



U.S. Department  
Of Transportation  
**Federal Transit  
Administration**

REGION IX  
Arizona, California,  
Hawaii, Nevada, Guam  
American Samoa,  
Northern Mariana Islands

201 Mission Street  
Suite 1650  
San Francisco, CA 94105-1839  
415-744-3133  
415-744-2726 (fax)

**AUG 9 2012**

Mr. Arthur T. Leahy  
Chief Executive Officer  
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
One Gateway Plaza  
Los Angeles, CA 90012-295

RE: Environmental Record of Decision for the  
Westside Subway Extension Project

*ART*  
Dear Mr. Leahy:

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has completed its review of the public and interagency comments on the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Westside Subway Extension Project (Project). In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), FTA has issued the enclosed Record of Decision (ROD) for the Project. As stated in the ROD, the Project must incorporate all the mitigation measures presented in the FEIS and the ROD. These mitigation measures include, but are not limited to, all commitments for further consultation on specific issues.

If the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) contemplates any change to the Project, LACMTA must notify FTA immediately and refrain from taking any action related to the proposed change until FTA has determined what, if any, additional environmental analysis is necessary, and that analysis has been completed and approved by FTA. For example, if LACMTA wishes to make a change to the mitigation measures in the FEIS, the ROD, or a change to the Project that would cause new or changed environmental or community impacts not presented in the FEIS, then LACMTA must notify FTA in writing of the desire to make a change.

Any such change will be reviewed in accordance with FTA environmental procedures (23 C.F.R. § 771.130) on supplemental documentation. FTA will determine the appropriate level of environmental review for this or any other proposed change (i.e., a written re-evaluation of the FEIS, an environmental assessment of the change, or a supplemental EIS), and the NEPA process for this supplemental environmental review will conclude with a separate NEPA determination or, if necessary, with an amendment to this ROD.

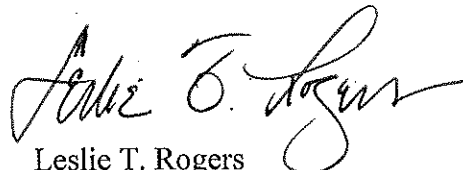
Upon FTA's issuance of the ROD, LACMTA is authorized to take Project actions that have pre-award authorization. Pre-award authorization is not a real or implied commitment by FTA to

provide any funding for the Project or any element of the Project. However, if FTA were to provide grant funding for the Project, the cost of the Project actions that have pre-award authorization, performed after the issuance of the ROD, would be eligible expenses. All pre-award actions must comply with all Federal requirements, including FTA Buy America requirements, to maintain eligibility for reimbursement of costs incurred in connection with those actions.

Please make the ROD and supporting documentation available to affected government agencies and the public. Availability of the ROD should be published in local newspapers and the ROD should be posted on the Project website. The ROD also should be provided directly to affected government agencies, including the State Inter-governmental Review contact established under Executive Order 12372.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to bring this important Project to fruition. Should you have any questions on the ROD, please contact Mr. Ray Tellis of our Los Angeles Metropolitan Office at (213) 202-3956.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leslie T. Rogers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and "R".

Leslie T. Rogers  
Regional Administrator

**Record of Decision  
on the  
Westside Subway Extension 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 environmental statutes, regulations, and executive orders have been satisfied for the Westside Subway Extension Project (Project) located in Los Angeles County, California.

This environmental Record of Decision (ROD) applies to the fixed guideway transit alternative that would operate as an extension of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) Purple Line heavy rail transit (HRT) subway from its current western terminus at Wilshire/Western Station to a new western terminus near the West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs (VA) Hospital, which was described as the Project (defined as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) and refinements) and evaluated in the *Westside Subway Extension Final Environmental Impact Statement/Final Environmental Impact Report* (FEIS), dated March 2012. The Project sponsor, LACMTA, seeks financial assistance from FTA for the Project. If FTA provides financial assistance for the Project, FTA will require that LACMTA design and build it as presented in the FEIS and this ROD. Any proposed change by LACMTA must be evaluated in accordance with 23 C.F.R. § 771.130 and must be approved by FTA in writing before the agency can proceed with the change.

**Background**

The Project is a HRT subway that would operate as an extension of the existing Metro Purple Line HRT subway from its current terminus at Wilshire/Western Station to a new western terminus near the West Los Angeles VA Hospital. The alignment travels westerly beneath Wilshire Boulevard to the Wilshire/Rodeo Station and then southwesterly toward the Century City Station. The extension will be nearly nine miles and will include a total of seven new stations: Wilshire/La Brea, Wilshire/Fairfax, Wilshire/La Cienega, Wilshire/Rodeo, Century City, Westwood/UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles), and Westwood/VA Hospital. The Project will include enhancements to the Division 20 Maintenance and Storage Facility located in Downtown Los Angeles to accommodate additional heavy rail vehicles.

