

**Record of Decision  
on the  
Regional Connector Transit Corridor Project  
in  
Los Angeles County, California  
by the  
Federal Transit Administration**

**Decision**

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has determined that the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and related Federal environmental statutes, regulations, and executive orders have been satisfied for the Regional Connector Transit Corridor Project (the Project) located in Los Angeles County.

This environmental Record of Decision (ROD) applies to the fixed guideway transit alternative connecting the Metro Blue Line terminus at the 7<sup>th</sup> Street/Metro Center Station to the Metro Gold Line, which was described as the Project (defined as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) and refinements) and evaluated in the *Regional Connector Transit Corridor Project Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report* (Final EIS), dated January 2012. The Project sponsor, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA), seeks financial assistance from FTA for the Project. If FTA provides financial assistance for the final design or construction of the Project, FTA will require that the LACMTA design and build it as presented in the Final EIS and this ROD. Any proposed change by the LACMTA must be evaluated in accordance with 23 C.F.R. § 771.130 and must be approved by FTA in writing before the agency requesting the change can proceed with the change.

**Background**

The Project will provide a 1.9-mile direct connection from the Metro Blue Line terminus at the 7<sup>th</sup> Street/Metro Center Station to the Metro Gold Line tracks near 1<sup>st</sup> and Alameda Streets with three new below grade station locations. The alignment will extend north from the 7<sup>th</sup> Street/Metro Center Station under Flower Street to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. The tracks will continue north underneath Flower Street and veer northeast near the intersection of 3<sup>rd</sup> and Flower Streets to run east underneath 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. The tracks will then proceed east underneath the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Tunnel and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street itself, and lead to a junction under the intersection of 1<sup>st</sup> and Alameda Streets. To the north and east of the junction, trains will rise to the surface through two new portals to connect to the Metro Gold Line heading north to Union Station, Pasadena, Azusa and eventually Montclair and east towards East Los Angeles. The Project will include three new stations at 2<sup>nd</sup>/Hope Street, 2<sup>nd</sup>/Broadway, and 1<sup>st</sup>/Central Avenue.

As the Project sponsor and potential recipient of FTA financial assistance for the Project, LACMTA served as a co-lead agency with FTA in conducting the environmental review process.

**Planning for the Project**

The Project aims to improve travel times, reduce transfers, reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, and create a sustainable light rail transit (LRT) system that serves people throughout the region as well as in downtown Los Angeles. The Project will improve transit service within the

Regional Connector Transit Corridor (Corridor) and increase regional connectivity throughout the Los Angeles County region by connecting the light rail service of the Metro Gold Line to the Metro Blue Line and the Metro Exposition Line. The vision is to connect the spokes of the regional transit system and provide a “one-seat ride” (a trip with no transfers) from Long Beach to Pasadena, Azusa, and eventually Montclair and from East Los Angeles to Santa Monica. This link will serve communities across the region and will allow greater accessibility to important business, cultural, and residential destinations in downtown Los Angeles while serving population and employment growth in Los Angeles County. The major themes and underlying needs supporting transit improvements in the Corridor include peak hour congestion within the Corridor, transit accessibility and availability, land use integration and economic development, growing demand for transit service, and benefits for the environment.

FTA published the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS for this Project in the *Federal Register* on March 24, 2009. The scoping process concluded on May 11, 2009. The *Regional Connector Transit Corridor Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIS)* was made available to identified stakeholders, agencies, and the general public for review and comment for a 45-day review period from September 3, 2010 through October 18, 2010. On October 28, 2010, the LACMTA Board of Directors voted to designate the Fully Underground LRT Alternative without the Flower/5<sup>th</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Street Station as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). However, the Project design will not preclude construction of a station at this location as a future, separate project.

