SCOPING SUMMARY REPORT

I-405 SEPULVEDA PASS EXPRESSLANES PROJECT

LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

EA: 354330

EFIS: 0720000070

March 2022

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Interstate 405 (I-405) Sepulveda Pass ExpressLanes Project (proposed Project) is being developed and undertaken by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), in coordination with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), District 7, as the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The proposed Project proposes to add ExpressLanes or additional high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes to the I-405 in the Sepulveda Pass, between Interstate 10 (I-10) in the south and U.S. Highway 101 (US-101) in the north, in Los Angeles County. The Project is proposed in order to reduce congestion, encourage carpooling and transit, improve trip reliability, reduce degradation of the carpool and general-purpose lanes, increase person throughput, and apply technology to help manage traffic.

It is anticipated that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared under CEQA and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under NEPA to address the environmental effects of the proposed Project. CEQA and NEPA both require public participation, and the scoping process is the first phase of gathering public input. Under NEPA, scoping is an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the potentially significant issues related to a proposed action. CEQA states that scoping is designed to examine a proposed project early in the environmental review process, and is intended to identify the range of issues pertinent to the project, including feasible alternatives or mitigation measures to avoid potentially significant environmental effects. Scoping is a way to solicit input about the purpose and need, the range of alternatives to be analyzed, and the scope of the analysis for the environmental document early in the project development process.

This report documents the various notification and outreach activities undertaken in order to increase project awareness and solicit input during the scoping period (August 3, 2021, through October 1, 2021). This report also provides a summary of the comments received during the scoping period.

The Project Development Team (PDT) undertook a wide variety of activities to raise public awareness of the Project and the scoping process. These activities included:

- Publication of a Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Notice of Intent (NOI)
- Distribution of the NOP and scoping notices
- Consultation and coordination activities under Assembly Bill (AB) 52 and 23 United States Code (USC) 139
- Newspaper advertisements
- E-blasts
- Text messaging
- Press releases and other media coverage
- Establishing a project website and interactive StoryMap
- Social media posts
- Public survey
- Holding virtual public and agency scoping meetings

During the public scoping period, 663 comment submissions were received. Those submissions were further broken down into individual comments. Of the 663 submissions, 626 were from individuals, 19 were from various organizations, 15 were from public agencies, 2 were from businesses, and 1 was from an elected official.

The comment content varied widely. The majority of comments were related to the range of alternatives, the various environmental topics, and the expression of support for transit in the Sepulveda Pass corridor.

Comments received during the scoping period will help to provide guidance on refining the Project alternatives to be analyzed in the EIR/EIS and the issues to be assessed in the technical studies and environmental document, as well as refinements to the outreach strategy and activities moving forward during project development.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AB	Assembly Bill
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
EIR/EIS	Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement
EJ	environmental justice
GHG	greenhouse gas
HOV	high-occupancy vehicle
I-10	Interstate 10
I-105	Interstate 105
I-110	Interstate 110
I-405	Interstate 405
Metro	Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NOI	Notice of Intent (to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement)
NOP	Notice of Preparation (of an Environmental Impact Report)
PDT	Project Development Team
ROW	right-of-way
SLF	Sacred Lands File
US-101	U.S. Highway 101
USC	United States Code
USPS	U.S. Post Office
VMT	vehicle miles traveled

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), in coordination with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 7, as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), has initiated project planning activities for the Interstate 405 (I-405) Sepulveda Pass ExpressLanes Project (proposed Project), located in Los Angeles County, California. The study area includes portions of the cities of Culver City, Los Angeles, and Santa Monica, and unincorporated areas in Los Angeles County. See Figure 1-1, below, for a map of the project area.

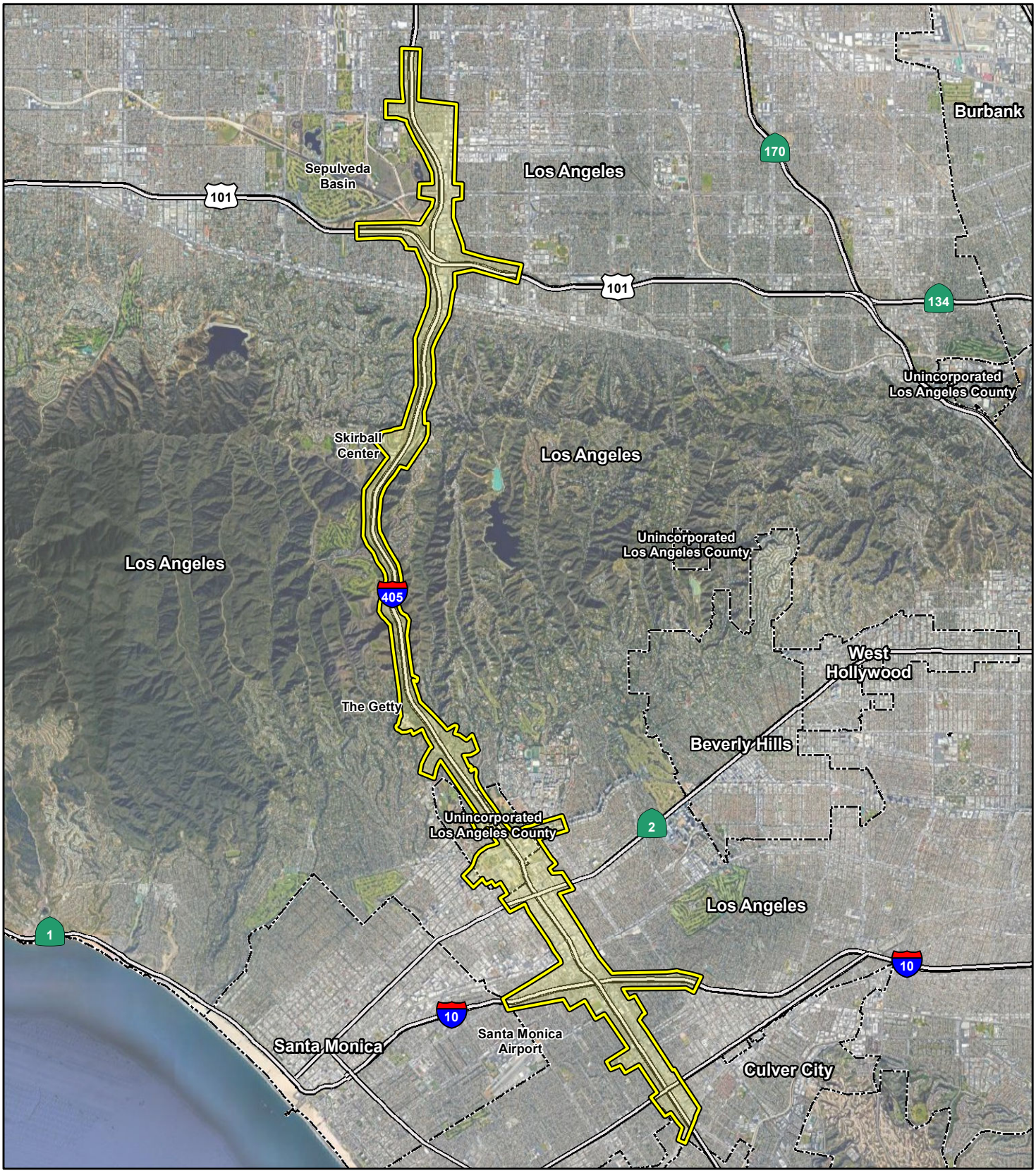
The Project proposes to improve traffic conditions on I-405 starting in the south at Interstate 10 (I-10) and terminating in the north at U.S. Highway 101 (US-101). The proposed Project intends to reduce congestion, encourage carpooling and transit, improve trip reliability, reduce degradation of the carpool and general-purpose lanes, increase person throughput, and apply technology to help manage traffic. The range of improvements may include, but is not limited to, converting existing high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes to ExpressLanes or adding an additional ExpressLane in each direction and converting existing HOV lanes to ExpressLanes.