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

**Planning for the Project**

The Project will improve mobility and provide fast, reliable, high-capacity, and environmentally sound transportation solutions in the Westside of Los Angeles. Since the early 1980s, transit service has been envisioned to extend toward Beverly Hills, Century City, Westwood/UCLA,

West Los Angeles, and Santa Monica. Twelve large population and employment centers are located along the corridor, and are served by congested road networks that will deteriorate further with projected increases in population and jobs. This anticipated growth will further affect transit travel speeds and reliability, even with a dedicated lane for express bus service on Wilshire Boulevard. The underlying needs supporting transit improvements in the Corridor include linking major activity centers via transit to reduce reliance on automobiles, meeting the growing demand for transit service, connecting existing and planned transit service, reducing peak hour congestion and meeting regional objectives for mobility, accessibility and reliability.

FTA published the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this Project in the *Federal Register* on March 24, 2009. The scoping process concluded on May 7, 2009. The Notice of Availability (NOA) of the *Westside Subway Extension Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report* (DEIS) was published in the *Federal Register* on September 3, 2010. The DEIS was made available to stakeholders, agencies, and the general public for review and comment for a 45-day period from September 3, 2010 through October 18, 2010.

On October 28, 2010, the LACMTA Board of Directors identified Alternative 2, Westwood/VA Hospital Extension as the LPA. The LPA will extend the HRT subway system approximately nine miles from the existing Metro Purple Line Wilshire/Western Station to a Westwood/VA Hospital Station.

The NOA for the FEIS was published on March 23, 2012 in the *Federal Register*. The 30-day review period for the FEIS was set to conclude on April 23, 2012, but FTA extended the NEPA review period for an additional 30-days at the request of stakeholders. The review period ended on May 22, 2012.

### **Alternatives Considered**

Planning and screening efforts were conducted to lead up to the NEPA process and to identify which alternatives met the Project's purpose and need. Identified alternatives were advanced and analyzed through the process, thereby resulting in a Project definition (LPA and refinements). The screening, evaluations and public involvement effort included:

- An initial screening of the potential reasonable transit modes, alignments, and station locations occurred during the Alternatives Analysis Study (AA) and early scoping meetings.
- A detailed screening of the conceptual alternatives determined the alternatives that were discussed, analyzed, and evaluated in the AA and presented for public comment.
- The final alternatives screening in the AA, resulting in the five build alternatives with station and alignment options being carried forward into the EIS process.

In 2007, based on public input and an evaluation of purpose and need, an initial set of 17 conceptual build alternatives, as well as No Build and Transportation System Management (TSM) alternatives, were developed during the initial screening process and presented to the public at early scoping meetings. The conceptual build alternatives fell into five major categories:

1. Wilshire Boulevard-based heavy rail subway alignments
2. Santa Monica Boulevard-based heavy rail subway alignments
3. Combined Wilshire Boulevard/Santa Monica Boulevard heavy rail subway alignments
4. HRT, light rail transit (LRT), and monorail elevated alignments
5. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) alignments

The initial screening recommended an underground alignment as it has fewer land use, right-of-way, traffic, visual, historical, and noise impacts than an elevated alignment. Five conceptual build alternatives were carried forward for more detailed comparative analysis:

1. Alternative 1 - Wilshire Boulevard HRT Subway
2. Alternative 14 - Wilshire/Fairfax Center HRT Subway
3. Alternative 11 - Wilshire/Santa Monica Boulevards Combined HRT Subway
4. Alternative 16 - Wilshire/Santa Monica Boulevards Combined HRT Subway with transfers at Hollywood/Highland Station
5. Alternative 17 - Wilshire/Santa Monica Boulevards BRT

Following the detailed screening, the *Westside Extension Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis Study (2009)* recommended HRT as the preferred technology for further study because it provides the capacity to serve the anticipated ridership demand. While BRT may provide a near-term solution, it did not provide sufficient capacity in the long term and did not provide as reliable trip-time performance as HRT. Furthermore, as the existing system at Wilshire/Western is HRT, an extension of the HRT would limit the number of transfers, which will improve transit services, mobility, and travel time for travel within, to, and from the Study Area. Alternative 1 and Alternative 11 were recommended for further study in the DEIS.

After the public scoping meetings, five variations of Alternative 1 and 11 were developed based on the goals and objectives of the Project, public comments, design considerations, avoidance and minimization of impacts, and fiscal constraints. The five build alternatives, as well as the No Build and TSM Alternatives, were carried forward into the DEIS. These alternatives included six station and alignment options, which were discussed in the *Westside Subway Extension Alternatives Scoping and Refinement Following the Environmental Scoping Report (2010)*.

- *Alternative 1 – Westwood/UCLA Extension:* This alternative extends HRT, in subway, from the existing Metro Purple Line Wilshire/Western Station to a Westwood/UCLA Station. From the Wilshire/Western Station, it travels westerly beneath Wilshire Boulevard to the Wilshire/Rodeo Station, then southwesterly toward a Century City Station and terminates at a Westwood/UCLA Station. Alternative 1 is approximately 8.60 miles in length and includes seven stations.
- *Alternative 2 – Westwood/VA Hospital Extension:* This alternative is the same as Alternative 1 from the existing Wilshire/Western Station to a Westwood/UCLA Station. From this station, Alternative 2 then travels westerly under Veteran Avenue and continues west under the I-405 Freeway, terminating at a Westwood/VA Hospital Station. This alignment is 8.96 miles in length from the Wilshire/Western Station. This alternative includes eight stations.