Based on comments received on the Draft EIS and input received from community meetings, refinements were made to the alignment of the LPA to reduce or avoid previously identified construction, parking, and right-of-way impacts. A *Supplemental Environmental Assessment/Recirculated Draft Environmental Impact Report (SEA/RDEIR)* evaluating the impacts of refinements to the LPA was circulated for public comment over a 45-day review period between July 22, 2011 and September 6, 2011.

The Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Final EIS was published in the *Federal Register* on January 20, 2012. The review period for the Final EIS concluded on February 21, 2012.

### **Alternatives Considered**

FTA and LACMTA considered a broad range of alternatives in various studies prior to the initiation of the NEPA process and continuing through the Draft and Final EIS. The planning and project development process involved analyzing the alternatives to determine which ones would be studied in the Alternatives Analysis (AA), which was released in early 2009, and carried through into the Draft EIS. Alternatives can be eliminated from further consideration during the planning process, before the NEPA process is initiated, or after the NEPA process is initiated (e.g., during NEPA scoping or early coordination activities, as part of the planning process). The AA results in alternatives being selected for further study in the EIS.

Prior to the initiation of AA, several studies identified the need for a direct connection between Metro lines running on the east and those on the west of downtown. The *Blue Line Connection Preliminary Planning Study* (1993) examined alternatives for light rail line through downtown Los Angeles to connect the Long Beach and Pasadena segments of the Metro Blue Line. Also in 1993, the *Pasadena – Los Angeles Light Rail Transit Project Environmental Impact Report* identified that a direct light rail connection would be possible between Union Station and 7<sup>th</sup> Street/Metro Center Station to reduce the number of required transfers between the Metro Red,

Gold, and Blue Lines. The *Regional Light Rail Connector Study* (2004) included an engineering feasibility study to identify potential alignment, station, and configuration alternatives for a new LRT connection between the Metro Blue, Exposition, and Gold Lines.

Planning and screening efforts were conducted to lead up to the NEPA process and identify which alternatives met the Project's purpose and need. Identified alternatives were advanced and analyzed through the AA process, thereby resulting in two build alternatives to be carried through into the EIS process. The screening, evaluation, and public involvement effort included:

1. An initial screening of the potential reasonable transit modes, alignments, and station locations occurred before the public and agencies scoping meetings. This screening resulted in the conceptual alternatives presented for comment at the scoping meetings.
2. A detailed screening of the conceptual alternatives determined the alternatives that were discussed, analyzed, and evaluated in the AA and presented for public comment.
3. A final alternatives screening in the AA resulted in two build alternatives being carried forward into the EIS process. These two build alternatives, along with a third build alternative added in response to public input received during scoping and preparation of the Draft EIS, were analyzed in the Draft EIS and Final EIS and presented for public comment.

Heavy Rail Transit, Bus Rapid Transit, and LRT modes were considered during early scoping meetings. However, because this project has two distinctive end points (7<sup>th</sup> Street/Metro Center Station and the 1<sup>st</sup> and Alameda Station) and the existing Metro Blue and Gold Lines are LRT systems, LRT was identified as necessary and the most compatible to integrate into the two locations.

Previous studies completed during the early-mid 1990's identified alternative alignments including using Alameda Street or other north/south street connection through downtown to connect to the Metro Blue Line at Washington Boulevard near Long Beach Boulevard or continuing an underground alignment from the 7<sup>th</sup> Street/Metro Center Station through to Chinatown directly on to Pasadena, by-passing Union Station. The previously studied alignments were outside of the project study area, almost twice as long as the proposed Project, more costly and of greater environmental impact. Therefore, these alternatives were withdrawn from consideration.

An initial set of 36 alternatives were developed, spanning all of the appropriate alignments that would link the Metro Blue, Gold, and Exposition Lines. The initial alternatives represented alignments using mainly Flower, Figueroa, Temple, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and Hewitt Streets to link the 7<sup>th</sup> Street/Metro Center Station and Little Tokyo/Arts District Station. The initial alternatives included aerial, at-grade, and underground configurations and station alternatives. The AA initial screening resulted in alignment configurations being eliminated from further analysis as referenced in the *Alternatives Identification Report* (April 2008). Comments received during the early scoping period did not reveal support for an aerial configuration. Also considering right-of-way requirements, cost, and traffic impacts, aerial configurations were withdrawn from consideration.