The current set of alternatives under consideration includes the following:

Alternative 1: No Build Alternative. The No Build Alternative does not include improvements to the existing lanes along I-405.

Alternative 2: Convert Existing HOV to One ExpressLane (Standard Lane and Shoulder Widths). This build alternative would convert the existing HOV lane in each direction, along I-405 between I-10 and US-101, to an ExpressLane. The northbound and southbound directions of the freeway would be restriped within the existing footprint to accommodate one 12-foot wide ExpressLane with a 4-foot wide buffer separating the ExpressLane from the 12-foot wide general-purpose lanes. Dynamic pricing would be deployed in the ExpressLane to ensure trip reliability and traffic flow. Installation of toll and communication infrastructure and modification/installation of overhead signs would be required. Alternative 2 proposes to widen the freeway, where necessary, to accommodate an additional weave lane at ExpressLane ingress/egress locations and maintain stopping sight distance at curves. Non-standard inside shoulders would be maintained in a few locations where constraints exist, and standard 10-foot outside shoulders would be provided where possible. Retaining walls would be provided where required to minimize and avoid right-of-way (ROW) acquisition.

Other improvements include construction of retaining walls and sound walls, utility improvements, and drainage improvements.



LEGEND

Project Study Area

City Boundary

0 4400 8800

FEET

SOURCE: Google Maps (2021); WSP (4/21/2020)

I:\WSP2003\GIS\MXD\Project_Area.mxd (6/22/2021)

FIGURE 1-1

Interstate 405 (I-405) Sepulveda Pass Express Lanes Project

Project Study Area

07-LA-405-PM 29.5/39.8

EA 354330; EFIS 0720000070

Alternative 3: Convert Existing HOV Lane to Two ExpressLanes (Non-Standard Lane and Shoulder Widths). This build alternative would convert the existing HOV lane to an ExpressLane and add a second ExpressLane, in each direction between I-10 and US-101. The freeway would be widened and restriped to accommodate the two ExpressLanes with a buffer separating the ExpressLanes from the general-purpose lanes. Dynamic pricing would be deployed in the ExpressLanes to ensure trip reliability and traffic flow. Installation of toll and communication infrastructure and modification/ installation of overhead signs would be required. Alternative 3 proposes to widen the freeway to the outside in order to accommodate the proposed two-lane ExpressLanes facility as described. Non-standard lanes and shoulders would be provided to accommodate for the addition of the new ExpressLanes as part of Alternative 3. Retaining walls would be provided where required to minimize and avoid ROW acquisition.

The reduction of shoulder and lane widths allows for accommodation of the proposed two-lane ExpressLanes facility without substantial proposed roadway widening. However, in locations with the following conditions, additional roadway widening may be required:

- 12-foot-wide weaving lane at ExpressLanes ingress/egress locations
- Widening of inside/outside shoulders to maintain sight distance at curves

Other improvements include construction of retaining walls and sound walls, utility improvements, and drainage improvements.

Alternative 4: Convert Existing HOV Lane to Two ExpressLanes (Standard Lane and Shoulder Widths). This build alternative would convert the existing HOV lane, from I-10 and US-101, to an ExpressLane in each direction, and a second ExpressLane in each direction would also be added, while providing standard lane widths, shoulder widths and stopping sight distances. The freeway would be widened and restriped to accommodate the two ExpressLanes with a buffer separating the ExpressLanes from the general-purpose lanes. Dynamic pricing would be deployed in the ExpressLanes to ensure trip reliability and traffic flow. Installation of toll and communication infrastructure and modification/installation of overhead signs would be required. Alternative 4 proposes to widen the freeway to the outside in order to accommodate the proposed standard two-lane ExpressLane facility as described. Retaining walls would be provided where required to minimize and avoid ROW acquisition. Reconstruction of some existing freeway structures would be required to implement Alternative 4's standard roadway cross-section.

Other improvements include construction of retaining walls and sound walls, utility improvements, and drainage improvements.

Alternative 5: Add an Additional HOV Lane (Non-Standard Lane and Shoulder Widths). This build alternative would add an additional HOV lane, from I-10 and US-101, in each direction. The freeway would be widened and restriped to accommodate the two HOV lanes with a buffer separating the HOV lanes from the general-purpose lanes. Alternative 5 proposes to widen the freeway to the outside in order to accommodate the proposed two-lane HOV facility as described. Non-standard lanes and shoulders would be provided in order to accommodate the addition of the new HOV lane as part of Alternative 5. Retaining walls would be provided where required to minimize and avoid ROW acquisition. The reduction of shoulder and lane widths allows for accommodation of the

proposed two-lane HOV facility without substantial proposed roadway widening. However, in locations with the following conditions, additional roadway widening may be required:

- 12-foot-wide weaving lane at HOV ingress/egress locations
- Widening of inside/outside shoulders to maintain sight distance at curves

Other improvements include construction of retaining walls and sound walls, utility improvements, and drainage improvements.

1.2 PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

A Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) will be prepared for the proposed Project. The first step in preparing the Draft EIR/EIS is to conduct formal scoping in order to provide the general public and public agencies with preliminary project information in an effort to solicit input regarding the scope of the environmental analysis, the range of alternatives , potential mitigation measures, and the project's purpose and need. Both CEQA and NEPA encourage public participation during the preparation of a draft environmental document.

This Scoping Summary Report documents and summarizes the outreach activities that occurred prior to and during the formal scoping period for the proposed Project (beginning August 3, 2021, and ending on October 1, 2021). Section 2.0 of this report discusses the notification efforts conducted pursuant to CEQA and NEPA. In order to inform the general public and public agencies, many different forms of outreach were utilized in addition to the required notification under CEQA and NEPA; Section 3.0 discusses these outreach efforts. Section 4.0 provides information regarding the Efficient Environmental Review process codified at 23 United States Code (USC) 139 and the associated coordination efforts. Section 5.0 provides an overview of the scoping meetings held for the proposed Project, and Section 6.0 provides an overview of the comments received during the scoping period. Finally, Section 7.0 outlines the next steps in the project development process.

2.0 NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND NOTICE OF INTENT

The CEQA and NEPA scoping process for the proposed Project was initiated with the preparation and distribution of a Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (NOP), via mail and posting at the State Clearinghouse and the Los Angeles County Clerk, and the publication of a Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (NOI) in the Federal Register. Both the NOP and the NOI serve as the start of the CEQA and NEPA processes, respectively, and contain project and scoping information including the purpose of the proposed Project, the preliminary range of alternatives, and scoping meeting dates and times.

2.1 NOTICE OF PREPARATION

The NOP was posted to the State Clearinghouse on August 3, 2021, beginning the required 30-day review period under CEQA. The State Clearinghouse number assigned was 2021080037, which will be referenced in future CEQA filings. The State Clearinghouse posting is contained in Appendix A-1. The NOP was also posted at the Los Angeles County Clerk on August 2, 2021, and the Clerk posting is contained in Appendix A-2. In addition, the NOP was distributed via United States Postal Service (USPS) Priority Mail to elected officials, agency representatives, and interested parties, along with a brief letter from Caltrans notifying recipients of the initiation of scoping. A copy of that letter, its attachments, and the associated distribution list is contained in Appendix A-3. The NOP was also made available for public review on the project website at http://www.metro.net/405expresslanes.

