RECORD OF DECISION
FOR THE
LOS ANGELES COUNTY METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTORITY
EAST SAN FERNANDO VALLEY TRANSIT CORRIDOR PROJECT,
LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
BY THE
FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

Decision

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), pursuant to Title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 771 and Title 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508, has determined that the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and related federal environmental statutes, regulations, and executive orders have been satisfied for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (LACMTA) East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor Project (Project) located in Los Angeles County, California.

This Record of Decision (ROD) applies to the at-grade light rail transit (LRT) modified Alternative 4, also identified as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA), which was described and evaluated in the *East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor Project Final Environmental Impact Statement/Final Environmental Impact Report* (FEIS/FEIR), dated September 2020. FTA served as the federal lead agency under NEPA and LACMTA served as the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

LACMTA may seek financial assistance from FTA for the Project and carry out the Project's engineering and construction (design-build). The East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor Project consists of the design, construction, and future operation of a light rail transit (LRT) system that would operate over 9.2 miles along Van Nuys Boulevard (6.7 miles) and within LACMTA owned rail right-of-way (2.5 miles) located in Los Angeles County. The LACMTA may phase the Project and construct the 6.7-mile segment along Van Nuys Boulevard as an Initial Operating Segment (IOS). If FTA provides financial assistance for final design and construction of the Project, FTA will require that LACMTA design and construct the Project as presented in the FEIS/FEIR and in the ROD. Any proposed change must be evaluated in accordance with 23 CFR Section 771.129-130 and FTA must approve the change before the agency requesting the change can proceed.

Background

The LACMTA in cooperation with the FTA, has proposed a Project to establish rail transit service along Van Nuys Boulevard and the LACMTA-owned railroad right-of-way within Los Angeles County, California. The Project would consist of a 9.2-mile, at-grade LRT with 14 stations. The Project would include construction of a new Maintenance and Storage Facility (MSF) site located on the west side of Van Nuys Boulevard on approximately 25 acres in the area bounded by Keswick Street on the south, Raymer Street on the east and north, and the Pacoima Wash on the west. The LRT would be powered by electrified overhead lines and would travel 2.5 miles along the LACMTA-owned right-of-way used by the Antelope Valley Metrolink line and Union Pacific Railroad from the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station south to

Van Nuys Boulevard. As the Project approaches Van Nuys Boulevard, it would transition to and operate in a median dedicated guideway along Van Nuys Boulevard for approximately 6.7 miles south to the Metro G Line (formerly known as the Orange Line) Van Nuys Station. Additional details regarding the Project characteristics, components, and facilities are discussed further below within the Description of the Project section of this ROD. The proposed Project is funded by LACMTA, with the use of local and state funding sources, and is therefore subject to state environmental review requirements. Additionally, since LACMTA may seek federal funding for the Project in the future, it is subject to federal environmental review. Project documentation, therefore, has been prepared in compliance with both the CEQA and the NEPA.

The Project study area has a high population density and large transit-dependent population who rely on transit for daily transportation, including commuting. Continued population growth will increase the demand for transit service and result in additional roadway congestion adversely affecting air quality and bus transit service and performance.

In order to address these mobility challenges and needs, the Project has been developed with the following purposes:

- Improve mobility in the eastern San Fernando Valley by introducing an improved north-south transit connection between key transit hubs/routes;

- Provide new service and/or infrastructure that improves passenger mobility and enhances transit accessibility/connectivity for residents within the project study area to local and regional destinations and activity centers;

- Provide more reliable transit service within the eastern San Fernando Valley;

- Increase transit service efficiency (speeds and passenger throughput) in the project study area;

- Provide additional transit options in an area with a large transit-dependent population, including the disabled, and high-transit ridership;

- Encourage modal shift to transit in the eastern San Fernando Valley, thereby improving air quality; and

- Make transit service more environmentally beneficial through reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in the project study area.

Planning For The Project

The Project is the outcome of prior studies that have evaluated transportation needs within the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor study area for more than 15 years. In 2000, the California State Legislature made funds available through a Traffic Congestions Relief Program (TCRP) for the LACMTA to develop a north–south corridor bus transit project that interfaces with an east–west Burbank-Chandler corridor project and a Ventura Boulevard Metro Rapid Bus Project.

In May 2003, the LACMTA Board advanced the *San Fernando Valley North/South Transit Corridor's, Regional Significant Transportation Investment Study (RSTIS).* The RSTIS recommended a series of bus efficiency improvements on five north/south corridors, including on Reseda Boulevard, Sepulveda Boulevard, Van Nuys Boulevard, and Lankershim Boulevard/San Fernando Road in the San Fernando Valley; and adjacent to the Canoga Avenue corridor in the west San Fernando Valley. The corridor is located on a former rail right-of-way jointly owned by LACMTA and the City of Los Angeles. LACMTA environmentally cleared that corridor, and construction was completed on the Metro G Line (formerly the Orange Line) Canoga Extension Project in July 2012.

In March 2010, the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) completed a bus speed improvement study for the four eastern San Fernando Valley north/south transit corridors – Reseda, Sepulveda, Van Nuys, and Lankershim/San Fernando. The study recommended a range of near-term, mid-term, and long-term bus speed and service improvements, including a new interlined bus service for Van Nuys, signal timing adjustments, traffic striping improvements, street widenings, concrete bus pads, bridge widening, bus stop relocations, transit station enhancements, and a median busway on Van Nuys Boulevard.

In April 2010, the Los Angeles City Council approved the study's recommendations and directed LADOT to: 1) work with LACMTA to develop a scope, schedule, and budget for environmental clearance and public outreach for the three phases of the East San Fernando Valley North/South Rapidways Project; 2) include three busway alternatives for the Van Nuys corridor between Burbank Boulevard and Plummer Street (median busway, median busway with grade separations at major streets, and median busway with grade separations and a tunnel segment between the Metro G Line and Vanowen Street); and 3) work with LACMTA to develop a scope, schedule, and budget for an Alternatives Analysis (AA) of expanded north–south rail service in the San Fernando Valley.

In 2011, LACMTA initiated the Alternatives Analysis, (AA) Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR) phase of the Project to develop and evaluate transit alternatives in the eastern San Fernando Valley corridor. Ultimately, during the AA phase, 26 project alternatives were narrowed down to six that addressed project goals and corridor needs. The focus of the outreach program during the AA phase was to increase project awareness and initiate public participation in the multi-phased project development process. Public participation during this phase assisted in the refinement of alternatives.