- *Alternative 3 – Santa Monica Extension:* This alternative is the same as Alternative 2 from the existing Wilshire/Western Station to the Westwood/VA Hospital Station. From this station, Alternative 3 would then continue westerly under Wilshire Boulevard, terminating at the Wilshire/4th Street Station between 4th and 5th Streets. This alignment is 12.38 miles in length from the Wilshire/Western Station. This alternative includes twelve stations.
- *Alternative 4 – Westwood/VA Hospital Extension plus West Hollywood Extension:* Similar to Alternative 2, Alternative 4 extends from the existing Wilshire/Western Station to a Westwood/VA Hospital Station, but also adds a West Hollywood extension. The West Hollywood extension connects the Metro Red Line Hollywood/Highland Station to the proposed Metro Purple Line extension. From Hollywood/Highland, the West Hollywood extension runs south under Highland Avenue, westerly under Santa Monica Boulevard, southerly on San Vicente Boulevard, then southwesterly toward Wilshire Boulevard to the track connection structure at Robertson and Wilshire Boulevards. This alignment is 14.06 miles in length and includes thirteen stations.
- *Alternative 5 – Santa Monica Extension plus West Hollywood Extension:* Similar to Alternative 3, Alternative 5 extends from the existing Metro Purple Line Wilshire/Western Station to a Wilshire/4th Station, but adds a West Hollywood extension similar to the extension described in Alternative 4. This alignment is 17.49 miles in length and includes seventeen stations.

Station and alignment options: The five build alternatives included six station and alignment options, which were developed in response to comments received during the DEIS scoping. Criteria for station and alignment location screening and selection were based on the goals and objectives identified in the Purpose and Need of the Project and included: engineering feasibility, construction feasibility, environmental considerations and community preference, urban design considerations, user benefits, and costs. The station and alignment options were as follows:

- *Option 1 - Wilshire/Crenshaw Station Option.* Option 1 would eliminate the Wilshire/Crenshaw Station from the Project.
- *Option 2 - Wilshire/ Fairfax Station Option.* This option would shift the Wilshire/Fairfax Station to the east side of the Wilshire/Fairfax intersection.
- *Option 3 - Wilshire/La Cienega Station and West Hollywood Connection Structure Option.* Under this option, the Wilshire/La Cienega Station would be located west of La Cienega Boulevard. The station would be designed as a transfer station, allowing direct transfers between the Wilshire Boulevard and West Hollywood branches of the subway, instead of a transfer at the Wilshire/Rodeo Station.
- *Option 4 - Century City Station and Alignment Options – Century City Constellation.* Option 4 includes an alternate location for the Century City Station on Constellation Boulevard instead of Santa Monica Boulevard. This option also includes two alignment options from Wilshire/Rodeo (Constellation North Alignment and Constellation South Alignment) to the Century City Station at Constellation Boulevard and three alignment options from the Century City Station to the Westwood/UCLA Station (East, Central, and West Alignments).
- *Option 5 - Westwood/UCLA Station Option.* This option would locate the Westwood/UCLA Station under the center of Wilshire Boulevard, extending from just west of Westwood Boulevard

to west of Gayley Avenue, almost to Veteran Avenue, as opposed to the base station which is located off of Wilshire Boulevard under UCLA Lot 36.

- *Option 6 - Westwood/VA Hospital Station Option.* This option would locate the Westwood/VA Hospital Station on the north side of Wilshire Boulevard, west of Bonsall Avenue.

In October 2010, the LACMTA Board of Directors identified Alternative 2 as the LPA. Options 1, 2 and 3 were incorporated into the LPA. Three options (Option 4-Century City Constellation Station with the North and East Alignments, Option 5-Westwood/UCLA Station, and Option 6-Westwood/VA Hospital Station) remained as options to the LPA in the FEIS. In April 2012, the LACMTA Board of Directors adopted Option 4 and Option 5, but did not adopt Option 6, as part of the Project definition.

The other alternatives were withdrawn from consideration based on financial constraints and cost, ridership, and connectivity to activity centers. Only Alternatives 1 and 2 are affordable within the adopted Long Range Transportation Plan. Between these two alternatives, Alternative 2 provides significantly higher ridership and higher cost-effectiveness over Alternative 1. Further, extending the alignment and adding the Westwood/VA Hospital Station would serve a major regional center and provide an important access point to the regional transit system located west of the I-405 Freeway. Therefore, Alternative 1 was selected as the LPA.

With the adoption of Option 1, the Wilshire/Crenshaw Station was not included as part of the LPA because it had lower ridership than the other stations and lacked community support. The optional station would conflict with local land use plans as it was located adjacent to lower density land uses that are not planned for future growth in the adopted Community Plan and Park Mile Specific Plan. Moreover, the station would not serve a major north south intersection, as Crenshaw Boulevard terminates at Wilshire Boulevard and does not extend to the north. Furthermore, future connections from the Westside subway stations along Wilshire Boulevard to the planned Crenshaw/LAX Light Rail Transit Project to the south have been recommended to take place at La Brea, La Cienega, or San Vicente rather than at Wilshire/Crenshaw.