During the scoping period, Metro and Caltrans made the decision to extend the formal scoping period an additional 30 days, ending on October 1, 2021. To provide widespread notice to elected officials, agency representatives, interested parties, and the general public, updates were provided via each of the methods by which the original noticing was provided. As such, a second mailing was distributed via USPS to a distribution list that was updated in the interim based on revised information regarding appropriate contacts, notifying recipients of the time extension. A copy of that letter and distribution list is contained in Appendix A-4. The State Clearinghouse posting was updated for consistency with the extended scoping period (Appendix A-5). Notification of the extension of the scoping period was also provided to the Los Angeles County Clerk.

2.1.1 Assembly Bill 52

Assembly Bill (AB) 52 is applicable to the project and requires public agencies to engage in consultation with tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area in which the project occurs. Caltrans' standard practice is to request a list of tribal contacts from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) for each individual project, based on a project area map. The list of contacts and results of the Sacred Lands File (SLF) search were not received until September 9, 2021. In order to remain compliant with the provisions of AB 52 that require lead agencies extend an invitation to consult within 14 days of the NOP, an initial mailing was sent to a preexisting list of contacts on August 16, 2021. That mailing and distribution list is contained in Appendix A-6. Following receipt of the contact list and SLF results from the NAHC, a second mailing was distributed on October 1, 2021. The information received from the NAHC, as well as the second mailing, is contained in Appendix A-7.

2.2 NOTICE OF INTENT

In compliance with 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1508.22, the NOI was published in the Federal Register on August 11, 2021. It was also made available for public review on the project website at http://www.metro.net/405expresslanes.

A revised NOI was published in the Federal Register extending the scoping comment period on September 7, 2021. Both the original and revised NOI publications are included in Appendices A-8 and A-9, respectively.

3.0 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS

In addition to the required notification under CEQA and NEPA, the Project Development Team (PDT), led by Metro Community Relations, undertook a comprehensive outreach program to increase awareness of the proposed Project and the scoping period. Some of the activities described in this section occurred prior to the commencement of the formal scoping period.

3.1 PUBLIC SURVEY

An 11-question online "icebreaker" survey was developed prior to the start of scoping to capture the attention of local Sepulveda Pass corridor communities and regional travelers as well as aid in refining technical assumptions about existing use and public need (see Appendix B-1). This qualitative survey cannot be considered a holistic representation of the total population of interest as research utilized a nonprobability sample; rather, survey findings offer subjective insight into public opinions and views and allow for the collection of a variety of data.

This survey was developed using SurveyMonkey, a proven and well-established online platform, that offers the greatest degree of accessibility for online users, supports a range of survey question types, and integrates well with existing online notification methods. To further reach and enhance participation, the survey was developed in both English and Spanish formats to engage corridor travelers. In addition, the Project helpline provided alternative language support so that community members could participate in the survey process without the need for online resources or the ability to communicate in either of the two primary project languages. Due to the lack of in-person activities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and evolving public health protocols, printed handout and other display format surveys were not used for this effort.

Survey questions sought to:

- Determine respondent geography,
- Establish travel patterns and corridor use,
- Assess travel satisfaction,
- Identify opportunities for travel improvement, and
- Receive new contact information.

This survey launched prior to scoping with the intention of stirring initial interest in the project and encouraging respondents to sign up for project updates by sharing their contact emails and mobile phone numbers. It was available to the public for a period of 44 days between Monday, July 26, 2021, and Thursday, September 7, 2021, first debuting in the Project awareness e-blast. As a motivation to spark participation prior to the start of scoping, individuals that responded by July 31 were entered into a drawing to win one of four $50 Target gift cards. The four drawing winners were randomly selected from the communities of Culver City, Sherman Oaks, Van Nuys, and West Los Angeles. A total of 1,591 respondent surveys were gathered and assessed as part of this initial engagement. Of the survey respondents, 792 chose to remain connected to the proposed Project by providing their contact email while another 364 offered their cell phone numbers as a means of receiving Project updates. These additional contacts were then folded into each subsequent e-blast and text

notification effort to encourage scoping meeting and comment participation, as well as engagement beyond the scoping phase.

3.2 NEWSPAPER ADS

The public notice advertising the availability of the NOP ran in three publications reaching across the Sepulveda Pass corridor (see Appendix B-2). There were two ads run in English and one in Spanish. The LA Daily News and the LA Sentinel ran the advertisement in English on August 3 and August 5, 2021, respectively; La Opinión ran the advertisement in Spanish on August 3, 2021.

3.3 E-BLASTS AND SMS TEXTS

Email notifications (e-blasts) were distributed prior to and during the comment period to send information directly to the following contacts included in the Project database (which is separate and more wide-ranging than the NOP/NOI distribution list), including:

- Elected Officials
- Elected Officials – Staff
- Emergency Responders
- Public Agencies
- Public Transit Agencies
- Tribal Groups
- Utilities
- All individuals that opted in via the sign-up form, project survey, or online comment form

Notifications distributed included information on the scoping dates and purpose, how to comment, and invitations to participate in virtual public scoping meetings. All e-blasts were distributed primarily in English, with links to the content in Spanish.

The scoping announcement e-blast gave a short background on the proposed Project, linked to the Interactive StoryMap tool and Metro's blog (The Source) article, detailed comment submission methods, and provided details and registration links for the virtual scoping meetings. The reminder e-blast reiterated this information the week after scoping commenced.

The extension of the scoping period was announced via e-blast on August 17, 2021, and the new due date for comments was provided.

Once all the virtual public scoping meetings had concluded, a thank you e-blast containing links to meeting recordings was distributed in both English and Spanish, as well as other resources and a reiteration of the extension of the scoping period. After this, weekly update notifications were distributed until the scoping period concluded (Table 3.A). They covered various themes, including frequently asked questions, the ExpressLanes program, and the purpose of the scoping process. Each of these e-blasts also included details on how to comment and other project resources (see Appendix B-3).

Table 3.A: E-Blasts

No.	Purpose	Date
1	Opt-In to Updates	July 7, 2021
2	Project Awareness/Survey Announcement	July 26, 2021
3	Scoping Announcement	August 3, 2021
4	Scoping Announcement Reminder	August 12, 2021
5	Scoping Extension Announcement	August 17, 2021
6	Thank You / Weekly Update 1 Theme: Public Scoping Meeting Recap	August 25, 2021
7	Weekly Update 2 Theme: Project Alternatives	September 2, 2021
8	Weekly Update 3 Theme: Frequently Asked Questions	September 10, 2021
9	Weekly Update 4 Theme: ExpressLanes Program Overview	September 17, 2021
10	Weekly Update 5 Theme: Public Survey Result	September 24, 2021
11	Weekly Update 6 Theme: Scoping Questions Answered	September 29, 2021
12	Final Comment Reminder	October 1, 2021

In addition to e-blasts, periodic SMS texts were sent to individuals who provided contact information (Table 3.B). The SMS texts were sent out prior to and during the scoping period (see Appendix B-3).

