred Alternative—the Shared Passenger Track Alternative—and adopt the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Findings of Fact, Statement of Overriding Considerations (SOC), and a Mitigation Monitoring and Enforcement Plan (MMEP). (Agenda Item #10)
- Direct the Authority Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to execute the Final Record of Decision (ROD) and issue the Combined Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/ROD under the Authority's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Assignment responsibilities, identifying Shared Passenger Track Alternative A as the Selected Alternative, documenting compliance with other related federal environmental laws, and including mitigation measures as identified in the MMEP. (Agenda Item #11)

Prior Board Action

In November 2018, the Authority Board approved the staff-recommended 2018 HSR Project Alternative as the Preferred Alternative for the project section (Resolution #HSRA

18-21). In November 2023, the Authority released the 2023 Supplemental Alternatives Analysis, which considered three new build alternatives and proposed the Shared Passenger Track Alternative for further consideration.

At the May 16, 2024, Authority Board meeting, the Authority Board concurred with Authority staff that Shared Passenger Track Alternative A is the Authority's Preferred Alternative for the project section (Resolution #HSRA 24-06). Consistent with prior Board direction, the Draft EIR/EIS identified the Preferred Alternative/CEQA Proposed Project as Shared Passenger Track Alternative A (Resolution #HSRA 24-06).

Structure of the Meeting

The October 28–29, 2026, Board meeting is structured as a 2-day meeting to ensure adequate time for thorough consideration of the Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section Final EIR and Proposed Combined Final EIS/ROD and proposed decisions.

On October 28, consistent with the Authority's practice, public comment will be taken at the start of the Board meeting on all agenda and nonagenda items, except the Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section agenda items (Agenda Items #3, 8, 9, 10, and 11). Staff will then give a presentation to the Board about the project section Final EIR and Proposed Combined Final EIS/ROD and the recommended actions (Agenda Items #9, 10, and 11). Public comment on all project section actions will be taken after the staff presentation. After hearing the staff presentation and public comment, the Board will then have an opportunity to identify any issues or questions it would like staff to address the following day.

After the Board addresses Agenda Item #3, the meeting will then recess until the following day.

On October 29, staff will present a summary of public comments received the prior day, issues and questions identified by the Board the prior day, and staff's responses to Board questions and issues raised in public comments (Agenda Item #8). The Board will then deliberate and consider certifying the Final EIR pursuant to CEQA requirements, as noted above (Agenda Item #9).

If the Board certifies the Final EIR, the Board will then deliberate about the Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section Preferred Alternative and will consider approving it, adopting the associated CEQA Findings of Fact, the SOC, and the MMEP (Agenda Item #10).

The Board will also deliberate about directing the Authority's CEO to execute the ROD and to issue the Combined Final EIS/ROD (Agenda Item #11).

Environmental Documentation

To evaluate the potential impacts and effects of the project section, the Authority prepared a Draft EIR/EIS as a joint document to meet pertinent requirements of both CEQA and NEPA. The Draft EIR/EIS was circulated for public review and comment between December 5, 2025, and February 3, 2026. The Draft EIR/EIS evaluated two project alternatives (Shared Passenger Track Alternatives A and B) and a No Project/No Action Alternative, consistent with prior Board direction (Resolution #HSRA 24-06).

For the final environmental document, the Authority made the decision to split the CEQA and NEPA approvals. Consistent with the preference in 23 U.S. Code (U.S.C.) 139(n)(2) and 49 U.S.C. 24201(a)(1) to accelerate decision-making, the Authority has proposed to issue a Combined Final EIS/ROD. For ease of reference, the Final EIR and Proposed Combined Final EIS/ROD may be referred to hereinafter as the "Final EIR/EIS." The Final EIR/EIS considers and responds to comments received during the Draft EIR/EIS comment period and, where appropriate, revises Draft EIR/EIS impacts and proposed mitigations, and compares the impacts and benefits of Shared Passenger Track Alternatives A and B from between Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS) and Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center (ARTIC) against impacts and benefits of the No Project Alternative.