Option 2 was included as part of the LPA due to stronger community support and better access and land integration opportunities, including proximity to Museum Row. Similarly, the Option 3 - Wilshire/La Cienega East Station location without a West Hollywood connection structure was included because it provided a connection to a denser, more commercial area than the other station location to the west of La Cienega. This station option also provides connections to two major north-south arterials, La Cienega and San Vicente Boulevards.

The LACMTA Board of Directors decided to carry Option 4 into the FEIS in response to concerns raised by the community. Comments were received during the public review of the DEIS regarding the safety of tunneling directly on a seismic fault (for the Santa Monica Boulevard Alignment) and the safety of tunneling under homes and schools (for the Constellation North and East Alignments). The Century City Santa Monica Station at Century Park East is located above a northern extension of the Newport-Inglewood Fault zone, and thus was not considered a viable option for the station. In the FEIS, the location of the Century City Santa Monica Station (at Century Park East) was shifted farther east to Avenue of the Stars in an attempt to minimize seismic issues. Based on seismic and geotechnical testing and refined seismic analysis conducted in Century City, it was determined that the location of the Century

City Santa Monica Station at Avenue of the Stars was directly above the Santa Monica Fault zone and thus not considered a viable option for the Century City Station. The Constellation Station site showed no evidence of faulting. Tunnels approaching either station location would necessarily cross both faults. However, the alignment associated with the Constellation Station would cross the fault zone at more of a right angle, which is more desirable for safe design.

A station on Constellation Boulevard would be more centrally located within Century City. Despite the longer alignment and slight increase in travel time, compared to the Century City Santa Monica Station, the ridership model predicted more than 3,000 additional daily boardings at the Century City Constellation Station and the seven new Purple Line stations west of Wilshire/Western. The cost of the track and station for the Century City Constellation Station would not be significantly different than the cost of the track and stations for the Century City Santa Monica Station. The Century City Santa Monica Station could require more temporary construction easements and acquisitions for station construction sites than the Century City Constellation Station depending on the location of construction staging. However, the Century City Santa Monica Station would require fewer subsurface easements than the Century City Constellation Station. Both station options would require temporary roadway lane closures during construction. Currently, Constellation Boulevard carries one-fifth the traffic volume of Santa Monica Boulevard and operates at a better level-of-service. Therefore, traffic impacts during construction would be less with the Constellation Boulevard Station option. Considering these factors, in April 2012, the LACMTA Board of Directors included the Century City Constellation Station as part of the Project definition.

In regards to the alignment options under Option 4, the LACMTA Board of Directors selected the Constellation North Alignment and the East Alignment to be carried forward as part of the LPA into the FEIS. The Constellation North Alignment was carried forward because it would pass beneath fewer residential properties and would require fewer subsurface easements than the Constellation South Alignment. The Constellation North Alignment would pass beneath four residential properties whereas the Constellation South Alignment would pass beneath 23 residential properties.

From the Century City Station to the Westwood/UCLA Station, the West Alignment is significantly longer than the other two alignment options, and would increase travel time between Century City and Westwood by more than two minutes. This, in turn, would lead to lower ridership and reduced user, air quality and energy conservation benefits. The West Alignment option would also increase capital costs by \$122 to \$142 million in comparison to the East Alignment option. Between the Central and East Alignment options, both have similar performance characteristics and costs. The East Alignment, however, passes under fewer private properties. Therefore, the East Alignment was selected to be carried forward as part of the LPA into the FEIS.

For Option 5, the on-street station location for the Westwood/UCLA Station was adopted as part of the Project definition as it provides better access to Westwood Village and the north-south thoroughfare of Westwood Boulevard. Compared to the off-street location, the on-street station includes an entrance at the Westwood Boulevard intersection, providing better access to bus connections along Westwood Boulevard, and would be slightly closer to major office buildings and Westwood Village. Furthermore, one of the station entrance options for the

Westwood/UCLA On-Street Station is a split entrance between the north and south sides of Wilshire Boulevard. This entrance configuration would provide access to both sides of Wilshire Boulevard, which has four traffic lanes in each direction with double left-turn lanes, which impedes pedestrian flow across the street. However, given that the on-street location occurs under Wilshire Boulevard, construction of the on-street station is expected to have adverse impacts during construction. Furthermore, the Westwood/UCLA off-street station option would require a deeper station and tunnels (approximately 40 feet deeper) in order to avoid the foundations for a future hotel on Gayley Avenue. The deeper tunnel and stations increase costs and pose risks during construction, and require more time for transit riders to travel between the platform and the entrance. This may affect transit travel times and ridership. Lastly, the on-street station option would require approximately 13 fewer residential and non-residential permanent underground easements than the off-street station option, regardless of the alignment option chosen from the Westwood/VA Hospital and Century City Stations.

Similar to Option 5, Option 6 was selected because it provides better connectivity to activity centers although the Westwood/VA Hospital South Station would have traffic impacts during construction (including temporary ramp closures at the I-405). While both the North and South Station Options are within one-quarter mile of the VA Hospital, the Westwood/VA Hospital South Station site is 500 feet from the hospital and on the same side of Wilshire Boulevard while the Westwood/VA Hospital North Station site is 1,200 feet away and on the other side of Wilshire Boulevard. Therefore, the Westwood/VA Hospital South Station offers better pedestrian access to the VA Hospital for employees, patients, and visitors. The South Station Option's vertical alignment also would be shallower than the North Station Option's vertical alignment, reducing the time it takes transit users to reach the platform from the entrance. A north alignment west of San Vicente Boulevard also would have to pass below a significant number of residential and commercial properties, which would not be necessary with the South Option. In addition, the North Option would be more challenging to design and would limit alignment options in the event of a future extension to Santa Monica due to the tight radius curve that would be required to extend west.