Table 3.B: SMS Texts

No.	Purpose	Date
1	Project Awareness	July 27, 2021
2	Scoping Announcement	August 5, 2021
3	Scoping Meetings Announcement	August 12, 2021
4	Scoping Meeting Reminder	August 14, 2021
5	Scoping Meeting Recordings	August 25, 2021
6	Alternatives Overview / Comment Reminder	September 3, 2021
7	Final Comment Reminder	October 1, 2021

3.4 EXTENDED OUTREACH

An extended outreach toolkit provided copy-paste ready content to share on social media platforms, distribute in e-blasts and newsletters, and post on websites (see Appendix B-4). The content provided information about how to get involved with the proposed Project by watching the project video, attending a public scoping meeting, and providing a comment. It was distributed to key stakeholders, including public agencies, elected officials, community organizations, neighborhood councils, and academic institutions, for communication with their respective constituents or group members.

The toolkit was distributed to over 450 contacts twice during the comment period with content edited in the later draft to reflect the completion of all three scoping meetings. Recipients included a range

of key stakeholders, including transportation groups, public agencies, elected officials, community-based organizations, neighborhood councils, and academic institutions.

3.5 METRO BLOGS AND PRESS RELEASES

Metro blogs The Source (English) and El Pasajero (Spanish) published blog posts on the first day of the public comment period. In addition to announcing the 30-day comment period, these articles gave background on the proposed Project, described the five alternatives, provided information on the public scoping meetings, and detailed the methods of commenting. When the comment period was extended, both articles were updated to reflect the extension of the public comment period to October 1 (see Appendix B-5).

In addition, a press release from the Metro Media Relations group containing similar information regarding the Project and the public scoping period was published to the Metro website on August 9, 2021, and is also included in Appendix B-5.

3.6 EARNED MEDIA AND STAKEHOLDER COVERAGE

The toolkit and other project information were utilized across multiple platforms by key stakeholder organizations. Information was posted about the proposed Project via social media platforms and website posts. These types of stakeholder digital coverage are referred to as earned media.

Social media platforms where earned media appeared included Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Online publications also included coverage in the following:

- Bel Air Association Blog
- Lake Balboa Neighborhood Council Blog
- Paul Koretz, City Council District CD 5 Newsletter
- Sherman Oaks Homeowner's Association Newsletter / Alert
- Culver City News Blog
- Culver City Crossroads (via Culver City Patch)
- CityWatch LA
- Nithya Raman, City Council District 4 E-Newsletter

3.7 SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS AND TARGETED SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISEMENTS

Metro utilized its agency Facebook and Twitter accounts to engage stakeholders and promote important scoping dates and deadlines, including the public scoping meetings, the start and end dates of the scoping period, and the scoping period extension. In addition, Metro scheduled two Facebook advertisements to promote the scoping process and available resources. Each ad targeted users age 13 and over along and within a 2-mile radius of the Project corridor. Nearly 500,000 ads were shared with more than 175,000 local and regional stakeholders, garnering views of the Project video and enticing survey participation. Both ads were distributed in English, but allowed for Facebook translation to accommodate those viewing in supported languages.

3.8 STAKEHOLDER BRIEFINGS AND PRESENTATIONS

Prior to and during the public scoping period, the Project team conducted nine presentations and briefings with elected officials, public agencies, and key stakeholders in the Project area to introduce the Project, discuss the environmental process and timeline, and encourage their participation and support in promoting the scoping process to their constituencies. These briefings ensured that all of the key representatives for the corridor communities were aware of the Project and informed of the launch of the public scoping process in advance of the release of meeting notices. This, in turn, helped sustain relationships with key stakeholder representatives that further expanded public notification efforts, as these contacts could reach stakeholders that the team may otherwise not have reached. These are listed in Table 3.C.

Table 3.C: Stakeholder Briefing Meetings

No.	Meeting Name	Date
1	VICA Transportation Committee	July 13, 2021
2	Service Council Update	July 21, 2021
3	Metro Board Staff Briefing	July 28, 2021
4	Local Elected Officials Briefing	July 30, 2021
5	The Getty Museum	August 23, 2021
6	Leo Baeck Temple	August 19, 2021
7	The Valley Economic Alliance (TVEA) Economic Development Committee	September 3, 2021
8	Brentwood Glen Association	September 16, 2021
9	Northern Corridor Cities	September 29, 2021

3.9 PROJECT WEBSITE/STORYMAP

The Project website (https://www.metro.net/projects/i-405-expresslanes-project/) was an important source of information throughout the comment period. It provided a succinct overview of the proposed Project and the area it covers, as well as its current status, which was frequently updated (see Appendix B-6). Stakeholders were able to access the latest project updates, methods of commenting, and contact information, as well as a Dropbox library containing project materials in both English and Spanish. Links to the materials were provided on all notifications, on both hard copy and electronic outreach communications. The Project video was also provided in English and with Spanish subtitles.

The Interactive StoryMap, accessible from the Project website, was a key tool in educating stakeholders throughout the comment period. A StoryMap is an ArcGIS platform that integrates maps, legends, text, photos, and video, creating an immersive experience. The Project StoryMap contained information detailing the Project overview and alternatives, the ExpressLanes program, the environmental process, and the scoping process, as well as the next steps that would follow once the comment period concluded. The Scoping section provided details on how to comment, including how to register and participate in the virtual scoping meetings. Once the meetings concluded, a recording was posted in both English and Spanish for those who were unable to attend. A documents section also listed and linked all available Project resources from the Dropbox library, as well as articles from The Source & El Pasajero.

4.0 23 USC 139 COOPERATING AND PARTICIPATING AGENCY INVITATIONS

In accordance with the Efficient Environmental Review guidelines codified at 23 USC 139, agencies were invited to become cooperating and/or participating agencies in the preparation of the EIR/EIS. Table 4.A shows the various federal, State, and local agencies invited, the rationale as to why they were invited, and their response (if any).

Table 4.A: Cooperating/Participating Agency Invitations and Responses

Agency Name	Rationale for Invitation	Response
Federal Agencies		
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	Regulatory permit authority – Section 404 of the Clean Water Act	Requested time extension for response on 7/21/21. Point of contact will be Stephanie Hall, Caltrans Liaison. No additional response received. As a federal agency, considered to be a Participating Agency.
U.S. EPA (USEPA), Region 9	Special expertise – air quality conformity	No response received. As a federal agency, considered to be a Participating Agency.
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	Regulatory permit authority – Section 7	Letter sent from Jonathan Snyder via email on 7/15/21 declining Cooperating Agency status but accepting Participating Agency status.
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Western-Pacific Region Airports Division	Project's proximity to the Santa Monica Airport influence/safety zone	No response received. As a federal agency, considered to be a Participating Agency.
Federal Transit Administration (FTA)	Project's potential integration with existing or planned transit facilities in the region.	No response received. As a federal agency, considered to be a Participating Agency.
U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Region 8	Project's location in a seismically active region	No response received. As a federal agency, considered to be a Participating Agency.
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Region IX	Project's proximity to a 100-year floodplain	FEMA letter dated 7/1/21 from Alessandro Amaglio accepted Participating Agency status.
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)	Project's proximity to dense residential housing near I-405 between I-10 and Sunset Boulevard	Letter sent 7/22/21 accepting Participating Agency status. Point of contact: Elizabeth McDargh, OEE Senior Environmental Officer.
Veterans Administration (VA)	Project's proximity to Veterans Affairs facilities	No response received. As a federal agency, considered to be a Participating Agency.
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation	Project's proximity to historic resources	No response received. As a federal agency, considered to be a Participating Agency.
State Agencies		
California Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC)	Potential involvement of local Native American tribes	No response received.
California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal EPA)	Potential environmental impacts of the Project, such as air, water, and soil quality	No response received.
California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP)	Project's proximity to historic resources	No response received.