Throughout the Alternatives Analysis phase, a total of 14 early scoping meetings, including 11 community meetings and three elected official briefings, were held between October 6, 2011 and October 9, 2012. A total of 175 attendees, representing a cross section of the project area communities, participated in the early scoping meetings held in 2011 through 2012

Public review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR) prepared for the Project began on September 1, 2017 and ended on October 30, 2017. Five Public Hearings were held during the public review period to receive oral and written comments on the DEIS/DEIR. The Public Hearings were held along the corridor in the Cities of Los Angeles and San Fernando.

The FEIS/FEIR for the Project was published in the Federal Register for review on October 2, 2020 and the comment period ended on November 2, 2020. The comment period was subsequently extended another 15 days to November 17, 2020. Online, virtual public information meetings were held on October 14, 2020 and October 26, 2020 at 4:30 pm and 6:00 pm, respectively.

Alternatives Considered

As a result of the alternatives screening process and feedback received during the public scoping period, six NEPA and CEQA alternatives were developed and considered in the DEIS/DEIR: a No-Build Alternative, a Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Alternative, two Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) alternatives, and two rail alternatives.

No Build Alternative. The No-Build Alternative represents projected conditions in 2040 without implementation of the Project. No new transportation infrastructure would be built within the project study area, aside from related transportation projects that are currently under construction or funded for construction and operation by 2040. These projects include highway and transit projects funded by Measure R and Measure M, as well as projects specified in the current constrained element of the LACMTA Long Range Transportation Plan and the 2016 Southern California Association of Governments Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy.

TSM Alternative. The TSM Alternative proposes enhancements to the existing transit system and would focus on relatively low-cost, efficient, and feasible transit service improvements and transportation systems upgrades, such as increased bus frequencies and minor modifications to the roadway network. Additional transit improvements that would be considered under the TSM Alternative include, but are not limited to, traffic signalization improvements, bus stop amenities/improvements, and bus schedule restructuring.

BRT Alternatives. Two BRT alternatives (Alternatives 1 and 2 in the DEIS/DEIR) were considered, a Curb-Running BRT Alternative and a Median-Running BRT Alternative. Under the Curb-Running BRT Alternative, buses would operate in the curb lane for 2.5 miles along San Fernando Road and Truman Street between the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink station on the north and Van Nuys Boulevard on the south. For a distance of 6.7 miles from San Fernando Road on the north to the Metro G Line (formerly the Orange Line) to the south, the existing curb lanes along Van Nuys Boulevard would be converted to dedicated bus lanes.

The Curb-Running BRT Alternative would operate in dedicated bus lanes, sharing the lanes with bicycles and right-turning vehicles. The Median-Running BRT Alternative would operate in mixed-flow traffic for 2.5 miles between the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station and Van Nuys Boulevard. Between San Fernando Road and the Metro G Line, the Median-Running BRT Alternative would operate in dedicated median-running bus lanes along Van Nuys Boulevard.

Rail Alternatives. Two rail alternatives were considered (Alternatives 3 and 4 in the DEIS/DEIR), a Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative, and an LRT Alternative. Both the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative and LRT Alternative would operate along a 9.2-mile route from the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station on the north to the Metro G Line Van Nuys Station on the south. Between the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station and Wolfskill Street, the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would operate in a median dedicated guideway. From Wolfskill Street to the intersection of San Fernando Road/Van Nuys Boulevard, the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would operate in mixed-flow traffic lanes on San Fernando Road. From San Fernando Road to the Metro G Line Van Nuys Station, the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would operate in a semi-exclusive right-of-way for 6.7 miles in what is now the median of Van Nuys Boulevard. Twenty-eight stations would be provided under this alternative that would serve the Cities of San Fernando and Los Angeles, including the communities of Pacoima, Arleta, Panorama City, and Van Nuys. The LRT Alternative would travel 2.5 miles along the LACMTA-owned right-of-way used by the Antelope Valley Metrolink line and Union Pacific Railroad from the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station south to Van Nuys Boulevard where it would curve and continue south in a semi-exclusive right-of-way in the median along Van Nuys Boulevard 6.7 miles to the Metro G Line Van Nuys Station. The 9.2-mile LRT Alternative would operate at grade with the exception of an underground segment beneath Van Nuys Boulevard from just north of Parthenia Street south to Hart Street. Fourteen stations would be provided under the LRT Alternative. Both the Low-Floor LRT/Tram and LRT Alternatives would require a number of additional elements to support vehicle operations, including an overhead contact system, traction power substations, communications and signaling buildings, and a Maintenance and Storage Facility.

On June 28, 2018 the LACMTA Board of Directors formally identified a modified version of DEIS/DEIR Alternative 4-LRT as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). The LPA eliminated the 2.5-mile subway portion of Alternative 4 in favor of an entirely at-grade alignment. The subway was eliminated because it would be very expensive, have significant construction impacts including right-of-way acquisitions, and would result in little time savings compared with a fully at-grade alignment. The factors that were considered by Metro in identifying a modified version of Alternative 4 as the LPA included: the greater capacity of LRT compared to the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) alternatives, the LPA could be constructed in less time and at reduced cost compared to the DEIS/DEIR Alternative 4, would result in fewer construction impacts compared to DEIS/DEIR Alternative 4, and strong community support for a rail alternative. The LACMTA Board of Directors based its selection of the LPA upon the data presented in the DEIS/DEIR, as well as comments received from agencies and individuals during the public review period.

Environmentally Preferable Alternative

The "environmentally preferable alternative" is the alternative required by 40 CFR Part 1505.2(a)(2) to be identified that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment and best protects, preserves, and enhances historical, cultural, and natural resources.

FTA determined that the LPA is the environmentally preferable alternative when the alternatives were weighted and balanced in terms of their environmental effects. The LPA would result in unavoidable adverse effects after implementation of mitigation measures in the following resource areas: traffic and bicycle facilities, land use, community and neighborhood, visual and aesthetics, noise, safety and security, and parklands and community facilities. However, the locally preferred alternative would also result in long-term operational benefits including increased transit ridership, decreased regional vehicle-miles traveled, reduced regional criteria pollutant emissions, and decreased greenhouse gas emissions. LACMTA will continue to consult and coordinate with local agencies throughout the final Design Phase for appropriate mitigation as needed. In addition, the LPA would increase transit system connectivity in the Los Angeles County region, improve transit reliability, and improve access to San Fernando Valley employment opportunities. This would benefit environmental justice populations who live and work near the corridor.