The Draft EIR/EIS consisted of:

- **Volume 1:**
  - Introductory text about the Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section and the environmental process, including the project purpose and need, and objectives
  - Detailed description of Shared Passenger Track Alternatives A and B, including all related and supporting HSR facilities, such as stations, electrification infrastructure, and train control
  - Detailed environmental impacts and mitigation analysis of Shared Passenger Track Alternatives A and B and the No Project Alternative across numerous environmental resource areas, including (but not limited to) parks and recreation, transportation and traffic, biological and aquatic resources, hydrology and water resources, noise and vibration, aesthetics and visual resources, air quality and global climate change, and cultural resources

  - Detailed Section 4(f) analysis and community analysis
  - Summary of public and agency outreach efforts
- **Volume 2:**
  - Technical appendices supporting Volume 1
- **Volume 3:**
  - Preliminary design drawings and alignment plans/maps upon which environmental analysis is based, including detailed maps indicating which parcels may be affected by the project

During the Draft EIR/EIS environmental review process, approximately 1,450 individual comments (contained in 309 submissions, including some received after the close of the comment period) from the public and government agencies were received in writing and during public testimony, regarding project environmental impacts, alternatives, and mitigations. Key comments related to transportation (stakeholder coordination and traffic delay effects), biological and aquatic resources (survey protocols, bat- and owl-related mitigation measures, vegetation management and reporting requirements), safety and security (emergency response times), impacts on parks and park project status, air quality (emissions off-model adjustment factors), noise and vibration (inclusion of sensitive noise receptors), plan and policy updates, and hazardous materials and wastes (impacts during demolition).

- On October 16, 2026, the Authority will issue the Final EIR and Proposed Combined Final EIS/ROD (hereinafter referred to collectively as the "Final EIR/EIS") and post it on the Authority's website at https://hsr.ca.gov/program-areas/environmental-planning/environmental-documents/project-section-environmental-documents-tier-2/los-angeles-to-anaheim-project-section-environmental-documents/. The Authority will provide broad public notice of the posting of the Final EIR/EIS on the Authority's website, in newspapers of general circulation in the project area, direct mailings to property owners and occupants near the project, direct mailings to commenters on the Draft EIR/EIS, and email notification to persons who had subscribed to the project mailing list and postcard mailers.
- The Final EIR/EIS uses an errata sheet approach as authorized by 23 U.S.C. 139(n)(1) and 49 U.S.C. 304a(a) and the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) implementing policies and procedures for NEPA (49 Code of Federal Regulations Part 771). Under these provisions, the use of errata sheets in lieu of rewriting and

reprinting a Draft EIS is appropriate when comments received on a Draft EIS are minor, and the Authority's responses to those comments are limited to factual corrections or explanations of why the comments do not warrant further response. Public comments and comment responses have been included in Volume 4 of the Final EIR/EIS.

- A detailed errata chapter (Volume 1, Chapter 16, Corrections and Additions to the Draft Report) has been prepared to explain what changes were made between the Draft and Final EIR/EIS in response to public comments and project cost updates. In addition, the Final EIR/EIS prepared simplified errata sheets, listing the changes that were made in tabular format, which were inserted as flysheets into the original (electronic) version of the Draft EIR/EIS.

Revisions made to the Draft EIR/EIS primarily focus on the following:

- Project engineering and design refinements made as part of value engineering efforts and in response to updated information received during the Section 4(f) consultation process, as briefly described in the Summary and Chapter 16 of the Final EIR/EIS
- Updates to incorporate the 2026 Business Plan's capital cost and operations and maintenance cost estimates for the project section
- Finalization of preliminary Section 4(f) determinations
- Revisions in response to comments on the Draft EIR/EIS

For a more comprehensive list of such changes, please refer to Chapter 16 of the Final EIR/EIS. Authority staff has provided the Board with a complete copy of the Final EIR/EIS in an electronic format for its review in advance of this meeting. The Summary and Chapter 18, Standard Responses, of the Final EIR/EIS are also included in an electronic format with this memorandum for the Board's convenience (refer to Attachments B and C).