Table 4.A: Cooperating/Participating Agency Invitations and Responses

Agency Name	Rationale for Invitation	Response
California Air Resources Board (CARB)	Project's potential impacts to air quality in the region	No response received.
California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)	Project's potential impacts to sensitive species and wildlife crossings located in the Santa Monica Mountains	No response received.
California Department of Parks and Recreation, State Parks	Project's proximity to State Parks lands	No response received.
California Highway Patrol (CHP)	Project's potential effect on CHP operations along the I-405	No response received.
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)	Project's proximity to recent wildfire areas	No response received.
University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), Capital Programs	Project's proximity to the University	No response received.
Local Agencies		
Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)	Project's location within Los Angeles RWQCB watershed areas, such as the Ballona Creek and Los Angeles River Watershed Management Areas	No response received.
South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD)	Project's potential impacts to air quality in the region	Response from Lijin Sun via email on 7/7/21 indicated that SCAQMD would be a CEQA Commenting Agency and available for technical consultation for CEQA air quality analysis. No formal acceptance of the Participating Agency invitation.
Los Angeles County Flood Control District	Project's proximity to Sepulveda Channel, which runs parallel to I-405 within the Project limits	No response received.
Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy	Project's proximity to the Santa Monica Mountains	No response received.
City of Santa Monica	Project's location within a major transportation corridor for the City and within one mile of the City limits	Jason Kligier (Acting Mobility Manager) responded via email on 7/13/21 indicating acceptance of Participating Agency status, and sent follow-up letter with primary point of contact (Rachel Kwok).
City of Los Angeles	Project's location within City limits and the potential for the project to affect a major transportation corridor in the City	No response received.
City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation	Project's location within City limits and the potential for the project to affect a major transportation corridor in the City	Email from Eddie Guerrero to Karl Price on 7/28/21 accepted Participating Agency status and indicated he would be primary contact.

Table 4.A: Cooperating/Participating Agency Invitations and Responses

Agency Name	Rationale for Invitation	Response
Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning	Project's location within unincorporated County area and the potential for the Project to affect a major transportation corridor in the County	No response received.
Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation	Project's proximity to several County parks	Email from Jui Ing Chien on 7/14/21 declined invitation.
Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (DPW)	Project's potential to impact infrastructure and utilities in the vicinity	No response received.
Los Angeles County Department of Public Health	Project's potential impacts to air quality in the region	No response received.
Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP)	Project's potential to impact utilities in the vicinity	No response received.
Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)	Project's location within a major regional transportation corridor	No response received.
County of Los Angeles Fire Department	Project's proximity to recent wildfire areas	No response received.

The initial set of invitation letters was sent prior to the publication of the Notice of Intent, on June 23, 2021. Responses were requested by July 23, 2021. The full set of invitation letters is included in Appendix C-1. Responses are included in Appendix C-2.

Following the receipt of responses and finalization of the roster of Cooperating and Participating Agencies, an additional letter was sent to Cooperating and Participating Agencies requesting feedback on the proposed Project's purpose and need, set of alternatives, methodologies for the technical studies that will inform the Draft EIR/EIS, and Coordination Plan and schedule. The 23 USC 139 coordination process will remain in effect during development of the Draft EIR/EIS.

5.0 SCOPING MEETINGS

Due to public health guidelines and Metro safety protocols during the spike in the COVID-19 Delta variant, plans for in-person meetings and outreach could not be conducted. As such, Metro and Caltrans collectively agreed to proceed with conducting virtual scoping meetings via Zoom. The meetings provided access to Spanish language interpretation services and call-in numbers in both English and Spanish for those unable to access the meeting via the internet. In order to best accommodate various schedules and maximize participation, a variety of timeframes were provided for the scoping meetings. Public scoping meetings were held on:

- Saturday, August 14, 2021, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, August 17, 2021, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, August 18, 2021, from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

At each scoping meeting, a brief presentation was made by the Project team, and then a short question-and-answer session was held about any clarification needed on the presentation or the proposed Project. A copy of the presentation is included in Appendix D-1. Please note that the video presentation is not embedded in the PDF of the presentation for filesize reasons, but is provided separately. Following the brief question-and-answer session, the meeting was opened for attendees to provide verbal comments on the Project.

Attendance was as follows during the virtual public scoping meetings: 52 participants on August 14, 2021; 101 participants on August 17, 2021, and 162 participants on August 18, 2021. In addition to members of the public, stakeholders in attendance at the public scoping meetings included representatives for State and local elected officials, City of Los Angeles Neighborhood Council representatives, representatives from area Homeowners Associations, and several non-profit and private enterprise representatives. A copy of attendance sheets from the three public scoping meetings can be found in Appendix D-2. An attendance summary of the three public scoping meetings is provided in Appendix D-3, and a legal transcript of the scoping meeting proceedings is provided in Appendix D-4.

In addition, an agency scoping meeting was held on Thursday, August 5, 2021, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. via Zoom. The agency scoping meeting followed generally the same format as the public scoping meetings, but was shorter in length and somewhat less structured. A brief presentation was followed by an informal question/answer and comment period. Links to available information were also shared with attendees via the Zoom chat.

6.0 SUMMARY OF SCOPING COMMENTS

During the formal scoping period, comments could be submitted in one of several ways: via USPS regular mail, via email to the Project email address, via electronic submittal to the online comment form accessible at the Project website, via a verbal voicemail message on the Project hotline, or verbally/via the chat function at any of the three public scoping meetings. During the public scoping comment period, a total of 663 submissions regarding the proposed Project were collected. The submissions were broken down, or delimited, into 1,563 individual comments. Table 6.A, below, provides an overview of the methodology used to delimit individual comments and assign them to topics and subtopics.

6.1 TOPIC METHODOLOGY

In general, comments were delimited (meaning that entire submissions were broken down into individual comments) at a high level, as is appropriate for scoping comments. All individual comments were assigned a topic, and some topics were further divided into subtopics, as indicated in Table 6.A. It should be noted that a subtopic was only assigned if relevant; that is, even if a comment was categorized into a topic that had associated subtopics, assignment of a subtopic was not mandatory.

Due to the general variance in comments, comments were delimited and topics assigned with the end goal being to adequately define the overall thrust of the comment. Because many individual comments touched on multiple topics, it was not feasible nor valuable to attempt to define every single item or issue mentioned; rather, the goal was to determine the primary issue.

As is expected for a project of this nature, many commenters expressed support or opposition for an alternative or alternatives. Only if support or opposition for or against an alternative was explicitly stated (or very obvious) in a comment was the relevant subtopic assigned. The topics “general support” or “general opposition” were utilized when the comment was similarly general and expressed support for or opposition to any activity in the Sepulveda Pass corridor or to all alternatives. The topic “Support for transit in corridor” was distinct from alternatives as it was understood that transit elements are not within the scope of the proposed Project; however, many commenters expressed a desire for a transit option within the Sepulveda Pass corridor.

Comments that were classified under the topic “Environmental topics” could be further sub-categorized into any of the topics that will be discussed in the Draft EIR/EIS for the proposed Project. Caveats to note about some of these subtopics include the following:

- “Environmental justice” (EJ) as a subtopic under “Environmental topics” was used if the specific term “environmental justice” or phrases relating to impacts to EJ populations within the context of Executive Order 12898 were used or referenced. Otherwise, general concerns about disadvantaged populations (particularly as they relate to highway tolling) were assigned the “equity” topic. However, in developing the EJ methodology and analysis as part of the Community Impact Assessment prepared for the project, both topics will be reviewed for relevant items.