The No Build alternative would lack the environmental benefits and transportation benefits of the ESFVTC LPA. The No Build alternative would result in greater traffic congestion, especially on the Van Nuys corridor, resulting in longer travel times. Therefore, in consideration of the damage to the physical environment and the long-term benefits to environmental resources, particularly air quality, the ESFVTC LPA is the environmentally preferably alternative.

Description of the Project

The Project, i.e., the LPA, consists of a 9.2-mile, at- grade LRT with 14 stations. Under the Project, the LRT would be powered by electrified overhead lines and would travel 2.5 miles along the LACMTA-owned right-of-way used by the Antelope Valley Metrolink line and Union Pacific Railroad from the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station south to Van Nuys Boulevard. As the Project approaches Van Nuys Boulevard, it would transition to and operate in a median dedicated guideway in the median of Van Nuys Boulevard for approximately 6.7 miles south to the Metro G Line Van Nuys Station. The Project would include 14 stations. Maintenance and Storage Facility (MSF) Option B would be constructed as the preferred MSF site located on the west side of Van Nuys Boulevard on approximately 25 acres is bounded by Keswick Street on the south, Raymer Street on the east and north, and the Pacoima Wash on the west. The Project is anticipated to operate with a 6-minute peak and 12-minute off-peak headways when it opens and is projected to operate at 5-minute peak and 10-minute off-peak once ridership begins to increase. Additional details regarding the Project characteristics, components, and facilities are discussed below.

In addition, to ensure the objectives of the project were met in a timely manner and to avoid delays due to the timing of funding availability, LACMTA proposed constructing the LPA in two phases, an Initial Operating Segment (IOS) or Phase 1, which consists of the portion of the

LPA alignment along Van Nuys Boulevard, and Phase 2, which includes the northern 2.5-mile segment of the LPA along the LACMTA owned railroad right-of-way. Accordingly, the IOS phasing was included in this FEIS/FEIR to enable LACMTA to realize potential cost savings, which would not otherwise occur under the LPA.

Vehicles

LRT vehicles would be similar to those currently used throughout the existing LACMTA LRT system. LACMTA's LRT system is designed to accommodate trains with up to three, 90-foot rail cars, for a total train length of 270 feet. Although LRT vehicles can operate at speeds of up to 65 mph in an exclusive guideway, operating at-grade along Van Nuys Boulevard, they would not exceed the posted speed limit of the adjacent roadway, which is 35 mph. The Project assumes a maximum speed of 65 mph when traveling within the LACMTA right-of-way adjacent to San Fernando Road. LRT vehicles could carry approximately 230 seated passengers and up to 400 passengers when standing passengers are included. The LRT train sets would be configured with a driver's cab at either end, similar to other LACMTA light rail trains, allowing them to run in either direction without the need to turn around at the termini.

Alignment

The Project alignment would have two tracks and would be fully separated from automobile traffic, except at signalized intersections or controlled at-grade crossings. Along and just east of San Fernando Road, from the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station south to Van Nuys Boulevard, the alignment would be located within the existing LACMTA-owned right-of-way currently used by Metrolink and Union Pacific Railroad. Metrolink and Union Pacific Railroad would continue to use a separate dedicated track.

From the intersection of San Fernando Road and Van Nuys Boulevard to the Metro G Line, the Project would operate in a semi-exclusive right-of-way in what is currently the median of Van Nuys Boulevard. The train would operate at prevailing traffic speeds and would be controlled by train signals that would coordinate with the traffic signals.

Stations

Stations would be constructed at approximately 3/4-mile intervals along the entire route. There would be 14 stations. The following stations are proposed under the Project:

1. Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station
2. Maclay Station
3. Paxton Station
4. Van Nuys/San Fernando Station
5. Laurel Canyon Station
6. Arleta Station
7. Woodman Station
8. Nordhoff Station
9. Roscoe Station
10. Van Nuys Metrolink Station
11. Sherman Way Station
12. Vanowen Station
13. Victory Station
14. Metro G Line Van Nuys Station

The proposed stations would have designs consistent with the Metro Rail Design Criteria (MRDC), including directive and standard drawings. Stations would be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant, including compliance with the requirements pertaining to rail platforms, rail station signs, public address systems, clocks, escalators, and track crossings, as described in Sections 8.10.5, 8.10.6, 8.10.7, 8.10.8, 8.10.9, and 8.10.10 of the 2010 ADA standards.

Common elements would include signage, maps, fixtures, furnishings, lighting, and communications equipment. All stations are proposed to have center platforms, allowing passengers to access trains traveling in either direction. Typically, at-grade station platforms are 270 feet long (to accommodate three-car trains), 39 inches high (to allow level boarding and full accessibility, in compliance with the ADA), and minimum 12.2 feet wide for side platforms to 16 feet wide for center platform stations.

Canopies at the LRT stations would be approximately 13 feet high and would incorporate directional station lighting to enhance safety. Stations would include seating elements and contain ticket vending machines, variable message signs, route maps, and fare gates, as well as the name and location of the LRT station. In addition, LACMTA is moving to a fare gate system and such a system would be integrated into station design as appropriate.

Stations would also include bicycle parking and bike lockers at or near stations, as feasible. In addition, signage and safety and security equipment, such as closed-circuit televisions, public announcement systems, passenger assistance telephones, and variable message signs (providing real-time information), would be part of the amenities.

Supporting Facilities

The Project would require a number of additional elements to support vehicle operations, including an Overhead Contact System (OCS), Traction Power Substations (TPSS), communications and signaling buildings, and a Maintenance and Storage Facility (MSF).

Maintenance and Storage Facility

The Project would include construction of a new MSF, which would provide secure storage of the LRT vehicles when they are not in operation, and regular light maintenance to keep them clean and in good operating condition as well as heavy maintenance.

MSF Option B, as described in the DEIS/DEIR, was identified as the locally preferred site by the LACMTA Board. The MSF site would be approximately 25 acres in size. The MSF would be located on the west side of Van Nuys Boulevard and would be bounded by Keswick Street on the south, Raymer Street on the east and north, and the Pacoima Wash on the west. Access to the facility would be via two turnout tracks on the west side of the alignment. A northbound turnout would be located in the vicinity of Saticoy Street. A southbound turnout would be located in the vicinity of Keswick Street.

The MSF would accommodate both operational and administrative functions. The MSF would accommodate all levels of vehicle service and maintenance (i.e., progressive maintenance, scheduled maintenance, unscheduled repairs, warrantee service, and limited heavy maintenance) in addition to storage space for vehicles. The typical MSF would provide interior and exterior vehicle cleaning, sanding, and inspection areas; maintenance and repair shops; storage yards for vehicles; and storage areas for materials, tools, and spare vehicle parts. The storage yard would be the point of origin and termination for daily service.

