

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

DATE: February 11, 2019

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso *Sharon Tso for*
Chief Legislative Analyst Council File No: 19-0002
Assignment No: 19-01-0067

SUBJECT: High Speed Rail Alternative SR-14

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Resolution (Martinez-Koretz) to include in the City's 2019-2020 State Legislative Program **OPPOSITION** to the California High Speed Rail Authority's refined alternative SR-14 unless amended to be underground in the Sun Valley section of the route.

SUMMARY

On October 9, 2018, the Resolution (Martinez-Koretz) was introduced in opposition to the California High Speed Rail Authority's refined alternative SR-14 unless amended. The Resolution states that while most of the route will run underground, there is a section of the route that will run above ground using the existing Metrolink corridor in Sun Valley. This community already faces several environmental issues including landfills, auto dismantling yards, and heavy industrial uses abutting residential neighborhoods. The Resolution also states that the SR-14 option to operate above ground in the Sun Valley community once again confirms that Sun Valley continues to be burdened by destructive land uses that allow the rest of the city and state to prosper and move forward.

The attached Resolution recommends opposition to the California High Speed Rail Authority's refined alternative SR-14 unless the alternative is amended to be underground in the Sun Valley section of the route.

BACKGROUND

The California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) is responsible for the planning, designing, building and operation of the first high-speed rail system in the nation. The system is anticipated to run from Los Angeles to San Francisco in under three hours at speeds capable of over 200 miles per hour. The Palmdale to Burbank project section was originally part of the larger Palmdale to Los Angeles project section. In 2014, the Palmdale to Los Angeles project section was separated into the Palmdale to Burbank and Burbank to Los Angeles project sections. The CHSRA and the Federal Railroad Administration had determined that separate environmental documents would be more beneficial to address environmental impacts and conduct stakeholder outreach.

The Palmdale to Burbank section links the Antelope Valley and the San Fernando Valley, connecting the Palmdale Transportation Center in Palmdale to the Hollywood Burbank Airport in Burbank. There are three build alternatives in the Palmdale to Burbank project section: refined alternative SR-14, E1, and E2. The refined alternative SR-14 would be approximately 38.4 miles


in length. A section of the alignment would travel within a 12 mile long bored tunnel that would continue beneath portions of the Angeles National Forest/San Gabriel Mountains National Monument until emerging from the tunnel into Pacoima. The alignment would cross over the Hansen Spreading Grounds and follow the existing Metrolink corridor into Burbank Airport Station. The above ground usage of the existing Metrolink corridor in Sun Valley would add an additional layer of burden on a community that already faces several environmental issues including landfills, auto dismantling yards, and heavy industrial uses abutting residential neighborhoods.

In November 2018, the Board of Directors concurred with the CHSRA staff recommended refined alternative SR-14 as the state's preferred alternative for preparing the Palmdale to Burbank project section draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The other alternatives under consideration are E1 and E2. The draft EIR/EIS report for this project section is anticipated to be released in winter 2019 and will include a public hearing, as well as agency and public comment opportunities.

The Los Angeles Department of Transportation (DOT) is currently reviewing the CHSRA's alternatives. At this time, DOT has not provided feedback.

DEPARTMENTS NOTIFIED

Los Angeles Department of Transportation


Xochitl Ramirez
Analyst

SMT:xr

Attachment: 1. Resolution

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles, with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state, or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, the California High Speed Rail Authority was created in 1996 for the purpose of constructing a high speed train from San Francisco to Los Angeles that will eventually encompass over 800 miles of rail, with up to 24 stations; and

WHEREAS, on September 19, 2018, three refined set of Palmdale to Burbank alignment alternatives were announced including State Route 14 (SR-14), E1, and E2; and

WHEREAS, the SR-14 option follows State Route 14 before going below ground through the San Gabriel Mountains, and later intersecting with route E1 that goes along San Fernando Road through Pacoima and Sun Valley; and

WHEREAS, a refined alternative SR-14 would also add an additional layer of burden on the Sun Valley community with trains running every nine minutes and potentially creating closures of existing intersection as well as additional truck traffic further burdening the community with air pollution during the construction period; and

WHEREAS, while most of the route will run underground, there is a section of the route that will run above ground using the existing Metrolink corridor in the Sun Valley community which already faces several environmental issues including landfills, auto dismantling yards, and heavy industrial uses abutting residential neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, having the SR14 option operate above ground in the community of Sun Valley, will once again confirm that Sun Valley continues to be left behind by destructive land uses that allow the rest of the city and state to prosper and move forward.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2019-2020 State Legislative Program OPPOSITION to the California High Speed Rail Authority's refined alternative SR-14 unless amended to be underground in the Sun Valley section of the route.

PRESENTED BY: Nury Martinez
Nury Martinez
Councilmember, 6th District

OCT 09 2019

SECONDED BY: Paul Kretz