Table 6.A: Comment Topics

Topic	Associated Subtopics
General Opposition	N/A
General Support	N/A
Support for Transit In Corridor	N/A
Equity	N/A
Purpose and Need	N/A
Funding/Revenue	N/A
ExpressLanes Operations	N/A
Community Engagement	N/A
Other	N/A
Alternatives	• Oppose Alt 1 • Oppose Alt 2 • Oppose Alt 3 • Oppose Alt 4 • Oppose Alt 5 • Support Alt 1 • Support Alt 2 • Support Alt 3 • Support Alt 4 • Support Alt 5 • Suggestion for option/New Alternative • Opposed to tolling • Opposed to expanding of lanes
Environmental Topics	• Air Quality/GHGs • Biological Env. • Cultural/Tribal Resources • Cumulative Impacts • Community Impacts • Energy • Environmental Justice • Geology/Soils/Seismicity • Growth • Hazardous Waste/Materials • Hydrology/Floodplain • Land Use • Noise/Vibration • Paleontology • Parks/Recreation Facilities • Pedestrian/Bike facilities • Relocations/ROW • Transportation/Traffic/VMT • Utilities • Visual/Aesthetics • Water Quality/Stormwater • Wildfires • Construction Impacts
Other Projects	• Past HOV project • Purple Line Construction • Sepulveda Transit Corridor • Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan

HOV = high-occupancy vehicle
N/A = not applicable
ROW = right-of-way
VMT = vehicle miles traveled

- "Transportation/Traffic/VMT" was also assumed to be inclusive of concerns relating to traffic safety.
- "Utilities" was also assumed to be inclusive of emergency services, especially as it relates to non-standard lanes and shoulders.

6.2 TOPICAL BREAKDOWN AND SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

The scoping period is an important part of the CEQA and NEPA processes in that it is the first point in project development in which feedback from the general public, agencies, and other entities is solicited. It is also essentially the beginning of the environmental process, prior to the commencement of detailed technical work and the preparation of the CEQA and NEPA documents. However, this also means that the information that is made available during scoping is generally preliminary and not of extensive detail. Because of that, many comments received during scoping requested additional information or information that was simply not available or had not yet been developed at the time. Several of these requests had to do with the potential impacts or effects of the Project. Specific information regarding the impacts of the Project will not be available until the release of the Draft EIR/EIS.

The I-405 Sepulveda Pass ExpressLanes Project is not the first ExpressLanes project proposed in Los Angeles County. There are ExpressLanes in operation on the I-110 and I-10 freeways, and others in various stages of planning. Much of the feedback received during the scoping phase on the I-405 project is similar to that received during the scoping phase of other ExpressLanes projects, specifically regarding equity concerns over tolling and toll lane operations. Some of the feedback regarding toll lane operations also suggests the general public may lack familiarity with the ExpressLanes program.

The Sepulveda Pass is a challenging area for transportation due to the geographical constraints in the corridor, and as such, several projects across various modes are being planned in order to offer a range of options for travelers. Scoping feedback regarding other proposed projects in the Sepulveda Pass, primarily the proposed Sepulveda Pass Transit Corridor project, suggested that a common sentiment was to express support of a project underpinned by opposition to another project (usually concerning projects dealing with different modes). Some commenters did express support for only transit projects, but other comments suggested potential confusion about the interface of several projects in the same or a similar geographic area. To this effect, Metro's commitment is for these projects to be designed in a way that would avoid potential conflicts between the proposed projects and thus preclude one of these projects from being implemented.

6.2.1 Alternatives

Comments on the alternatives described in the NOP/NOI, both generally and specifically on either the proposed alternatives or suggestions for new alternatives, made up a large component of the comments received (approximately 28 percent of all comments were assigned to the alternatives topic). Many commenters used the opportunity to express support or opposition to a specific alternative, to tolling in general (approximately 7 percent of all comments received), or expansion of lanes in general (approximately 3 percent of all comments received). Approximately 11 percent of all comments received provided a suggestion for a new alternative or an option/modification to an

existing alternative. These comments ranged from modifying existing carpool transition lanes, adding an ExpressLane in addition to an HOV lane (rather than conversion of the HOV lane), bidirectional/contra-flow lanes, double-decking the freeway, tunneling through the Sepulveda Pass, and other suggestions. Commenters also identified the interchanges at the I-10 and US-101 as areas of bottleneck that should be addressed. Some commenters expressed the desire to extend ExpressLanes further south to Interstates 105 and 110.

In addition to modifications to the infrastructure, some commenters suggested operational changes to the freeway and/or specific lanes. These suggestions included: increasing the HOV (2+) capacity requirement, driver education requirements, limiting truck hours, restricting car/truck size, restricting HOV lanes to buses/transit only, continuous access HOV lane striping, physical barrier/buffer between managed lanes and general-purpose lanes, and incentivizing remote work. Figure 6-1 illustrates the sub-topical breakdown of comments within the Alternatives primary topic. Please note that the percentages shown in Figure 6-1 are different than the percentages described above in text, as Figure 6-1 provides the proportions of sub-topics within the primary topic.