Maintenance Yard Options: Two alternatives for the maintenance yard expansion were analyzed in the DEIS to accommodate additional heavy rail vehicles that will be added to the fleet to accommodate the Build Alternatives. The first option would be to expand storage immediately south of the Division 20 Maintenance and Storage Facility between the 4th and 6th Street Bridges. This would accommodate 102 vehicles, which is sufficient capacity for Alternatives 1 and 2. For Alternative 3, 4, and 5, a satellite facility would be built at the Union Pacific (UP) Los Angeles Transportation Center Rail Yard, connected by yard lead tracks to the Division 20 Maintenance and Storage Facility. An additional 1.3 miles of track and a new bridge over the Los Angeles River would be constructed for vehicles to reach this yard. Since Alternative 3, 4, and 5 were eliminated from further consideration in October 2010 by the LACMTA Board of Directors, the first option (expand immediately south of the Division 20 Maintenance and Storage Facility) would provide adequate capacity to accommodate the additional vehicles and is included in the LPA.

### **Description of the Project**

The Project as described in the FEIS is the subject of this ROD. The Project would be built in three construction segments (Wilshire/Western to Wilshire/La Cienega, Wilshire/La Cienega to

Century City and Century City to Westwood/VA Hospital). The Project would open in three phases: Phase 1 to Wilshire/La Cienega, Phase 2 to Century City, and Phase 3 to Westwood/VA Hospital. Construction is expected to begin in 2014. The Project is planned to be operational to the Westwood/VA Hospital Station by 2036.

Route: The Project's alignment is roughly nine miles in length from the Wilshire/Western Station to the Westwood/VA Hospital Station. From the Wilshire/Western Station, the alignment travels westerly beneath Wilshire Boulevard to the Wilshire/Rodeo Station and then southwesterly toward a Century City Station. The alignment then extends from Century City to a Westwood/UCLA Station. From this station, the alignment then travels westerly under Veteran Avenue and continues west under the I-405 Freeway, terminating at a Westwood/VA Hospital Station. The Project alignment will be below the ground surface in subway.

Stations: The extension would include a total of seven new stations with the following entrances:

1. Wilshire/La Brea Station entrance would be located on the northwest corner of the Wilshire Boulevard and La Brea Avenue intersection at the current site of the LACMTA Customer Service Center.
2. Wilshire/Fairfax Station entrance would be located on Wilshire Avenue on the block between Ogden Drive and Orange Grove Avenue.
3. Wilshire/La Cienega Station entrance would be located on the northeast corner of the Wilshire Boulevard and La Cienega Boulevard intersection at the current site of the CitiBank building.
4. Wilshire/Rodeo Station entrance would be located on the southwest corner of Wilshire Boulevard and Reeves Drive at the current site of the Ace Gallery.
5. Century City Station entrance would be located at the northeast corner of Constellation Boulevard and Avenue of the Stars.
6. Westwood/UCLA Station entrances would be located on the northwest corner of Wilshire Boulevard and Gayley Avenue, and split between the northwest and southwest corners of Wilshire Boulevard and Westwood Boulevard.
7. Westwood/VA Hospital Station entrance would be located on the Bonsall level, beneath the bus drop-off area to the north of the VA Hospital parking lot.

Maintenance Facility: Enhancements to the Division 20 Maintenance and Storage Facility include new storage tracks, new turnback platforms and turnback tracks and increased capacity for major repairs, wheel truing, service and inspection, and blow down operations, in addition to other associated facilities such as equipment storage, offices, and amenities.

### **Basis for the Decision**

FTA has determined that the Project meets the Purpose and Need of the proposed action as discussed below.

Linkage to Major Activity Centers: The City of Los Angeles has recognized twelve high-density activity centers and two high-growth opportunity centers, of which seven activity centers and one high-growth opportunity center are located within the Study Area corridor. The Project would directly link seven of the twelve major activity centers and one recognized high-growth opportunity area located in the corridor while providing connections to other activity centers.

The Project would encourage the use of transit and help reduce reliance on automobiles for access to these high-density areas and preserve lower densities in existing communities outside the designated growth areas and improve levels of transit service. The Project will facilitate transit oriented development opportunities in or near station areas, particularly where there are local land use incentives and favorable market conditions. This also would support local general plan and zoning policies served by the Project in the Study Area.

Demand for Transit Service: LACMTA, the principal transit provider in the Study Area, provides bus transit coverage on most arterials in the Study Area, including the Wilshire Corridor Bus Routes 20 and 720, which are among the most heavily used bus routes in Southern California. Bus ridership in the Wilshire Corridor surpasses the ridership of many light rail transit routes. Transit users completed 1.34 million trips in 2006 with demand for transit trips expected to increase to 1.71 million trips by 2035 without the Project. The increase in demand for transit will be for trips that begin and end within the Study Area and for trips that begin and end outside of the Study Area.