The MSF would serve as the "home base" for the operators. Space would be provided for staff offices, dispatcher workstations, employee break rooms and/or lunchrooms, operator areas with lockers, showers and restrooms, and employee and visitor parking.

The MSF would include collision/body repair areas, enclosed paint booths, and wheel truing (the profiling of wheels to ensure the proper wheel to rail interface) machines. The MSF would also include maintenance-of-way, signals and communications, and traction power functions that would be housed in separate and smaller buildings.

The MSF site would accommodate the maximum number of LRT vehicles required for service and also allow for future expansion of transit service and vehicle maintenance and storage.

Overhead Contact System

The overhead contact system (OCS) is a network of overhead wires that distributes electricity to tram or light rail vehicles. An OCS would include steel poles placed within the right-of-way to support the overhead wires above the light rail vehicles. A telescoping pantograph or "arm" on the roof of LRT vehicles would slide along the underside of the contact wire and deliver electric power to the vehicles. The OCS poles would be approximately 30 feet tall and typically located every 90 to 170 feet between the two tracks or in some locations where street width dictates, may be on the sidewalk.

Traction Power Substations

The Traction Power Substations (TPSS) are electrical substations that would be typically placed at approximate ¾ mile intervals. The LRT vehicles would be powered by approximately 14 TPSS units (including one at the MSF), which would be spaced relatively evenly along the alignment to provide direct current to the LRT vehicles. The TPSS would be located at points along the alignment where maximum power draw is expected (such as at stations and on inclines). In the event that one TPSS needs to be taken offline, the LRT vehicles would continue to operate. The MSF would also have its own designated TPSS.

Communications and Signaling Buildings

Communications and signaling buildings that contain train control and communications equipment would be located at each station, crossover, and at-grade crossing.

Operations

The proposed LRT is anticipated to operate with a 6-minute peak and 12-minute off-peak headways when it opens and is projected to operate at 5-minute peak and 10-minute off-peak once ridership begins to increase. Adjacent and connecting bus lines would be evaluated and headways would be revised depending upon train schedule and demand.

Parking Loss and Travel Lane Loss

Parking Loss

With implementation of the Project, all curbside parking would be prohibited along Van Nuys Boulevard.

Travel Lane Loss

The number of travel lanes on Van Nuys Boulevard would be reduced from three to two lanes in each direction for the segment between the Metro G Line and Parthenia Street. North of that point, the Project would maintain two existing travel lanes in each direction to Laurel Canyon Boulevard and the existing one northbound lane and two southbound lanes along Van Nuys Boulevard from Laurel Canyon Boulevard to San Fernando Road.

Turning Restrictions

Left turns from Van Nuys Boulevard onto cross streets would be maintained at most of the currently signalized intersections where the LRT would be running in the median. All crossings of the alignment would be controlled by a traffic signal. Motorists who desire to make a left turn where it is no longer allowed would have to make a U-turn at a signalized left-turn location or choose a route that would allow them to use a signalized cross street.

Under the Project, the intersections with turning restrictions is refined as follows:

- Pinney Street & San Fernando Road (Closed via a cul de sac);
- Van Nuys Boulevard & El Dorado Avenue (southbound left only);
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Tamarack Avenue;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Telfair Avenue;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Cayuga Avenue;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Oneida Avenue;

- Van Nuys Boulevard & Haddon Avenue;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Omelveny Avenue;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Amboy Avenue;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Rincon Avenue;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Remick Avenue;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Vena Avenue;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Bartee Avenue (northbound left only);
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Lev Avenue;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Arleta Avenue (southbound left only);
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Beachy Avenue (southbound left only and pedestrian crossings);
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Canterbury Avenue;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Woodman Avenue (southbound left only);
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Vesper Avenue (northbound left only);
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Novice Street;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Gledhill Street;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Vincennes Street;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Osborne Street;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Rayen Street;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Parthenia Street (southbound left only);
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Lorne Street;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Blythe Street;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Michaels Street;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Keswick Street (southbound left only);
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Covello Street;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Wyandotte Street;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Gault Street (pedestrian crossing only); Van Nuys Boulevard & Hart Street;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Hartland Street (pedestrian crossing only);
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Archwood Street;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Haynes Street;
- Van Nuys Boulevard and Hamlin Street;

- Van Nuys Boulevard & Gilmore Street;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Friar Street;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Erwin Street;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Delano Street;
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Calvert Street; and
- Van Nuys Boulevard & Bessemer Street.

Bicycle Facilities

When feasible, bicycle parking would be provided at or near LACMTA stations, as required by MRDC. The existing bike lanes, which extend approximately two miles north along Van Nuys Boulevard from Parthenia Street to Beachy Avenue and from Laurel Canyon Boulevard to San Fernando Road, would be removed due to right-of-way constraints.

The City of Los Angeles constructed a bicycle path within the LACMTA's railroad right-of-way parallel to San Fernando Road. This existing Class I bike path would remain in place except in the City of San Fernando where the bike path would be relocated east in order to accommodate the relocated single Metrolink/UPRR track. The LACMTA right-of-way is generally wide enough to allow the bicycle path to remain alongside a pair of LRT tracks and relocated track for Metrolink and the Union Pacific Railroad, though some partial takes of adjacent properties would be required in the City of San Fernando.

Accessibility

Pedestrian Access

There would be a pedestrian overcrossing or undercrossing at the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station from the LRT platform to the Metrolink platform. For other pedestrian crossings along the LACMTA right-of-way, the crossings would be controlled by pedestrian gates.

All current crosswalks at signal-controlled intersections would be maintained. Between the signalized intersections, a barrier would be installed to prevent uncontrolled pedestrian crossings, as is LACMTA's current practice on its median-running LRT lines. Pedestrians would be required to walk to a signalized location to cross Van Nuys Boulevard. LRT passengers would reach the median station platforms from crosswalks at signalized intersections.

Vehicular Access

Vehicular access along Van Nuys Boulevard that would cross the LRT alignment would be limited to signalized crossings. All other streets or driveways would become right turns into and out of Van Nuys Boulevard.

Right-of-Way

Construction of the Project (MSF, stations, tracks, and TPSS) would require 100 property acquisitions, which includes 68 full acquisitions, 30 partial acquisitions, one LACMTA-owned property, and one vacant alley. Most of the acquisitions that would be required are commercial or industrial properties though up to four acquisitions of single-family residences could also be required.