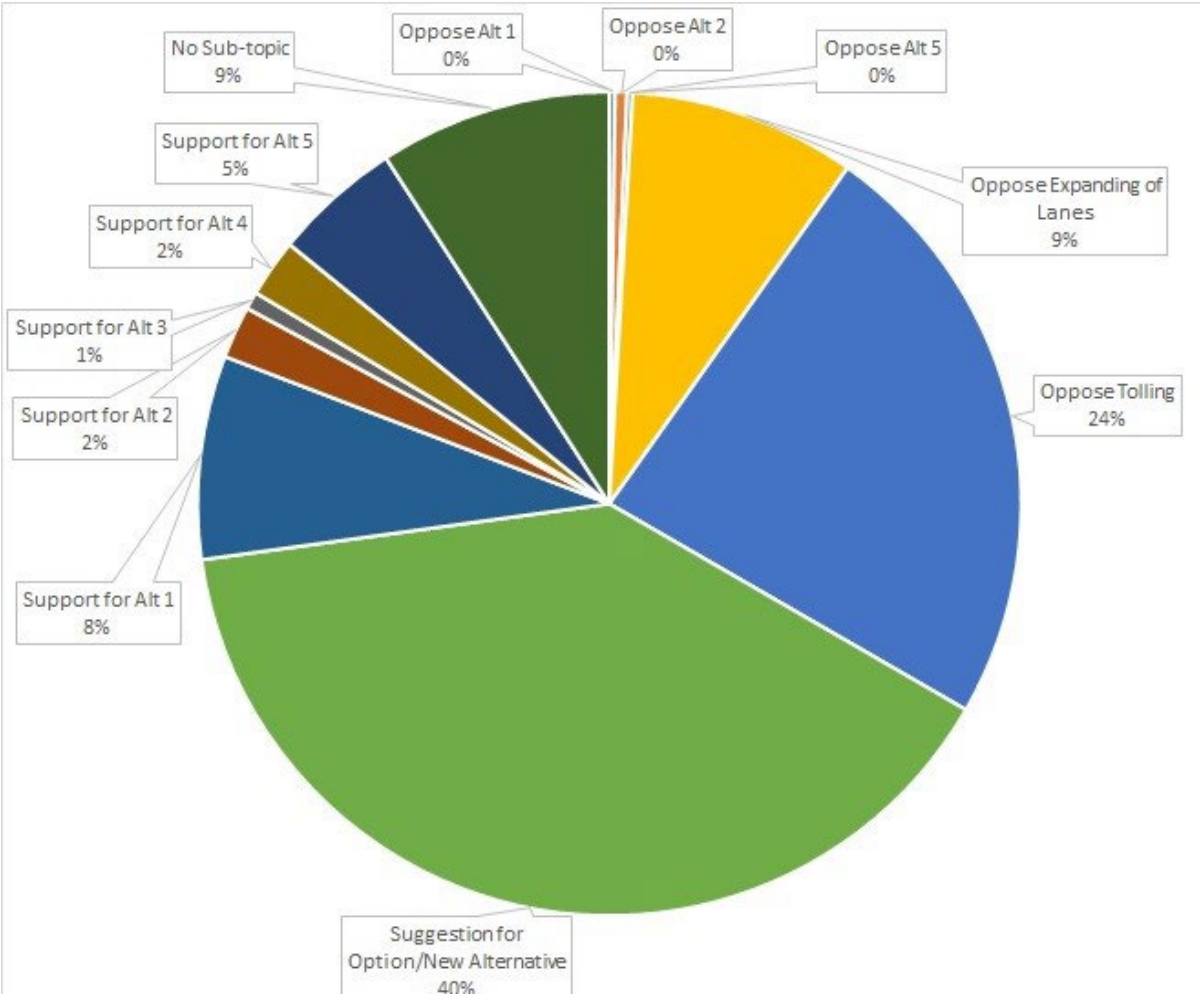


Figure 6-1: Sub-topic Breakdown of Comments on Alternatives (438 Individual Comments)

6.2.2 Environmental Topics

Commenters expressed concern about various environmental resource areas and potential impacts (approximately 22 percent of all comments). Most comments were of a general nature and expressed concern about the general impact of projects. Of those comments that were able to be assigned into subtopics, traffic/transportation/vehicle miles traveled (which includes traffic safety) and air quality/greenhouse gases were the most frequent topics, at approximately 7 percent and 4 percent of all comments, respectively.

Related to traffic, common concerns addressed proposed nonstandard features affecting operational safety, changes in traffic patterns (including shifting traffic from the current HOV lanes to the general-purpose lanes and from the freeway onto surface streets), and general concerns about recurrent traffic congestion.

Air quality concerns were raised from health perspectives as well as within the context of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and global climate change. Many commenters expressed the need to reduce car dependence in general, primarily due to GHG emissions and climate change concerns.

Concerns about community impacts were raised in approximately 3 percent of all comments, and ROW considerations were also raised in approximately 3 percent of all comments. Commenters expressed concerns about the loss of housing given the existing lack of housing in the Los Angeles area, justification for property acquisition, impacts to established neighborhoods in the Sepulveda Pass (primarily Brentwood Glen) including impacts to community character and cohesion, impacts to nearby resources like the Mission Canyon Landfill, the Getty Museum, various schools and religious facilities, etc., and impacts to property values.

An additional approximately 1 percent of all comments raised concerns about construction impacts. Many commenters expressed opposition or concerns about commencing a long-term construction project soon after the previous HOV project, concerns about construction delays and traffic-related construction impacts, the need to mitigate for construction impacts, and the justification for multi-year construction projects versus the perceived benefit.

Figure 6-2 shows the sub-topical breakdown of comments within the “Environmental Topics” primary topic. Please note that the percentages shown in Figure 6-2 are different than the percentages described above in text, as Figure 6-2 provides the proportions of sub-topics within the primary topic.

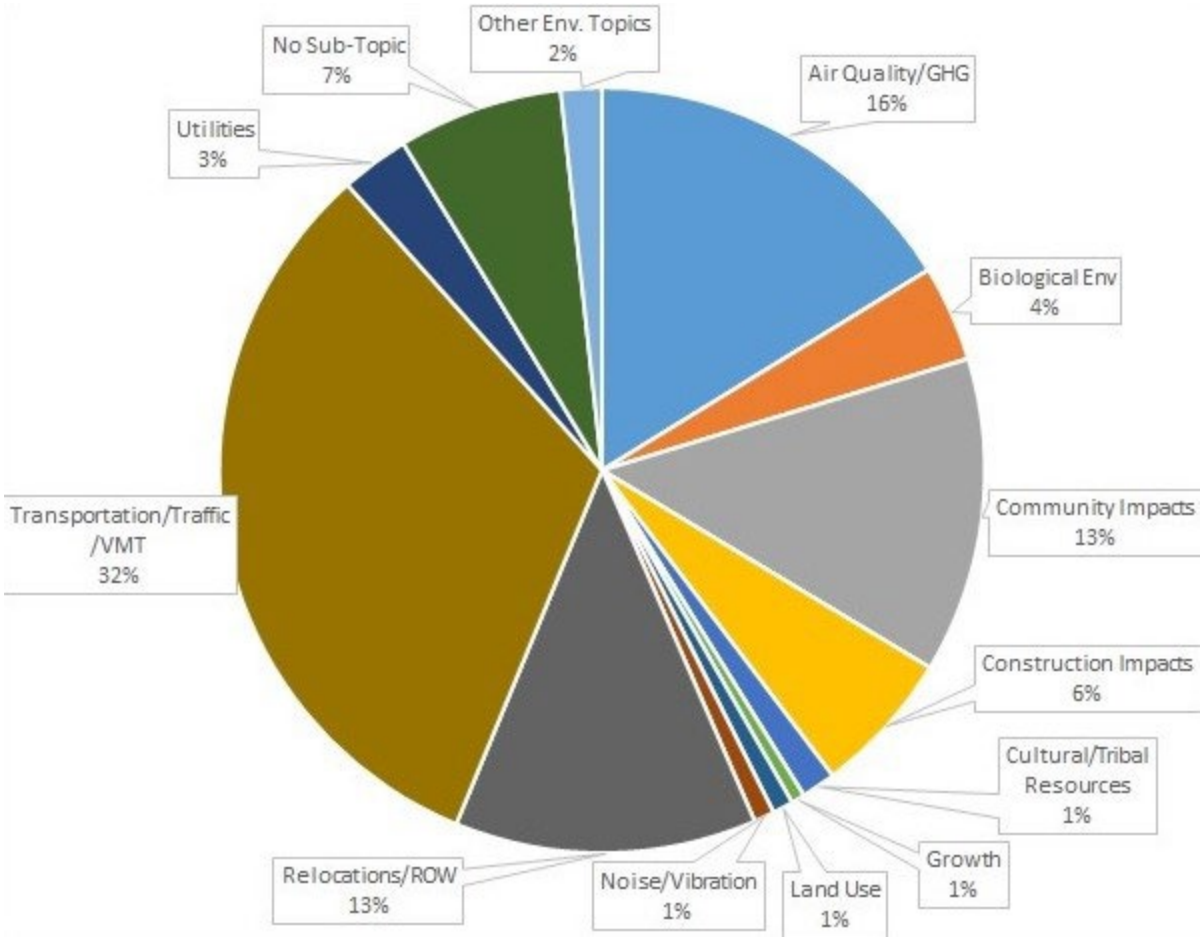


Figure 6-2: Sub-topic Breakdown of Comments on Environmental Topics (345 Individual Comments)

6.2.3 Other Projects

Approximately 8 percent of all comments discussed other projects (past, current, and potential future projects). Many commenters expressed frustration with the previous HOV lane project (both the disruption associated with its construction and some degree of construction fatigue, as well as the perceived ineffectiveness of the HOV lane on congestion in the Sepulveda Pass corridor overall). In addition, many commenters raised the topic of induced or latent traffic demand as a potential reason for why the previous HOV project may have been ineffective. Others expressed concern regarding the interface/potential conflict between the Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project and the ExpressLanes. Figure 6-3 provides a sub-topical breakdown of the comments within the "Other Projects" primary topic. Please note that the percentages shown in Figure 6-3 are different than the percentages described above in text, as Figure 6-3 provides the proportions of sub-topics within the primary topic.