The Project would help meet the growing demand for transit service both within the Study Area and the region. It provides connections to and within activity centers as well as offers a reliable, fast transit service. With improved transit speeds, the Project will attract more travelers to transit. Daily boardings at the seven new Project stations are expected to be approximately 49,300 per day. Approximately 30,100 net additional daily riders will be attracted to public transportation with the Project. These are trips that would have been made by another mode. Another 20,000 riders are expected to switch from bus to rail each day to take advantage of the subway's greater speed and reliability. In total, transit riders using the Project will receive more than 38,000 hours of travel time savings per day.

Connections to Existing and Planned Transit Service: The existing system consists of more than 76 miles of Metro Rail service (heavy-rail transit and light rail transit) and 14 miles of BRT service. In addition, the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (Metrolink) operates over 500 miles of commuter rail lines serving five counties in Southern California including 200 miles in Los Angeles County. The Project will directly connect the west side of Los Angeles County with activity centers described earlier but will also reduce the number of transfers (as well as time) needed to connect to all elements of the existing and planned Metro system. In particular, the extension of the existing Purple Line would allow a direct, one-seat ride from Westwood to Union Station, the gateway for Metrolink and Amtrak trains and the Metro Gold Line.

Peak Hour Congestion: Currently, the freeways in the region and arterial streets providing access to the employment centers in the Study Area operate at congested levels though many periods of the day, especially during peak hour travel. With freeways (I-10 and I-405) in the region experiencing heavy congestion, the arterial streets, including key east/west arterials such as Wilshire Boulevard and Santa Monica Boulevard serve as alternatives to freeways for local and regional travel. As a result, the arterials also operate at congested conditions throughout the day due to the insufficient roadway capacity to handle traffic volume.

Between 2006 and 2035, substantial increases are projected in vehicle miles travelled (VMT) and vehicle hours travelled (VHT) within the region. With VHT within the Study Area expected to increase by approximately 40 percent between years 2006 and 2035, congestion as characterized by VHT, VMT and intersection level of service (LOS) will worsen on arterial streets within the

Study Area. In turn, such congestion would affect the travel times and reliability of bus lines that run along Wilshire Boulevard. Metro Bus 20 and 720 (a Metro Rapid line meant for speedier service and with high ridership) currently travel at speeds between 10 and 15 miles per hour.

The Project will reduce congestion by providing reliable, higher speed transit service. During peak periods, rail operating speeds are faster than speeds for a comparable trip by automobile, providing more reliability in travel time variation. The improved convenience of transit improvements in the corridor would encourage use of a public transit alternative that would reduce daily vehicle trips, VMT, and congestion on roadways.

**Mobility, Accessibility and Reliability:** The Study Area has been designated by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) as one of the most congested areas in the five-county region based on the performance indicators of mobility, accessibility, reliability, and safety. The Project will directly assist meeting regional objectives for mobility (average daily speed, average daily delay per capita); accessibility (percent of PM (evening peak period) work trips within 45 minutes of residence); and reliability (percent variation in travel time during weekdays, 5 to 6 PM). In regards to improving mobility and reliability of transit, the Project, operating in an exclusive guideway that is fully separated from roadway traffic, will achieve much higher speeds than would be possible with buses, even with the bus priority treatments assumed in the No Build Alternative. During peak periods, rail operating speeds are faster than speeds for a comparable trip by automobile, providing more reliability in travel time variation. New links between the Project and other transit lines will reduce transfers and will improve transit travel time for residents throughout the County.

#### **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 interested agencies. All reasonable means to avoid and minimize the adverse effects of the Project have been adopted. The mitigation commitments are briefly described in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP), which is attached to this ROD as Attachment A, to ensure the fulfillment of those commitments. Mitigation measures are also identified in the FEIS. Any change to mitigation measures identified in the MMRP or FEIS 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**

Throughout the NEPA process, the Project used a wide ranging public outreach program employing a comprehensive range of strategies to actively engage stakeholders. The program included scoping meetings, community update meetings, key stakeholder meetings, and elected officials briefings, as well as development and dissemination of informational materials, a Project website, a Project information line, online social networking, and media relations. Project fact sheets, including illustrative maps, discussed the new transit improvements under evaluation, the importance of the corridor, transportation needs, the Study Area, alternatives, and schedule. A set of frequently asked questions was also developed and updated throughout the process to address key issues and questions about the Project. Various means were used to invite public comment throughout the Project, including email and direct mail to stakeholders in the Project database, and "Take One" brochures placed on public transit and in public venues, such as local libraries.

LACMTA maintained a contact list of stakeholders located throughout the Project area or who could be directly affected by the implementation of the Project. Stakeholders were notified of public station planning workshops, which focused on urban design concepts and station area planning for stations along the corridor. Workshop participants were involved in group discussions and were given the opportunity to provide feedback to the project team. The Project website serves as a central point where stakeholders can obtain information about the Project via the Internet. In addition, LACMTA launched the “LACMTA Westside Extension” group on the Facebook social networking site. Twitter was also used as a vehicle for providing community members not present at meetings with quick notes throughout the proceedings, allowing stakeholders to stay informed.