The LACMTA is the owner and operator of a mostly 100-foot-wide railroad right-of-way through the Pacoima community, City of San Fernando, and Sylmar community that currently has a single track down the center of the corridor, with some sidings, and a bike path. The track is operated by the Southern California Regional Rail Authority for Metrolink commuter rail service and is also utilized by the Union Pacific Railroad. Within the Pacoima community of the City of Los Angeles, the 100-foot width could accommodate two LRT tracks, one commuter and freight rail track, and the existing bike path. To provide sufficient room for the LRT tracks, the existing single rail track would be removed from the center of the corridor and replaced with a single track along the corridor's eastern edge to serve commuter and freight rail operations. The right-of-way could accommodate a center platform LRT station near Paxton Street and Maclay Avenue.

At the Pacoima Wash, north of SR-118, a pair of new bridges would be needed, one for the LRT tracks, and the other for the commuter/freight rail track. These bridges would lie alongside the existing San Fernando Road Bridge and the newly constructed bike path bridge. The available right-of-way within the City of San Fernando is relatively narrow. From Jesse/Wolfskill Street to a point approximately 1,000 feet north of Maclay Avenue, the right-of-way widths generally range from 60 feet to 80 feet. As a consequence, property acquisitions would most likely be required to construct the Project within this stretch of the project alignment because of the relatively constrained existing right-of-way. Acquisition of properties would also be required for the placement of the TPSS units at approximately ¾-mile intervals along the alignment, as well as at the San Fernando Road and Van Nuys Boulevard intersection.

Gated LRT Grade Crossings

For the portion of the Project alignment within the LACMTA-owned railroad right-of-way, the grade crossings at Paxton Street, Wolfskill Street, Brand Boulevard, Maclay Avenue, and Hubbard Avenue would be controlled by traditional vehicular crossing gates. The current single-track crossings would become three.

There would be pedestrian gates for at-grade street crossings, in addition to the traditional vehicular crossing gates that exist at Paxton Street, Wolfskill Street, Brand Boulevard, Maclay Avenue, and Hubbard Avenue.

There would also be left-turn lane gates, where feasible, at signalized intersections along Van Nuys Boulevard where left turns are permitted across the LRT dedicated guideway. The gates would be activated whenever a train approaches the intersection to enhance safety at these locations.

Basis for Decision

The FTA weighed the ability of project alternatives to meet the purpose and need, the environmental effects of the alternatives, and the comments from the public agencies. The FTA has reviewed the public and agency comments on the DEIS/DEIR, FEIS/FEIR, and the transcripts of the hearings. Attachment B to this ROD includes a summary of comments received on the FEIS/FEIR and responses to comments during the public circulation period.

Based on these factors, the FTA has determined that the Project meets the purpose and need of the proposed action as outlined in Chapter 1 of the FEIS/FEIR and as discussed below.

Improve mobility in the eastern San Fernando Valley by introducing an improved north-south transit connection between key transit hubs/routes: The Project would provide a connection to the Metrolink Antelope Valley Line at the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink station on the north and the Metro G Line Van Nuys Station on the south. The Project would also include a station along Van Nuys Boulevard at Saticoy Street immediately south of the Metrolink Van Nuys Station along the Metrolink Ventura Line.

Provide new service and/or infrastructure that improves passenger mobility and enhances transit accessibility/connectivity for residents within the project study area to local and regional destinations and activity centers: The Project would construct a new LRT line that would connect the communities along the corridor and provide access to government services at the Van Nuys Civic Center) and other important community centers and facilities including The Village at Sherman Oaks, Sherman Oaks Hospital, Panorama Mall, Whiteman Airport, Van Nuys Airport, Mission Community Hospital, Kaiser Permanente Hospital, Van Nuys Auto Row, and several schools, youth centers, and recreational centers.

Increase transit service efficiency (speeds and passenger throughput) in the project study area: The Project would construct a new LRT line along a corridor that experiences substantial congestion and low vehicle speeds. As congestion continues to increase, the reliability of bus service in the corridor will worsen. The Project would provide increased transit capacity and faster, more reliable service that would connect the communities along the corridor

Provide more reliable transit service within the eastern San Fernando Valley: The Project would provide an LRT line with 14 stations along a 9.2-mile alignment located within a semi-exclusive right-of-way in the median of Van Nuys Boulevard and within the LACMTA railroad right-of-way. Trains would operate with 6-minute peak and 12-minute off-peak headways when it opens and would operate with 5-minute peak and 10-minute off-peak headways once ridership begins to increase. The LRT line would replace existing Metro Rapid Line service along the corridor that is adversely affected by existing traffic congestion resulting in longer travel time and slower speeds.

Provide additional transit options in an area with a large transit dependent population, including the disabled, and high transit ridership: The concentration of persons without private transportation, and the number of adults below the poverty line within the corridor are expected to remain higher than County averages. The Project would provide increased transit capacity and faster, more reliable service to the large transit dependent population in the corridor.

Encourage modal shift to transit in the eastern San Fernando Valley, thereby improving air quality: Standards for many of the criteria pollutants monitored within the eastern San Fernando Valley have been exceeded multiple times during each of the previous three years of collected data (2009 – 2011). The traffic analysis indicates that travel speeds, vehicular delay and congestion will worsen by 2040. This will result in increased gas consumption and vehicle emissions in the project study area.

The increase in delay at the study intersections is expected to increase vehicle emissions and fuel consumption. The Project would increase transit ridership and reduce vehicle miles traveled in the Project study area, which would have the benefit of reducing regional criteria pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions.

Make transit service more environmentally beneficial through reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in the Project study area: The Project would result in increased transit ridership and a reduction in vehicle miles traveled that would have the beneficial effect of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Public Involvement and Outreach

Chapter 7 Public Agency and Outreach of the FEIS/FEIR describes the extensive outreach to the public and federal, state, and local agencies that occurred during the alternatives analysis (AA), preliminary design, and environmental planning phases of the Project. A variety of notification tools were used by LACMTA during the Project phases including: direct mail and email notification; press releases; newspaper display ads and online ads; meetings with cities, chambers of commerce, councils of governments, and educational institutions; stakeholder briefings; placement of posters at key locations along the corridor; placement of notices and announcements on the project website; social media – Facebook and Twitter; online blogs; city and chamber newspapers; city cable channels; door-to-door canvassing, and information booths at various community events. Through the use of traditional and innovative outreach methods, the outreach activities have yielded comments on the DEIS/DEIR and FEIS/FEIR from approximately 1,080 members of the public, organizations, elected officials, and public agencies; LACMTA has hosted and presented at more than 100 meetings, sharing project information with more than 2,900 participants. LACMTA's outreach effort was guided by the Metro Equity Platform Framework adopted by the LACMTA Board in February 2018, ensuring outreach includes meaningful engagement with historically underserved communities.