As part of this action, staff proposes the Board approve the Preferred Alternative, which is Shared Passenger Track Alternative A, with a light maintenance facility (LMF) at 26th Street in Vernon, new and upgraded tracks to be shared with passenger rail, and HSR platform and facilities at ARTIC.

Project Description

The Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section is part of Phase 1 of the California HSR System connecting Los Angeles to Orange County via Anaheim. The approximately 30-mile project section would provide HSR service starting in the vicinity of U.S. Highway 101, where the

viaduct built as part of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Link Union Station project would begin, south to ARTIC in Anaheim.

The Final EIR/EIS evaluates the impacts and benefits of a No Project Alternative and two build alternatives: Shared Passenger Track Alternative A and Shared Passenger Track Alternative B (depicted on **Figure 1**). The Shared Passenger Track Alternatives differ in their proposed LMF locations. Shared Passenger Track Alternative A proposes an LMF at 26th Street in Vernon, whereas Shared Passenger Track Alternative B proposes an LMF at 15th Street in the city of Los Angeles. The Authority's Preferred Alternative, as approved by the Authority's Board in May 2024, is Shared Passenger Track Alternative A. The Shared Passenger Track Alternatives follow the existing Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor, and would operate on track owned by Metro, BNSF Railway, and Orange County Transportation Authority.

One optional intermediate HSR station facility has been evaluated, to be at either the Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs Metrolink Station or at the Fullerton Metrolink/National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) Station. HSR trains would not stop at the Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs Metrolink Station or Fullerton Metrolink/Amtrak Station under either Shared Passenger Track Alternative A or Shared Passenger Track Alternative B. However, in line with the Authority's alternative development process, an option for a full-stop HSR station in between LAUS and ARTIC was considered separately, and evaluated in the Final EIR/EIS, should the Authority Board decide to select one of these intermediate HSR station option locations for inclusion in one of the build alternatives. The Final EIR/EIS analysis presents, separately and distinctly from the effects of each Shared Passenger Track Alternative, the effects from building one HSR station option at either Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs or Fullerton.

Figure 1 Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section

The Authority is the project sponsor and owner and is the lead agency under both CEQA and NEPA. Previous NEPA documents and approvals were completed in collaboration with the FRA as the lead federal agency. On July 23, 2019, and renewed July 22, 2024, the State of California and FRA finalized the National Environmental Policy Act Assignment Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This MOU assigns to the Authority most responsibilities formerly held by the FRA regarding the California HSR System's federal environmental review and approval process. The MOU empowers the Authority to perform NEPA review and authorization for all ongoing and new environmental documents that are being developed for the remaining project sections of the California HSR System, as well as for other passenger rail projects that directly connect to the HSR system, including documents that are not final for distribution as of the publication date of the memorandum.

Requested Actions

CEQA

The Authority is the Lead Agency under CEQA. The EIR component of the Final EIR/EIS constitutes the CEQA document.

The Authority Board will review and consider whether to certify the Final EIR at its meeting on October 28 and 29, 2026. If it does certify the Final EIR, the Final EIR will be considered the final environmental document for CEQA. The Authority Board will also consider whether to approve Shared Passenger Track Alternative A, in its capacity as state lead agency only. Such approval would complete the CEQA process for the Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section.

There is no requirement to circulate a Final EIR for general public comment; however, per California Public Resources Code Section 21092.5(a), the lead agency must provide proposed written responses to any public agency (e.g., California Department of Transportation, California Department of Fish and Wildlife) that submitted comments on the Draft EIR at least 10 days prior to the Final EIR certification (the October Authority Board meeting). The Final EIR/EIS, inclusive of the responses to comments on the Draft EIR/EIS, will be posted to the Authority website, and the public agencies will be notified of the availability, on or before Friday, October 16, 2026, to satisfy this requirement.

The purpose of CEQA is to ensure the public and government decision-makers are informed, through CEQA documents, of the potential environmental consequences of a proposed government action. Public comment on Draft EIRs helps provide information and feedback on the proposed action to decision-makers.