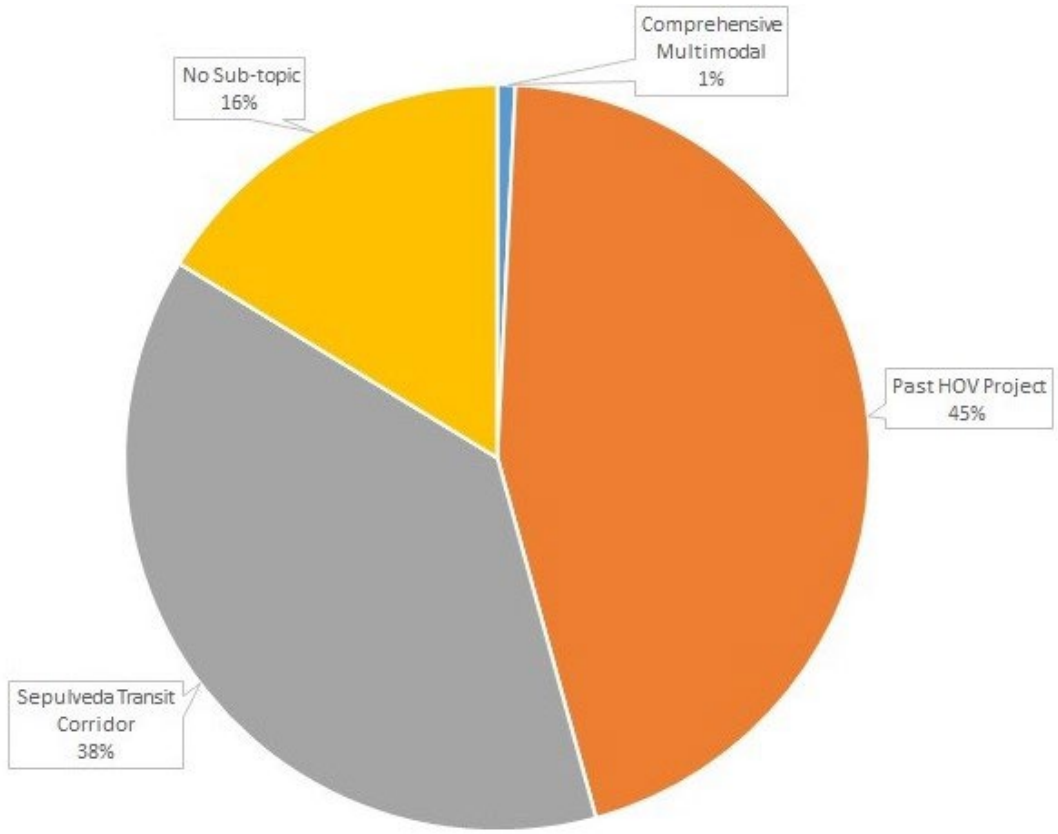


Figure 6-3: Sub-topic Breakdown of Comments on Other Projects (129 Individual Comments)

6.2.4 ExpressLanes Operations

Approximately 4 percent of all comments received were regarding the proposed (or existing) operations of the ExpressLanes. Commenters provided input and questions on the need for transponders, use of/eligibility for use of the ExpressLanes, electric vehicle use in the ExpressLanes, and other similar sentiments. There were several comments related to carpoolers' ability to use the lanes and if there would be a fee charged for those types of vehicles that currently have access to the HOV lanes. Many commenters expressed concern about an increase in congestion in the general-purpose lanes due to a large number of motorists who would either be unable to pay to access the ExpressLanes or no longer eligible to access the ExpressLanes.

6.2.5 Support for Transit in Corridor

This topic was broken out separately, rather than aggregated with the Alternatives topic, because a transit alternative is not under consideration as part of the proposed Project. Of all comments received, approximately 11 percent expressed general support for transit options to be introduced into the Sepulveda Pass corridor. Many comments coupled support for transit with opposition to freeway projects, and indicated that car dependency and overall transportation sustainability are the core issues to be addressed.

6.2.6 Equity

Concern regarding equity as it relates to the ExpressLanes was expressed in approximately 7 percent of all comments received. Overwhelmingly, comments expressed concern that lower-income populations would be burdened by tolls charged for using the ExpressLanes and some users of the facility might be pushed into more congested lanes. Commenters also expressed that the "pay-to-play" model provides a benefit only to higher-income populations at the expense of disadvantaged populations. As would be expected, the subtext of many comments associated with the comments classified under the equity topic, was opposition to the proposed Project.

6.2.7 Purpose and Need

Comments related to the need for the proposed Project, the objectives of the proposed Project, and the ability of the current range of alternatives to be effective in addressing the issues on the I-405 were classified as purpose and need (approximately 6 percent of all comments received). Overall, questions were raised about the potential effectiveness of the alternatives in relieving congestion, as well as some questioning why air quality/greenhouse gas reduction goals were not explicitly included in the purpose and need statement.

6.2.8 Funding/Revenue

Questions and concerns regarding funding, including where project funding is coming from, where ExpressLane revenues would be spent, and concerns that the proposed Project is being planned simply to open a new line of revenue/create a new 'form of taxation', were expressed in approximately 1 percent of all comments received.

6.2.9 General Opposition

Approximately 6 percent of all comments expressed a general statement of opposition to the Project. As discussed in Section 6.2, a lack of detailed project information currently available appeared to contribute to some of the opposition to the Project.

6.2.10 General Support

Approximately 2 percent of all comments expressed a general statement of support for the Project. Many of these comments also expressed favorable feelings toward the ExpressLanes program in effect on the I-110 and I-10 freeways.

Appendix E-1 provides a breakdown of the number of comments received in each topic and subtopic. Appendix E-2 provides a matrix which includes the text of all scoping comments received.

7.0 NEXT STEPS

The purpose of scoping under CEQA and NEPA is to engage agencies and parties to formally provide their views on the range and breadth of issues to be addressed in an EIR/EIS, and is generally considered to be the "kick-off" of the CEQA and NEPA environmental processes. As such, the comments and feedback received during the scoping period will be reviewed carefully by the PDT for consideration and adoption moving forward. This includes, but is not limited to, new alternatives or options to be analyzed, issues to be addressed in technical studies and/or the Draft EIR/EIS, and coordination efforts moving forward. The evaluation of suggested new alternatives or options to be further explored will be documented in a separate report.

Additionally, the PDT is assessing the engagement characteristics and metrics, both in general and through an equity-focused lens, in order to continue to develop the specifics of the outreach strategy moving forward in the environmental process. This will be done with an eye towards improvement in messaging and communication, as well as increased participation from potentially impacted communities and equity-focused communities. The PDT is also identifying ways to address the issues raised during the scoping process and mitigate potential Project risks moving forward. These methods include continued additional educational content regarding the ExpressLanes program, extended or supplemental focused outreach, and other strategies to be developed.

8.0 LIST OF PREPARERS

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