On March 1, 2013, LACTMA distributed a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to advise interested agencies and the public that LACTMA intended to prepare an EIS/EIR for the Project. The LACTMA distributed the NOP to approximately 116 agencies, elected officials, and interested parties and organizations in the Project study area. During the 65-day public scoping period, LACMTA hosted six scoping meetings, including four public scoping meetings, an elected officials briefing, and one agency scoping meeting. In addition to the official scoping meetings, LACMTA also participated in various City and stakeholder events, as requested by the respective groups, to enhance the outreach effort and increase awareness during the scoping period.

During the 65-day scoping period, LACMTA accepted oral comments at the scoping meetings and written comments via the project helpline, on meeting comment cards, via letters and emails, social media comments via Facebook and Twitter, and electronic comments via the LACMTA project website. A total of over 400 oral and/or written public comments were received from agencies and the public, including elected officials, residents, grassroots organizations, chambers of commerce, developers, hospitals, agencies, educational institutions, and businesses.

Outside of the scoping period and during preparation of the technical reports and DEIS/DEIR, LACMTA hosted three additional community meetings and nine focus group meetings to elicit feedback from the various business owners and employees along the Van Nuys Boulevard corridor.

The Notice of Availability (NOA) for the DEIS/DEIR was published in the Federal Register on September 1, 2017 (*Federal Register, Vol. 82, No. 169*) and was distributed to 116 agencies, elected officials, and interested parties and organizations. During the 60-day public review period, five public hearings were held to receive written and oral comments on the DEIS/DEIR. The LACMTA provided notice of the public hearings and availability of the DEIS/DEIR using a variety of notification strategies including display advertisements in English and Spanish in local newspapers; email notification; press releases to local and regional print, broadcast, and online English and Spanish media outlets; and placement of notices in LACMTA buses, on the project website, in Los Angeles Council District offices, the City of San Fernando City Hall, and in local schools, libraries, and churches.

Copies of the DEIS/DEIR were made available on the LACMTA project website and were placed in local libraries and at City of San Fernando, City of Los Angeles, and LACMTA offices.

During the 60-day public review period, approximately 840 letters, emails, and comment cards were received containing approximately 1,320 comments. Approximately 60 individuals provided verbal comments during public testimony at the five public hearings.

The FEIS/FEIR NOA was published in the Federal Register on October 2, 2020 (*Federal Register, Vol. 85, No. 192*) and English and Spanish versions of the NOA were distributed to approximately 115 agencies, elected officials, and interested parties and organizations in the Project study area. The NOA was also published in four local newspapers including in Spanish in the local Spanish language newspaper and an eblast announcing the availability of the FEIS/FEIR and two public information meetings was sent to over 4,000 individuals included in LACMTA's project stakeholder database. The NOA and electronic copies of the FEIS/FEIR were also mailed to 17 public agencies that submitted comments on the DEIS/DEIR and an electronic version of the FEIS/FEIR was made available on LACTMA's project website.

The FEIS/FEIR was made available for public review from October 2, 2020 to November 2, 2020. However, the public comment period was extended to November 17, 2020 (an additional 15 days) in response to requests from elected officials and members of the public for additional time to review the FEIS/FEIR. Emails and letters were received from approximately 180 individuals, organizations, and public agencies (one federal, two state, and six local), containing over 250 public comments on the document. A summary of the comments received, as well as LACMTA's responses to the comments are provided within Attachment B.

Determination and Findings

Based on the current impacts of the recent social response to the COVID-19 virus and the resulting decline in travel demand, it is impossible to predict any future changes to the Determination and Findings of the Project that may result from a COVID-19 response of an unpredictable nature and length. Should significant changes in the planning assumptions, project schedule, project scope, or surrounding project environment result because of a prolonged COVID-19 response, LACMTA will consider additional project evaluation and public input consistent with NEPA and CEQA.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

Within the project study area, there are 15 individual properties that were previously recorded as historic properties/historical resources that are currently extant. Three of the 15 properties are located within the Area of Potential Effect (APE). They are indicated with an asterisk (*) in Table 4.16-1 in the FEIS/FEIR and described in additional detail in the text that follows the table. Of the 15 previously recorded resources, two individual properties are listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) and local landmark programs; two individual properties are listed in the CRHR only; six properties are listed on the CRHR and local landmark programs, and three are designated at the local level as Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monuments (LA HCMs). Two properties were identified as appearing to be eligible as part of a previous study, including the San Fernando Road and the San Fernando Road Bridge over Pacoima Wash. Additionally, 15 individual properties previously recorded through the City of Los Angeles' SurveyLA citywide survey and another 21 properties identified as a result of surveys conducted for the Project are also located within the APE. The Project would have no adverse effect on any of the individual historic properties within the APE.

Within the Project study area, there are two previously recorded historic districts. The previously recorded historic districts include the Van Nuys Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ), which is locally designated by the City of Los Angeles, and the Panorama City Historic District, which is recorded as eligible for listing in the NRHP and is listed in the CRHR. Neither district is located within the APE. The Project would not adversely affect these districts.

The Project would involve shallow excavation during platform construction in the median, station upgrades, and sidewalk widening. Archaeological sites 19-001124 and 19-002681 are both located in the footprint of the Project. Neither resource is considered eligible for the CRHR or NRHP. However, the immediate resource areas are still considered sensitive for containing previously undiscovered archaeological resources. Consequently, the SHPO concurred in an October 19, 2020 letter to the FTA with a Finding of No Adverse Effect with Conditions. A Cultural Resources Monitoring and Data Recovery Plan (CRMDRP) (see Attachment D) has been prepared that identifies the construction monitoring, discovery, treatment, evaluation, and data recovery procedures for the two archaeological sites. Additionally, implementation of Mitigation Measures MM AR-2 and MM AR-3 listed in the MMRP (included as Attachment A), would avoid or reduce potential impacts on these archaeological resources.

As part of ongoing consultation with the Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians (FTBMI), the CRMDRP was forwarded to Jairo Avila of FTBMI in August of 2020 and a phone consultation was conducted with FTBMI, FTA, and LACTMA and its consultants on September 16, 2020 to review the CRMDRP. During the call and in a follow up 9/23/2020 email from FTA to FTBMI, FTBMI's questions regarding construction monitoring including the extent of monitoring and number of monitors, the procedures for disposition of cultural artifacts discovered during construction, and the role of the tribe as a consulting party through design and construction phases of the Project were addressed.