The first step at the approval stage of the project under CEQA (Agenda Item #9) is for the Board to certify, if it so chooses, that the Final EIR is adequate as an informational document for the Board about the environmental consequences of the project. That certification takes the form of draft Resolution HSRA 26-14 attached to this memorandum, which states that the Final EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA and presented to the Board, that the Board has reviewed and considered the information in it, and that the Final EIR represents the Board's independent judgment. Certification of the Final EIR is a prerequisite to approving the proposed project (here, the proposed project is the Preferred Alternative), but certification by itself does not approve the project.

The second and distinct step under CEQA (Agenda Item #10) is for the Board to consider whether to approve the Preferred Alternative in light of the environmental consequences

disclosed in the Final EIR (certified in the first step). That approval takes the form of the draft Resolution HSRA 26-15 attached to this memorandum. This step also involves making written acknowledgments (called "Findings of Fact") about the environmental consequences as stated in the Final EIR that will flow from the approval and will require adoption of feasible mitigation to minimize those consequences as a condition of the approval. For environmental consequences that cannot be mitigated to a less-than-significant level under CEQA, this step also involves making written conclusions that the benefits of implementing the project outweigh the significant impacts that cannot be reduced to a less-than-significant level with feasible mitigation measures (the SOC). The Findings, the SOC, and a mitigation enforcement plan (called a Mitigation Monitoring and Enforcement Plan, or MMEP) are included in Exhibits B and C of the draft CEQA approval Resolution HSRA# 26-15, herein included in Attachment E.

NEPA

The Authority is the Lead Agency under NEPA pursuant to the NEPA Assignment program, 23 U.S.C. 327, and an MOU dated July 22, 2024, and executed by the FRA and the State of California.

Pursuant to the Authority's NEPA Assignment, the Board will also take a third step to consider whether to direct the Authority CEO to execute the Final ROD and to issue a Combined Final EIS/ROD (Agenda Item #11). A Proposed Combined Final EIS/ROD is included as part of the materials provided prior to this meeting. A Combined Final EIS/ROD is different from the traditional issuance of a Final EIS followed by a separate ROD after a mandatory 30-day waiting period. The main difference[1] between a sequential Final EIS followed by a ROD and a combined Final EIS/ROD is whether the environmental analysis and the official agency decision are published as separate, consecutive documents or merged into a single, simultaneous release to speed up project delivery.

Under NEPA and the NEPA Assignment MOU, the Draft ROD indicates selection of the Preferred Alternative—Shared Passenger Track Alternative A—as the alternative that best serves the purpose and need for the Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section and minimizes economic, social, and environmental impacts. The Draft ROD also documents a

[1] Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 139(n)(2) and 49 U.S.C. 24201(a)(1), consistent with 23 U.S.C. 139(n)(2), "to the maximum extent practicable, the lead agency shall expeditiously develop a single document that consists of a final environmental impact statement and a record of decision, unless (A) the final environmental impact statement makes substantial changes to the proposed action that are relevant to environmental or safety concerns; or (B) there is a significant new circumstance or information relevant to environmental concerns that bears on the proposed action or the impacts of the proposed action."

number of federal decisions on the project, such as required determinations under several federal laws, including but not limited to Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act. This direction to issue a ROD takes the form of draft Resolution HSRA# 26-16, included herein as Attachment F.

There is no requirement to circulate a Combined Final EIS/ROD for general public comment; however, the Authority is making the NEPA components available to the public prior to the Authority Board's October meeting. The term "proposed" is used to be clear that the Proposed Combined Final EIS/ROD is not final until after the necessary Authority Board action authorizing the Authority's CEO to execute the ROD and to issue the Combined Final EIS/ROD. Should the Authority Board authorize the execution of the ROD, the Combined Final EIS/ROD will be signed by the Authority CEO and notice of its availability will be published in the *Federal Register* by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) via eNEPA, approximately 7 days after submission to USEPA (anticipated to be published no later than November 13, 2026).