The initial alternatives screening resulted in eight alignment alternatives plus the No Build and Transportation System Management (TSM) alternatives to be analyzed in more detail in the

*Final Alternatives Analysis Report* (December 2008). After further input from stakeholders, agencies, and the public, the eight alternatives were compared using a multi-criteria comparison model. Key considerations and criteria used in the screening of alternatives and station locations included: ridership, travel time savings, community acceptability, number of connections to key activity centers, land use compatibility and urban design issues, financial feasibility, constructability, right-of-way constraints, operational feasibility, environmental impacts and benefits, and safety. The *Final Alternatives Analysis Report* recommended the At-Grade Emphasis LRT, Underground Emphasis LRT, and Fully Underground LRT alternatives along with the No Build and TSM alternatives to be put forth for further engineering, environmental analysis, and urban design assessments.

The alternatives studied in the Draft EIS and Final EIS were the No Build, Transportation System Management (TSM), At-Grade Emphasis LRT, Underground Emphasis LRT, and Fully Underground LRT alternatives:

*No Build Alternative* transit network within the project area would be largely the same as it is now and would not include any major service improvements or new transportation infrastructure beyond what is listed in LACMTA's 2009 Long Range Transportation Plan. It would not have led to a connection meeting the needs outlined in the Purpose and Need statement for the Proposed Action.

*TSM Alternative* includes all of the provisions of the No Build Alternative, plus two new express shuttle bus lines on Upper Grand and Lower Grand routes, linking the 7<sup>th</sup> Street/Metro Center and Union Stations. Intermediate stops would provide additional transit coverage of Bunker Hill, Little Tokyo, and the Civic Center. Enhanced bus stops would be located every two to three blocks.

*At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative* would provide a direct connection with a combination of underground and at-grade segments from the existing underground 7<sup>th</sup> Street/Metro Center Station to the Metro Gold Line at Temple and Alameda Streets with three new station locations at (Flower/6<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Street, 2<sup>nd</sup>/Hope Street, and Main/1<sup>st</sup> Street). From the existing Metro Blue Line platform at the 7<sup>th</sup> Street/Metro Center Station, the tracks would extend north underneath Flower Street to a new underground station just south of 5th Street. The tracks would continue north, surface just south of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, cross 3<sup>rd</sup> Street at-grade level, and veer northeast through a portal in the hillside to an underground station at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Hope Streets. At this location, a new pedestrian bridge would be constructed to connect the station to Upper Grand Avenue. The tracks would continue northeast, to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Tunnel, and then travel east in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Tunnel toward Hill Street.

*Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative* would provide a direct connection from 7<sup>th</sup> Street/Metro Center Station to the Metro Gold Line tracks at the Little Tokyo/Arts District Station with three new station locations (Flower/5<sup>th</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Street, 2<sup>nd</sup>/Hope Street, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Station – Broadway Option or 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Station –Los Angeles Street Option). The alignment would extend underground from the 7<sup>th</sup> Street/Metro Center Station beneath Flower Street to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. The tracks would then proceed east underneath the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Tunnel and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to a new portal on the parcel bounded by 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Alameda Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, and Central Avenue. The Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would be entirely located underground except for a single at-grade crossing at the intersection of 1<sup>st</sup> and Alameda Streets.

*Fully Underground LRT Alternative* has the same alignment as the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative except the rail junction at 1<sup>st</sup> and Alameda Streets will be located underground instead of at street level with two portals connecting to existing Metro Gold Line. The Fully Underground LRT included four new station locations (Flower/5<sup>th</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Street, 2<sup>nd</sup>/Hope Street, 2<sup>nd</sup>/Broadway and 1<sup>st</sup>/Central Avenue). The Fully Underground LRT Alternative without the Flower/5<sup>th</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Street Station was selected as the LPA. However, the project design would not preclude construction of a station at this location as a future, separate project.