On October 13, 2020 in response to public release of the FEIS/FEIR, Walter Davis of LACMTA received a voicemail message from the Tribal Chair, Robert Dorame, of the Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council and a follow-up email from Ms. Christina Conley (Cultural Resources Administrator) expressing an interest in being updated and involved with cultural resources compliance for the Project. On November 6, 2020, FTA sent letters on to Mr. Dorame and Ms. Christina Conley detailing the cultural resources status and previous consultation processes that had been conducted for the Project. The letter also requested that the tribe review and provide comments on the CRMDRP within 30 days of receipt of the document.

Consultation with Native American Tribes will continue as the Project moves forward and as planning for future archaeological monitoring is conducted.

Air Quality Conformity

The Project is an electrically powered mass transit system that would increase regional transit ridership and decrease motor vehicle miles traveled and vehicle hours traveled within and outside the Project study area and, as a consequence, would result in reductions in regional criteria pollutant emissions relative to the No-Build Alternative.

The Project (LPA) has been incorporated into the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) 2019 Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) under project ID LA0G1301. The 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/ Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) was found by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and FTA to be in conformity with the State Implementation Plan (SIP) on June 1, 2016. The 2019 FTIP was found to be in conformity with the SIP on December 17, 2018.

The Project is not considered a Project of Air Quality Concern as defined in USEPA's Transportation Conformity Guidance. That determination was made by members of SCAG's Transportation Conformity Working Group at its meeting on October 22, 2019. Therefore, the Project does not require quantitative dispersion modeling for particulate matter (PM) and project-level (PM) conformity determination requirements are satisfied.

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 USC § 303)

The Project would not result in a use of Section 4(f) protected parks, recreational areas, wildlife refuges, or historic properties. The Project would not require any permanent incorporation of land from any of the public parks and recreational facilities considered Section 4(f) properties.

No construction staging and/or construction easement would be required from any of the identified Section 4(f) properties. No proximity impacts would be experienced at any of the Section 4(f) resources along the alignment.

No portion of an historic property would be permanently incorporated into the Project. Construction and operation of the Project would not result in adverse effects on the historic properties or archaeological sites within the APE, and none of the elements of these resources that contribute to their eligibility would be disturbed. Therefore, no Section 4(f) use of any historic property would occur as a result of the Project

Endangered Species Act

The Project area is already disturbed due to urban development and infrastructure including sidewalks, buildings, roadways, parking areas, retail businesses, etc. Consequently, no habitat for special-status plant species exists and no special-status plant species are expected to occur within the Project study area.

Three special-status bat species, pallid bat (Antrozous pallidus), western yellow bat (Lasiurus xanthinus), and big free-tailed bat (Nyctinomops macrotis), were judged to have at least some reasonable potential for occurrence within the biological resources project study area. The existing bridges over the Pacoima Wash, Pacoima Diversion Canal, and East Canyon Creek; the existing overpasses at I-5, State Route 118, and the Union Pacific Railroad (on Van Nuys Boulevard); and the adjacent vegetation (in particular, palm trees and trees with cavities, crevices, exfoliating bark, and bark fissures) may support roosting habitat for special-status bat species though no bats or signs of bats (i.e., urine staining and guano droppings) were visually observed during field surveys conducted for EIS/EIR.

The Project would require removal of existing median islands, road widening in other areas, and construction of new LRT stations, TPSS, and an MSF, which would be constructed west of Van Nuys Boulevard and south of the Metrolink railroad right-of-way and Raymer Street. Construction of these improvements would require removal of trees potentially affecting nesting birds and/or tree roosting bats. Additionally, two bridge upgrades are proposed for this alternative: one bridge at Van Nuys Boulevard where it crosses over the Pacoima Diversion Canal, and one adjacent to San Fernando Road as it crosses over the Pacoima Wash. The existing bridges could be used by nesting birds and/or bat species. Construction would also result in increases in noise, movement, and vibration at the bridges over the Pacoima Wash, the Pacoima Diversion Canal, and East Canyon Creek and the existing overpasses at I 5, State Route 118, and the Union Pacific Railroad (on Van Nuys Boulevard). As a consequence, the Project could adversely affect nesting birds or roosting bats if construction activities remove vegetation where nesting birds are present or affect structures or vegetation used by special-status bat species. Proposed Mitigation Measures BIO-1 and BIO-2 (see Attachment 1), would reduce potential impacts to non-adverse under NEPA.

Sections 402, 404, and 408 of the Clean Water Act

The Project would comply with Title III and Tile IV of the Clean Water Act and the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) standards during and following construction. The Project would include preparation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that includes the identification and implementation of applicable Best Management Practices (BMPs) to control erosion and to ensure that construction materials and/or pollutants are not discharged into surface waters or into areas that would eventually drain into storm drains. The SWPPP also includes a monitoring program to ascertain the effectiveness of the prescribed BMPs.

The construction and permanent BMPs included as part of the Project would be developed and implemented in compliance with RWQCB and LACMTA storm water standards and would be developed in cooperation with the City of Los Angeles and the County of Los Angeles. Prior to approval of grading permits, an appropriate drainage control plan, such as a Standard Urban Storm Water Mitigation Plan (SUSMP) would be implemented. The Project would not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern and no stream or river would be altered. Currently, stormwater drains to a major storm drains that cross the Van Nuys Boulevard and San Fernando Road corridors. These storm drains discharge into the Pacoima Wash Channel and Pacoima Wash Control Channel, which also cross the Project corridor. Under the Project, stormwater would continue to drain into existing storm drain lines and according to SUSMP requirements, the drainage design would limit the design water surface elevations and velocities to no greater than the existing conditions or to what can be handled by the existing conditions within the project area. Therefore, drainage would remain the same as existing conditions and no substantial erosion, siltation, or flooding would occur on- or offsite as a result of the Project.

The Project would require upgrades to two bridges that cross concrete-lined channels containing trace amounts of vegetation, including portions of the Sepulveda Flood Control Basin, and the Hansen Flood Control Basin. No mitigation measures are required as no construction would occur within these channels and it's not anticipated that temporary or permanent impacts would occur that would require a Section 404 permit and Section 401 Certification. However, the Project may require Section 408 permission from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers due to construction activities that could require alterations or impacts to the Sepulveda Flood Control Basin, and the Hansen Flood Control Basin Corps facilities. These impacts or alterations are not expected to be injurious to the public interest or impair the usefulness of the Corps facilities.