The Final EIR/EIS has undergone extensive preparation efforts, including thorough consideration of the comments received on the Draft EIR/EIS. Staff recommends that the Final EIR/EIS is an adequate informational document in compliance with CEQA, NEPA, and other pertinent federal and state regulations. As explained in the Summary of the Final EIR/EIS, Shared Passenger Track Alternative A is an appropriate approval choice based on a balanced consideration of the environmental information presented in the Final EIR/EIS in the context of CEQA, NEPA, other federal and state laws, local and regional land use plans, community preferences, and cost. Staff recommend selection of Shared Passenger Track Alternative A based on this balancing of adverse and beneficial impacts of the project on the environment when compared to the No Project Alternative and Shared Passenger Track Alternative B.

Legal Review

The Office of Chief Counsel has verified that the Board is legally authorized to take the actions requested in the agenda items. Authority counsel and outside counsel under the direction and guidance of Authority counsel have been involved in the development of the Final EIR/EIS and the certification and approval documents presented in this briefing. Legal counsel is not aware of any outstanding issues from a NEPA or CEQA perspective in the project section decision documents that would prevent consideration and action by the

Board. Furthermore, legal counsel recommends advancing the Final ROD for approval and public availability.

Budget and Fiscal Impact

Existing Board Policy HSRA24-1135, directs the Authority to update capital cost estimates in its annual plans or at key points of design levels for Phase 1 segments not under construction. This memo reflects a key point in the design phase for the Los Angeles to Anaheim project segment. As a planned future segment of the Phase 1 HSR system addressed in the Authority's 2026 Business Plan, completion of this EIR/EIS achieves the final project segment environmental clearance requirement of the federal ARRA grant. This project segment is currently unfunded and was estimated to be $8.8 billion (P65). The 2026 Business Plan used a new "bottoms up" approach that uses detailed quantities from the preliminary engineering drawings and design elements.

The capital costs include the total labor effort and materials to build the project section, including track structure, station facilities, support facilities, communications and signaling, electric traction, utility relocations, and modifications to roadways required to accommodate HSR grade-separated guideways.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board adopt the attached draft resolutions #HSRA 26-14, #HSRA 26-15, and #HSRA 26-16:

1. #HSRA 26-14 (Attachment D) certifies the completeness and adequacy of the Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section Final EIR for compliance with CEQA.
2. #HSRA 26-15 (Attachment E) approves the Los Angeles to Anaheim Preferred Alternative—Shared Passenger Track Alternative A—and associated facilities, which travels from south of LAUS at the northern edge of U.S. Highway 101 through the cities of Los Angeles, Vernon, Commerce, Bell, Montebello, Pico Rivera, Norwalk, Santa Fe Springs, portions of unincorporated Los Angeles County, La Mirada, Buena Park, Fullerton, and Anaheim where it terminates at ARTIC; adopts the CEQA Findings of Fact, SOC, and MMEP; and directs staff to file a CEQA Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse.
3. #HSRA 26-16 (Attachment F) directs the Authority CEO to issue the Combined Final EIS/ROD under the Authority's NEPA Assignment responsibilities, to identify Shared Passenger Track Alternative A as the Selected Alternative and document

compliance with other related federal environmental laws, and to include mitigation measures as identified in the MMEP.

Attachments/Enclosures

- Attachment A: Board Meeting PowerPoint Slides
- Attachment B: Summary of the Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section Final EIR/EIS
- Attachment C: Standard Responses to the Most Frequently Raised Comments
- Attachment D: Draft Resolution #HSRA 26-14
- Attachment E: Draft Resolution #HSRA 26-15
- Attachment F: Draft Resolution #HSRA 26-16

ATTACHMENT A: BOARD MEETING POWERPOINT SLIDES

ATTACHMENT B: SUMMARY OF THE LOS ANGELES TO ANAHEIM PROJECT SECTION FINAL EIR/EIS

ATTACHMENT C: STANDARD RESPONSES TO THE MOST FREQUENTLY RAISED COMMENTS

ATTACHMENT D: DRAFT RESOLUTION #HSRA 26-14

ATTACHMENT E: DRAFT RESOLUTION #HSRA 26-15

ATTACHMENT F: DRAFT RESOLUTION #HSRA 26-16