After the Draft EIS, the LPA was refined to minimize construction and right-of-way impacts, including, but not limited to, the addition of an enhanced pedestrian walkway on Flower Street, shift in the alignment under Little Tokyo with an associated shift in the location of the 1<sup>st</sup>/Central Avenue Station, change in the tunnel boring machine (TBM) insertion site to the Mangrove property, and extended use of the TBM to 4<sup>th</sup> Street instead of ending at the proposed 2<sup>nd</sup>/Hope Street station, as described in the project description below.

### **Description of the Project**

The Project as described in the Final EIS is the subject of this ROD. Final design and construction of the Regional Connector Transit Corridor is scheduled to begin in 2014, with revenue operations commencing in 2019. The Project will operate using high-floor articulated vehicles, electrically powered by overhead wires, and operate along rail tracks located in an exclusive underground right-of-way. The LPA alignment will be double-tracked and will be comprised of below-grade sections and portals connecting to existing LRT systems.

Route. The Project will cover approximately 1.9 miles from the Metro Blue Line terminus at the 7<sup>th</sup> Street/Metro Center Station to the Metro Gold Line. The Project will extend north from the existing Metro Blue Line platform at 7<sup>th</sup> Street/Metro Center Station and will run underneath Flower Street. The tracks will veer northeast near the intersection of 3<sup>rd</sup> and Flower Streets to run east underneath 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. The tracks will continue east underneath 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to just west of Central Avenue where the alignment will then veer northeast and into a new underground rail junction at Alameda Street. Separating from the junction, one set of tracks will continue north underground beneath the Mangrove property (located on the northeast corner of 1<sup>st</sup> and Alameda Streets), along the eastern side of the existing Little Tokyo/Arts District Station. The tracks will then travel under Temple Street, East of the Temple Street and the Alameda Street intersection, before surfacing through a portal in the southwest corner of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) maintenance yard and rise to connect to the existing Metro Gold Line LRT bridge over US Highway 101 (US 101). The other set of tracks leaving the underground junction at Alameda Street will rise to the east within 1<sup>st</sup> Street to accommodate a new portal and the existing Metro Gold Line tracks. The portal will be located within 1<sup>st</sup> Street between Alameda and Garey Streets, with the portal opening just west of Garey Street. The new Regional Connector tracks will join the existing 1<sup>st</sup> Street LRT tracks, just west of the 1<sup>st</sup> Street Bridge.

Stations. Three new, below-grade stations will be located at 2<sup>nd</sup>/Hope Street, 2<sup>nd</sup>/Broadway Street, and the Little Tokyo/Arts District (1<sup>st</sup>/Central Avenue).

Other features. The project includes an enhanced pedestrian walkway along the east side of Flower Street between 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets. Enhancements would include landscaping, way finding signage, art features, and amenities aimed at improving pedestrian experience and safety.

## **Basis for Decision**

FTA has determined that the Project meets the purpose and need of the proposed action as discussed below.

*Regional Connectivity and Transit Accessibility:* The Project will substantially improve regional access and mobility. Two transfers are currently needed for Metro Blue Line light rail from Long Beach or Exposition Line from Culver City for passengers traveling to the Metro Gold Line to Pasadena or East Los Angeles. The Project will reduce transfers, thus improving mobility and trip times and drawing more riders onto the Metro Rail system. The Project will carry a high volume of transit trips, nearly 90,000 per day according to ridership projections. Daily linked transit trips will increase by nearly 18,000 persons. The Project will also provide rail transit coverage of the downtown area, and includes three new stations serving the Civic Center, Bunker Hill, Historic Core, Little Tokyo, and Arts District.