No impacts to Waters of the United States (WoUS) are expected to occur. However, if construction activities do affect WoUS, permitting under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act may be required, most likely in the form of a Nationwide Permit 14 if project-related impacts on WoUS are less than 0.5 acre. Effects on WoUS would also trigger the need for a Section 401 Certification, issued by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Acquisition of these permits would ensure compliance with the Clean Water Act (Section 401 and 404).

If permanent impacts on WoUS streambeds are unavoidable, compensatory mitigation may be required under section 401 and 404 of the CWA. This is expected to be required at a minimum 1:1 ratio. Final compensatory mitigation will be determined during the aquatic permitting process.

In addition, temporary impacts would be required to be restored to pre-project conditions at the location of these impacts. Impacts on WoUS would not be adverse under NEPA after compliance with regulatory permit requirements and implementation of mitigation measure.

Executive Order 11988: Floodplain Management

A portion of the Project is located within a 100-year flood zone. However, the 100-year flood zone areas within the Project study area are fully contained within County flood channels and drainage facilities. No construction is proposed in these 100-year flood zones; therefore, construction of the Project would not place structures that would impede or redirect flood flows as mapped on any flood hazard delineation map.

There are no levees located within the Project study area, and therefore no flood impacts associated with levee failure would occur that could affect construction activities, workers, or equipment. The Project, however, would be located in a dam failure inundation zone area, as identified in Section 4.13 of the FEIS/FEIR. Portions of the Sepulveda and Hansen Flood Control Basins (and the associated dams) are located in the Project study area. Therefore, the Project could be adversely affected if these dams fail. However, project construction activities would not increase the present risk of dam failure, which is considered low, and would not place construction workers, equipment, or temporary structures in an area where there is a significant risk and high probability of flooding.

Temporary drainage facilities could be required to redirect runoff from work areas. The temporary drainage facilities would be sized according to City standards to avoid any exceedance of the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems. As a consequence, overall drainage patterns would remain the same and construction activities are not expected to have a substantial effect on flood capacities due to temporary changes in drainage patterns or facilities. Therefore, the construction effects related to flooding and flood hazards would be non-adverse under NEPA.

Executive Order 12898: Environmental Justice

Within the Project study area, the population is comprised predominantly of Hispanic or Latino persons at 66.8 percent, which is 20.3 percent higher than the City of Los Angeles and two percent higher than the County of Los Angeles, based on 2010 Census data. Approximately 17.7 percent of households in the Project study area were below the poverty level, which was 0.9 percent lower than the City of Los Angeles and 2.6 percent higher than the County of Los Angeles (see Section 4.17 of the FEIS/FEIR for further details).

Adverse construction impacts (including traffic circulation, noise, and air quality impacts) would occur throughout the Project area and would affect all communities within the project area, with impacts on environmental justice communities not exceeding those on non-environmental justice communities. Thus, the Project would not result in disproportionately high and adverse construction effects on environmental justice communities.

To assess the types of potential displacements resulting from the Project, conceptual engineering plans for the proposed alignment, station options, and rights-of-way were reviewed. The majority of the Project alignment would be constructed in the median of an existing roadway and would not require the displacement of businesses or residences along the majority of the project corridor. As detailed in Section 4.2 - Real Estate and Acquisition of the FEIS/FEIR, some areas of the Project, however, would require commercial or light industrial property acquisitions to accommodate the LRT facilities. Most of the acquisitions that would be required to construct the Project would occur as a result of the construction of the MSF.

The Project, including the stations, TPSS, and MSF would require the full or partial acquisition of 100 parcels. The majority of the acquisitions would affect light manufacturing and commercial properties, which contain businesses oriented toward automobile repair and supplies or raw materials supply and manufacturing. Project acquisitions, however, could include up to four single-family residences. These businesses are located in a predominantly low-income and minority neighborhood and could be supported by owners, workers, or customers from low-income or minority block groups that could be affected by the economic changes or job losses associated with these displacements. Therefore, the displacement impacts of the Project would be predominantly borne by an environmental justice population.

Although the displacement impacts described above would be predominantly borne by environmental justice populations, all communities within the project study area would be affected and the impacts suffered by the environmental justice populations would not be appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude than the adverse effects that would be suffered by the non-environmental justice populations. Additionally, relocation assistance and compensation in accordance with federal and state regulations would be provided for all displaced businesses. With implementation of compliance and mitigation measures and given that the Project would provide improved transit service and connectivity in an area with large transit-dependent and environmental justice populations, the impacts on the environmental justice populations would not be disproportionately high and adverse.

Relocation assistance and compensation for all displaced businesses and residences would be provided, as required by the Uniform Act and the California Act. All real property to be acquired would be appraised to determine its fair market value. Just compensation, which shall not be less than the approved appraisal, would be made to each displaced property owner. Each business and residence displaced by the Project would be given advance written notice and would be informed of their eligibility for relocation assistance and payments under the Uniform Act.

The Project includes measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse effects, as set forth in the FEIS/FEIR and Attachment A of this ROD. FTA has concluded, in accordance with Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations, that EJ communities would not be subject to disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects as a result of the Project. Additionally, the Project would also result in new transit opportunities that are anticipated to result in improved connectivity and transit equity. Mitigation measures would reduce or minimize the adverse effects, where feasible.

MEASURES THAT MITIGATE ADVERSE EFFECTS

The Project incorporates all practical measures to minimize environmental harm. Those measures, which are commitments imposed under this Record of Decision(ROD) for the Project, are described in the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor Project Final Environmental Impact Statement/Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIS/FEIR), and are included in the Project's Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP) (Attachment A to this ROD) to ensure fulfillment of all environmental and related commitments. The MMRP brings together all the relevant environmental compliance measures into one document to efficiently track all avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures put forth in the FEIS/FEIR. The measures listed in the MMRP in Attachment A are provided to guide and facilitate Project design and construction. This list will also facilitate the monitoring and implementation of the mitigation measures. Any change in such commitments from the description in the FEIS/FEIR will require a review in accordance with 23 CFR Parts 771.129-130 and must be approved by the Federal Transit Administration.

RAYMOND S TELLIS

January 29, 2021

Ray Tellis
Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration, Region IX

Attachments:

Attachment A: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan

Attachment B: Summary of Comments on the FEIS/FEIR

Attachment C: Relevant Federal, State, and Local Agency Correspondence

Attachment D: Cultural Resources Monitoring and Data Recovery Plan