

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Transit Administration

Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the West Santa Ana Branch Transit Corridor Project, Los Angeles, California

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration and Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

ACTION: Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) are issuing this Notice of Availability (NOA) to notify Federal, State, Tribal, regional, and local government agencies, as well as organizations and individuals, of the completion and availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIS/EIR) for the West Santa Ana Branch Transit Corridor Project (Project). This notice requests comments on the environmental document, the evaluation of resources pursuant to Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (23 U.S.C. 138 and 49 U.S.C. 303), and the effects to historic properties per Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 C.F.R. 800). This notice also serves to announce and invite the public to public hearings on the Project and Draft EIS/EIR. The Draft EIS/EIR has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and its implementing regulations, as well as California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) regulations and other federal and state laws. The FTA is the federal lead agency under NEPA and LACMTA serves as the lead agency under CEQA.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND PROJECT LOCATION: LACMTA proposes to implement a project that would extend a new light rail line from four possible northern termini in downtown Los Angeles through southeast Los Angeles County to a southern terminus in the City of Artesia (Figure 1).

Alternatives studied include a No Build Alternative and four Build Alternatives, as follows:

- Alternative 1: Los Angeles Union Station to Pioneer Station (19.3 miles; 11 stations)
- Alternative 2: 7th Street/Metro Center to Pioneer Station (19.3 miles; 12 stations)
- Alternative 3: Slauson/A Line (Blue) to Pioneer Station (Staff Preferred Alternative) (14.8 miles; 9 stations)
- Alternative 4: I-105/C Line (Green) to Pioneer Station (6.6 miles; 4 stations)

Alternative 1 also has two design options under consideration. With Design Option 1: Los Angeles Union Station – Metropolitan Water District (MWD), the northern terminus station would be moved

east of the MWD building. With Design Option 2: Add Little Tokyo Station, an additional station would be added in the Little Tokyo Community. Two maintenance and storage facility (MSF) site options are also under consideration: Paramount MSF site option and Bellflower MSF site option.

PURPOSE AND NEED: The Project's overall Purpose is to provide high-quality reliable transit service to meet the future mobility needs of residents, employees, and visitors who travel within and through the corridor. This new transit service will increase mobility and connectivity for historically underserved and transit-dependent communities, improve travel times on local and regional transportation networks, and accommodate substantial future employment and population growth.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STAFF PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE: In compliance with NEPA and CEQA, a Staff Preferred Alternative has been identified from among the four Build Alternatives under consideration. In addition to considering the effectiveness in meeting the Purpose and Need and environmental impacts and benefits, the financial capacity to construct, operate, and maintain the Project as well as strategies to fund the Project were primary considerations in determining the Staff Preferred Alternative. Based on these considerations, Alternative 3 has been identified as the Staff Preferred Alternative.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS:

The Draft EIS/EIR defines the alternatives studied and describes each alternative's associated potential transportation and environmental impacts, capital costs, and potential funding sources. Potential areas of impact include transit, traffic, active transportation, parking, land use/neighborhoods, land acquisition, displacement and relocation, equity and environmental justice considerations, visual quality, air quality, climate change, noise and vibration, geology, soils and seismicity, exposure to hazardous substances, water resources, biological resources, energy resources, safety and security, historic resources, archaeological resources, paleontological resources, tribal cultural resources, economic and fiscal impacts, electromagnetic fields, Section 4(f), community facilities and parklands, construction impacts, and other CEQA determinations. Mitigation measures for each alternative are also identified, as applicable. The information contained in the document will be used by the LACMTA Board of Directors to decide whether to implement the project and to select, from among the

alternatives and alignment options under consideration, a LPA in conjunction with the FTA for implementation.

As described in the Draft EIS/EIR, the build alternatives could result in unavoidable adverse effects or significant impacts after implementation of proposed mitigation measures in the following categories: Traffic, Active Transportation, Parking, Land Use, Noise and Vibration, Parklands and Community Facilities, and Air Quality.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: The public is invited to listen and participate at public hearings for the Project and the DEIS/DEIR. Public hearings will be held online via Zoom on the dates and times identified below.

- August 19, 2021 in English, Spanish, Japanese, and Korean and meeting will begin at 6:00 pm
- August 24, 2021 in English and Spanish and meeting will begin at 12:00 pm
- August 28, 2021 in English and Spanish and meeting will begin at 10:00 am

Please visit the project website (metro.net/wsab) for instructions and the link to virtually participate in the online meetings. For those who prefer to call in to the meeting, please see the call-in numbers as follow:

- For the meeting on August 19 in English:
Dial: +1 (213) 338-8477
Webinar ID: 980 0887 2988
Passcode: 5851
- For the meeting on August 24 in English:
Dial: +1 (213) 338-8477
Webinar ID: 986 2612 6175
Passcode: 5851
- For the meeting on August 28 in English:
Dial: +1 (213) 338-8477
Webinar ID: 986 4545 5706
Passcode: 5851
- For the meetings on August 19, 24, and 28 in Spanish:
Dial: +1 (646) 749-3335
Access Code: 159-029-069
- For the meeting on August 19 in Japanese:

Dial: +1 (646) 749-3335

Access Code: 962-461-941

- For the meeting on August 19 in Korean:

Dial: +1 (646) 749-3335

Access Code: 904-746-773

COMMENTS: Comments on the Draft EIS/EIR may be submitted in writing or orally during the public hearings. Written comments should be sent to Metro on or before **September 13, 2021** at the postal address or email address shown below or submitted via an online comment form found on the project website at *metro.net/wsab*.

Mrs. Meghna Khanna, Project Manager
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
One Gateway Plaza, Mail Stop 99-22-7
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Email: Khannam@metro.net

The LACMTA Board of Directors will identify the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) to advance into the Final EIS/EIR after the Draft EIS/EIR circulation and the consideration of public and agency comments received on the Draft EIS/EIR. As part of the LACMTA Board action, a decision may be made to phase implementation of the LPA. Any such decision would be made in consideration of public comments and funding availability. An environmental reevaluation could be required depending on the phasing selected.

The Final EIS/EIR will provide responses to substantive comments on the Draft EIS/EIR and will include information on the LPA, why the LACMTA Board of Directors chose it and the required mitigation and monitoring. The FTA may issue a single Final EIS and Record of Decision document pursuant to Public Law 114-9 and 23 U.S.C. 139(n)(2) unless the FTA determines statutory criteria or practicability considerations preclude issuance of the combined document. In that case, the FTA would issue a Final EIS followed by the Record of Decision.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY: Additional information on the project and the Draft EIS/EIR is available for review at the project website at *metro.net/wsab* and at the following locations:

Artesia Library, 18801 Elaine Ave, Artesia, CA 90701	Little Tokyo Branch Library, 203 S Los Angeles St, Los Angeles, CA 90012
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Clifton M. Brakensiek Library, 9945 Flower St, Bellflower, CA 90706	Los Angeles Central Library, 630 W 5th St, Los Angeles, CA 90071
Gateway Cities Council of Governments, 16401 Paramount Blvd, Paramount, CA 90723	Metro Headquarters, Dorothy Peyton Library, One Gateway Plaza, Los Angeles, CA 90012
Hollydale Library, 12000 Garfield Ave, South Gate, CA 90280	Paramount Park Community Center, 14400 Paramount Blvd, Paramount, CA 90723
Huntington Park Library, 6518 Miles Ave, Huntington Park, CA 90255	South Park BID, 1150-B S Hope St, Los Angeles, CA 90015

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT REQUIREMENTS: Upon request, sign language interpretation, materials in alternative formats, and other accommodations are available to the public for LACMTA-sponsored meetings and events. All requests for reasonable accommodations, interpretation services, and materials in other languages must be made at least three working days (72 hours) prior to the scheduled meeting date. Please submit requests by calling (323) 466-3876 between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Our TDD line is (800) 252-9040. Individuals with hearing or speech impairment may use California Relay Service 711 + Metro phone number.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Meghna Khanna at the address identified above or: Charlene Lee Lorenzo, Director of the Los Angeles Office, Federal Transit Administration, Region 9, 888 South Figueroa, Suite 440, Los Angeles, CA, 90017-5467; tel: 213.202.3952; email: Charlene.LeeLorenzo@dot.gov.

Figure 1: Project Map