*Peak Hour Congestion.* The area from which Regional Connector ridership is expected to be drawn includes several freeways and major intersections that have significant traffic congestion and long delays, including Interstate 5 (I-5), US 101, and State Route 110 (SR 110). The improved convenience of transit improvements in the Regional Connector Transit Corridor would encourage use of a public transit alternative that would reduce daily vehicle trips, vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and congestion on the region's roadways.

*Benefits for the Environment:* The Project will substantially reduce VMT and help the region meet its greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets. The Project will result in a reduction of daily VMT, reducing regional GHG emissions by nearly 60,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e).

*Land Use Integration and Economic Development:* The Project will increase accessibility to activity centers, thereby facilitating transit oriented development opportunities in or near station areas, particularly where there are local land use incentives and favorable market conditions. Although the construction of the Project does not directly cause development to occur, the Project would offer the opportunity for land use plans and policies to encourage new development and redevelopment near stations to take advantage of transportation infrastructure and the transit accessibility. In addition, landscape treatments along the enhanced pedestrian walkway on Flower Street and near stations would enhance the urban design of the communities within the transit corridor, making opportunities for development more attractive. The Project will create significant numbers of jobs for the region. The Project will create approximately 16,500 new jobs over the four year construction period.

## **Measures to Mitigate the Adverse Effects of the Project**

Measures to mitigate the effects of the Project were considered during the Project's development in coordination with the interested agencies. All reasonable means to avoid and minimize the adverse effects of the Project have been adopted. These mitigation actions include, but are not limited to, all commitments for further consultation on specific issues. The mitigation commitments are described in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP) to ensure fulfillment of all environmental and related commitments in the Final EIS (see Attachment A). Any change in such mitigation from the description in the Final EIS will require a review in accordance with 23 C.F.R. § 771.130 and must be approved by FTA in writing.

## **Public Involvement and Outreach**

Development of the Project has included public outreach using different venues and techniques for participation by the public and other agencies. Public meetings, including formal public and agency scoping meetings, public hearings, and a series of community update meetings were held at key study milestones. All meetings were located within various parts of the Corridor that were accessible by public transit.

Multi-lingual outreach to Japanese, Korean, and Spanish-speaking stakeholders was conducted, including translation at community updates and formal scoping meetings, as well as translation of most collateral materials. Multi-tiered meeting notifications including direct mail, internet based distribution via email, print and broadcast media, newspaper advertisements, and on-board postings on Metro buses and trains. Employment of “new” media such as blogs, social networks, and other internet or web-based tools (including a live web-broadcast of an April 2010 Community Update Meeting) were used to provide regional notification and involve traditionally hard to reach audiences (such as youth and commuters) in the decision-making process.

LACMTA maintained a contact list of stakeholders located throughout the project area and those located adjacent to the Corridor or who could be directly affected by implementation of the Project. Stakeholders were notified of public station planning workshops, focused on urban and streetscape design concepts and station area planning for the proposed stations along the project corridor. Workshop participants were involved in group discussions and were given the opportunity to provide feedback to the project team.

Targeted stakeholder meetings focused on specialized issues and localized concerns, including the stakeholders in Little Tokyo and the Little Tokyo Working Group (LTWG), which addressed concerns related to construction and operational impacts in Little Tokyo and Urban Design Working Group (UDWG), which examined urban design issues as well as focused station location and entrance discussions for the Financial District, Bunker Hill, Little Tokyo, and Historic Core. Meetings held with residential groups such as the Savoy and Higgins Building Homeowners Associations in addition to large property owners in the Financial District and on Grand Avenue addressed potential impacts to their properties.

Initial public comments were received during a 49-day public scoping period that were documented and reviewed in the preparation of the Draft EIS. LACMTA initiated a second round of public comments with the release of the Draft EIS. During the 45-day public review period for the Draft EIS, the document was placed in local public libraries and other repository sites, and made available on the LACMTA website (<http://www.metro.net/projects/connector>). Public hearing testimony and written comments on the Draft EIS were compiled during the public review period.