Meeting notices were timed to be released at least two weeks ahead of each public meeting. Public outreach included efforts to ensure the involvement of minority, low-income, and disabled persons. Those efforts were sensitive to multiple distribution channels and language needs, and included the selection of transit-accessible venues that complied with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Notices were placed in English, Spanish and Korean language newspapers. All announcements provided the specific transit routes that could be used to attend the meetings. Simultaneous translations were provided at each community meeting. Spanish translation was available at every public meeting with the addition of Russian for meetings held in West Hollywood and Korean for meetings held in the Mid-Wilshire and Koreatown areas. Closed captioning for the hearing-impaired was provided to the community on an as-requested basis provided that requests were made with 72 hours advance notice.

The DEIS was initiated with the publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register on March 24, 2009. Initial public comments were received during a 30-day public scoping period. Those public comments were documented and reviewed in preparation of drafting the DEIS. Six scoping meetings were held throughout the corridor between April 13, 2009 and April 23, 2009 to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the Project’s purpose, the alternatives to be considered, and issues and areas of concern to be considered in the DEIS. In addition to the public scoping meetings, an agency scoping meeting was held on April 13, 2009 at LACMTA Headquarters.

During the preparation of the DEIS, LACMTA held 25 community update meetings between August 4, 2009 and July 14, 2010 throughout the corridor. Following the publication of the DEIS on September 3, 2010, LACMTA continued encouraging public input during the 45-day public review period for the DEIS. The availability of the DEIS was well publicized through mailings, flyers, and website announcements. Copies of the DEIS were placed in local public libraries and other repository sites, and made available on the LACMTA website. LACMTA held five public hearings, between September 20, 2009 and September 29, 2009, throughout the corridor. Public hearing testimony and written comments on the DEIS were compiled during the public review period. In October 2010, LACMTA also conducted community briefings and presentations in the Westside Subway Extension corridor.

The public comments received during the circulation period of the DEIS, and the responses to those comments, were incorporated into the FEIS. During the preparation of the FEIS, LACMTA held six community update meetings between January 24, 2011 and March 29, 2011 throughout the corridor. Following the release of the FEIS on March 19, 2012, three community

open house meetings were held on March 26, 2012 at LACMTA, March 28, 2012 at Westwood United Methodist Church, and March 29, 2012 at Temple Emanuel, Beverly Hills. The public circulation period for the FEIS ended on May 22, 2012. During and after the public circulation period, the City of Beverly Hills (City) and the Beverly Hills Unified School District (BHUSD) submitted letters requesting the preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) related to potential Project impacts. After extensive review of the City's and BHUSD's requests and supporting documents, FTA determined that there have been no changes to the proposed action or new circumstances or information necessitating the preparation of a Supplemental EIS under 23 C.F.R. § 771.130(a).

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 per Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU were mailed to agencies at the onset of formal scoping in March 2009. Participating outreach efforts included an agency scoping meeting (described in Section 8.4.3 of the FEIS), agency coordination meetings, and coordination meetings with individual agencies, including, but not limited to, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the California Department of Transportation, and the cities in the corridor.

### **Determinations and Findings**

#### **Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)**

The Project would have no adverse effect on 39 historic properties and two historic districts within the Area of Potential Effect. However, it would result in an adverse effect on the Ace Gallery Building, located on the southwest corner of Wilshire/Reeves at 9430 Wilshire Boulevard, which was determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. This property would be demolished for construction staging and a station entrance. The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) (included as Attachment B) delineates specific procedures that will be implemented in the case of any unanticipated archaeological discovery during construction. Mitigation measures related to the treatment of discovered but not formally evaluated archaeological resources, undiscovered archaeological resources, and paleontological monitoring are included in the MMRP, and will be implemented during Project construction, as necessary.

#### **Air Quality Conformity**

The Project satisfies the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) air quality conformity requirements under 40 C.F.R. Part 93 as documented in the FEIS. The Project is not considered a Project of Air Quality Concern as defined in USEPA's Transportation Conformity Guidance. The Project is an electronically-powered mass transit system extension. The Project will increase regional transit ridership and decrease congestion on local roadways in the corridor. The Project would not increase the percentage of diesel vehicles on the roadway, does not involve a bus or rail terminal that significantly increases diesel vehicles, and is not identified in the State Implementation Plan (SIP) as a possible PM<sub>2.5</sub> or PM<sub>10</sub> violation use. 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 the use of any Section 4(f) protected park, recreational areas, or wildlife refuges under 49 U.S.C. § 303. In regards to historic resources, the Project would result in a *de minimis* impact to four historic resources (the May Company Building, Union Bank Building, Linde (Westwood) Medical Plaza, and the Veterans Affairs Medical Center Historic District). Pursuant to 23 C.F.R. § 774.3, FTA has determined that the use of those properties, including any measures 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 those resources. This *de minimis* impact determination is based, in part, on SHPO's concurrence, pursuant to Section 106 of the NHPA and its implementing regulations (36 C.F.R. Part 800), that the Project would have no adverse effect on the May Company Building, Union Bank Building, Linde (Westwood) Medical Plaza, and the Veterans Affairs Medical Center Historic District.

The Project would result in a direct use of one Section 4(f) property, the Ace Gallery Building. The Ace Gallery Building would be demolished for use as a construction staging and station entrance. There is no feasible and prudent avoidance alternative to the use of the Ace Gallery Building, and the alternative that uses the Ace Gallery Building would cause the least overall harm. The combination of the Ace Gallery Building property and the property called the Coldwell Banker site (site comprises three total properties) will best serve as the construction laydown site. Alternatives to the use of the Ace Gallery Building would have resulted in negative environmental impacts, such as the use of parklands; negative disruption to the surrounding neighborhood during construction; an extraordinary increase in the cost of construction and operation; and an unfavorable station entrance configuration. Further, the Ace Gallery Building and Coldwell Banker site are the only suitable properties with single business tenants in each of the properties, thereby minimizing tenant displacement and relocation. Moreover, the Project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the Ace Gallery Building. Measures to minimize harm to the Ace Gallery Building were incorporated into the MOA between FTA, LACMTA and SHPO. Those measures include the completion of National Park Service Historic American Building Survey (HABS) or Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) documentation prior to demolition of the Ace Gallery Building; placement of such HABS/HAER documentation on file with LACMTA, responsible agencies, historical societies and preservation groups, local universities and community libraries, and other appropriate national and local repositories and archives; and the development of a website concerning the history of the Ace Gallery Building.

#### Endangered Species Act

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

#### Sections 402 and 404 of the Clean Water Act

No local surface water bodies are located in the immediate vicinity of the corridor. The Project would comply with Title III and Title IV of the Clean Water Act and the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) standards during and following construction. To comply with the NPDES General Construction Permit, the Notice of Initiation would be filed with the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) prior to construction. The Project would include preparation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that includes the identification and implementation of applicable Best Management Practices (BMPs) to control erosion and to ensure that dirt, construction materials, pollutants or other human-associated materials are not discharged into surface waters or into areas that would eventually drain into storm drains. The SWPPP also includes a monitoring program to ascertain the effectiveness of the prescribed BMPs.

The construction and permanent BMPs included as part of the Project will be developed and implemented in compliance with RWQCB and LACMTA storm water standards and will be developed in cooperation with the Cities of Los Angeles and Beverly Hills and the County of Los Angeles. Prior to approval of grading permits, an appropriate drainage control plan, such as a Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan (SUSMP) in accordance with the Cities of Los Angeles and Beverly Hills standards, that controls construction and operational on-site and off-site runoff and drainage in a manner acceptable to LACMTA and RWQCB will be implemented. Upon completion of construction, a Notice of Termination will be filed with RWQCB. Therefore, no adverse effects related to surface water bodies are anticipated as a result of the Project.

#### Executive Order 11988: Floodplain Management

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

#### Executive Order 12898: Environmental Justice

More than one-sixth of the residents within one-half mile of the alignment are low income and nearly half are minority. Twelve environmental justice (EJ) communities were identified in the Study Area. Based on proximity to the alignment and proposed station areas, six of the twelve EJ communities would be directly affected by the Project: Miracle Mile, Westwood, Wilshire Center-Koreatown, Wilshire Park, Windsor Square, and VA Hospital Campus.

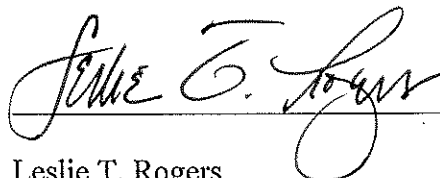
Adverse construction impacts (including traffic circulation, noise, and air quality impacts) will occur at stations and staging areas throughout the Study Area and will affect both EJ and non-EJ communities, with impacts on EJ communities not exceeding those on non-EJ communities. Likewise, adverse operational impacts will be distributed throughout the corridor with impacts on EJ communities not exceeding those on non-EJ communities. Thus, the Project would not result in disproportionately high and adverse construction or operations effects on EJ communities. Moreover, the Division 20 Maintenance and Storage Facility is located in an industrial area; not in the vicinity of any residential communities or neighborhoods. Thus, no EJ communities will be adversely affected by the proposed enhancements to that facility.

The Project would provide benefits to communities along the corridor and the region. The Project would improve mobility, increase transit connectivity, and also reduce the number of transfers. The Project would also improve accessibility to transit and provide access to major employment centers.

The Project includes measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse effects, as set forth in the FEIS and Attachment A of this ROD. FTA has concluded, in accordance with Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*, that EJ communities would not be subject to disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects as a result of the Project.

**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 DEIS, FEIS and this ROD, which includes the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (Attachment A). This environmental record for the Project includes: the environmental impacts of the Project, the adverse environmental impacts that cannot be avoided with alternatives to the Project, and the irreversible and irretrievable impacts on the environment. FTA has reviewed the public and agency comments on the DEIS and FEIS and the transcripts of the hearings submitted under 49 U.S.C. § 5323 (b). Attachments C and D of this ROD include and respond to public and agency comments received on the FEIS during the public circulation period, which ended on May 22, 2012. FTA finds that the preservation and enhancement of the environment and the interests 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

1 AUG 9 2012

Date

**Attachments:**

- Attachment A: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan
- Attachment B: Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement
- Attachment C: Summary of Comments on the FEIS and Responses
- Attachment D: Relevant Federal, State, and Local Agency Correspondence