In the fall of 2010, the LACMTA Board of Directors considered public comments as part of its selection process for the LPA for the Regional Connector Transit Corridor. Refinements, including the approach in and out of the underground station at 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Central Avenue on the eastern end of the alignment, were made to the LPA in response to comments received on the Draft EIS, in an effort to minimize environmental effects, and to refine project design.

Pursuant to NEPA (23 C.F.R. § 771.130 (c)), a SEA/RDEIR was prepared and circulated for public comment. The 45-day public review period for the SEA/RDEIR occurred between July 22, 2011 and September 6, 2011. The SEA/RDEIR was placed in local public libraries and other

repository sites, and posted on the project website (<http://www.metro.net/projects/connector>). Responses to public comments received during the circulation periods for the Draft EIS and SEA/RDEIR were incorporated into the Final EIS. Attachment B to this ROD includes and responds to public and agency comments received on the Final EIS since its circulation.

In complying with Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), FTA and LACMTA identified other Federal and non-Federal agencies that may have had an interest in the Project. Participating agency letters of invitation were mailed to agencies in March 2009. Agencies also were sent letters and were given an opportunity to comment on the SEA/RDEIR, Draft and Final EIS.

### **Determinations and Findings**

#### **Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act**

Historic properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and known archaeological resources will not be affected by the Project. The Project has the potential to directly affect the Los Angeles Zanja System, should a branch of the Zanja be encountered or discovered during construction. The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), included as Attachment D, delineates specific State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)-approved procedures that will be implemented in the case of any unanticipated archaeological discovery during construction. Mitigation measures for treatment of discovered but not formally evaluated archaeological resources and for undiscovered archaeological resources, as well as for paleontological monitoring are included in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) and will be implemented during the Project construction, as necessary. FTA determined that the Project will not have an adverse effect on cultural resources within the project area.

#### **Air Quality Conformity**

The Project satisfies the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) air quality conformity requirements under 40 C.F.R. Part 93, as documented in the Final EIS in Section 4.5.3.1. The Project involves an electrically-powered mass transit line that will not increase diesel traffic on the local roadway system and the operation of the Project will not involve a bus or rail terminal that significantly increases diesel vehicles. The Project would decrease the overall number of automobiles and vehicles operating in the region. As a result, it would neither cause new PM<sub>10</sub> or PM<sub>2.5</sub> hot spots nor increase the frequency or severity of existing PM<sub>10</sub> or PM<sub>2.5</sub> violations. No localized adverse impacts from CO are expected under this Project. The Project is included in a conforming Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP), and thus the project is included in emission budgets developed for the region. The Project would implement the particulate matter control measures contained in the RTP and RTIP and meet the requirements of 40 C.F.R. § 93.117.

#### **Section 4(f) Findings**

The Project will not result in a use of Section 4(f) protected parks, recreation areas, or refuges under Title 49 U.S.C. § 303. In regards to historic resources, the Project will have a *de minimis* impact on the St. Vibiana Cathedral Rectory. Pursuant to 23 C.F.R. § 774.3, FTA has determined that the use of the property, including any measure(s) to minimize harm (such as any avoidance, minimization, mitigation, or enhancement measures) committed to by the LACMTA, will have a *de minimis* impact, as defined in 23 C.F.R. § 774.17, on the property.

The Project has the potential to directly affect the Los Angeles Zanja System, should a branch of the Zanja be encountered or discovered during construction. The Memorandum of Agreement establishes mitigation measures that are appropriate to avoid use as defined by Section 4(f).

#### Endangered Species Act

There are currently no sensitive species or habitat located directly within the project area. Due to lack of suitable habitat, none of the sensitive species listed by the California Natural Diversity Database are anticipated to occur in the project area. Due to the lack of suitable habitat, no formal consultation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service was required. Therefore, no adverse effects pursuant to the Endangered Species Act will occur.

#### Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act

No local surface water bodies are located in the immediate vicinity of the Corridor. The Project will comply with Title III and Title IV of the Clean Water Act and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) standards during and following construction. To comply with the NPDES General Construction Permit, a Notice of Initiation will be filed with the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) prior to construction. The Project will 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 dirt, construction materials, pollutants, or other human-associated materials are not discharged from the project area into surface waters or into areas that will eventually drain to 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 shall be developed and implemented in compliance with the RWQCB, the LACMTA stormwater standards, and shall be developed in cooperation with the City and County of Los Angeles. Prior to approval of grading permits, an appropriate drainage control plan, such as a Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan in accordance with City of Los Angeles standards, that controls construction and operational on-site and off-site runoff and drainage in a manner acceptable to LACMTA and the RWQCB for the specific project site shall be implemented. Upon completion of construction, a Notice of Termination will be filed with the RWQCB. Therefore, no adverse effects are anticipated related to surface water bodies for the Project.

#### Executive Order 11988: Floodplain Management

The Project is not located within any 100-year or 500-year flood zones and, therefore, no modifications to any established floodplains will result from implementation of the Project. The alignment is located in an area already developed with impervious surfaces as well as well-developed drainage infrastructure and will not increase the risk of flooding. No adverse effects to Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management) will occur.

#### Executive Order 12898: Environmental Justice

The study area for the Project is entirely within downtown Los Angeles. Little Tokyo was identified as an environmental justice population in the project area. Little Tokyo is one of only three remaining Japantowns in the United States, and is a historic cultural center of national importance. Based on field studies and recent demographic data, low-income and minority populations elsewhere along the alignment were not observed to be meaningfully greater than the surrounding areas nor were they greater than 50 percent of the general population.

Outside of Little Tokyo, there are no environmental justice populations that will be disproportionately impacted by the Project's construction and operation. Refinements to the LPA since publication of the Draft EIS have reduced potentially disproportionate adverse impacts in Little Tokyo. Less cut and cover construction and fewer acquisitions will be needed, and TBM staging will be in a less impactful location on the edge of Little Tokyo. By reducing the need for road and sidewalk closures, property acquisitions, job displacement, and overall neighborhood disruption during construction, the refinements have helped reduce potential impacts in Little Tokyo. Specific measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate these adverse effects are set forth in the Final EIS and Attachment A to this ROD. Accordingly, FTA has concluded, in accordance with Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*, that the environmental justice community will not be subject to disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects as a result of the Project.

**Environmental Finding required by Federal Transit Law [49 U.S.C. § 5324(b)]**

The environmental record for the Project consists of all technical analyses, the Draft EIS, SEA/RDEIR, Final EIS, and this ROD, which includes the MMRP (Attachment A). This environmental record for the Project includes: the environmental effects of the Project; the adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided; alternatives to the Project; and irreversible and irretrievable effects on the environment. FTA has reviewed the public and agency comments on the Draft EIS, SEA/RDEIR, and Final EIS and the transcripts of the hearings submitted under 49 U.S.C. § 5323(b). Attachment B to this ROD includes and responds to public and agency comments received on the Final EIS since its circulation. Attachment C includes relevant correspondence. There were no comments relating to new environmental issues that had not been previously addressed and resolved in Volumes F-2, F-3, and F-4 of the Final EIS. FTA finds that an adequate opportunity to present views was given to all parties having a significant economic, social, or environmental interest in the Project. FTA finds that the preservation and enhancement of the environment and the interest of the community in which the Project is located were considered. FTA finds that, with the execution of the MMRP in Attachment A, all reasonable steps are being taken to minimize the adverse environmental effects of the Project, and where adverse environmental effects remain, no feasible and prudent alternative to such effects exists.



Leslie T. Rogers  
Regional Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration, Region IX

JUN 29 2012

Date

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
- Attachment B: Summary of Comments and Responses to Comments on the Final EIS
- Attachment C: Relevant Correspondence
- Attachment D: Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement