



Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) FAQ

1. What is a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)?

A *Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)* is the project alternative that Metro determines best meets the project's goals, objectives, and community needs, based on technical analysis and public input. Under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) processes, multiple alternatives are evaluated in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). After the public comment period on the draft document ends, Metro staff analyzes all feedback and recommends an LPA for the Metro Board to consider. An LPA selected by the Metro Board becomes the basis for subsequent environmental analysis and design advancement.

2. What has happened since the public comment period closed?

Since the formal public comment period on the Draft EIR ended:

1. **Compilation of Comments** – All written and oral comments received have been reviewed and compiled.
2. **Response to Comments** – Metro staff and the environmental consultant are preparing responses to comments submitted during the comment period.
3. **Staff Evaluation** – Staff has weighed technical analyses (e.g., environmental impacts, costs, ridership forecasts) alongside public and stakeholder input to evaluate how alternatives align with project goals and objectives.
4. **Recommendation for LPA** – A staff recommendation for the LPA has been prepared for consideration by the Metro Board based on the evaluation.
5. **Board Consideration** – The Metro Board considers the recommendation at a public meeting and votes on selecting an LPA.

Once an LPA has been selected, additional environmental analysis focuses on that alternative.

3. Does the Metro Board have the authority to select an LPA?

Yes. The Metro Board of Directors, not Metro staff, has the authority to identify and select an LPA per the Public Utility Code. Metro staff makes a recommendation, but the Board's action is a required step in advancing the project. The selection of the LPA guides subsequent environmental clearance and final project definition.

4. Does the Metro Board have to follow the Metro staff's recommendation?

No. The Metro Board is not legally obligated to adopt the staff's recommended LPA and may choose an alternative based on its own evaluation of environmental data, public testimony, policy considerations, funding implications, and broader strategic priorities. Staff's recommendation informs the Board's deliberation, but the Board has ultimate decision-making authority.

5. What criteria are considered in selecting an LPA?

A range of technical and policy criteria typically inform the selection of an LPA, including:

- Consistency with identified project goals and objectives
- Findings from the Draft EIR, including environmental impacts and mitigation strategies
- Public comments received during the Draft EIR comment period
- Project costs, funding and financial considerations
- Ridership forecasts and mobility benefits
- Stakeholder input
- Constructability and operational considerations
- Consistency with Metro policy and broader regional planning goals
- Construction schedule.
- Cost Benefit Analysis.

6. Is the LPA decision final?

No. Identifying an LPA does *not* constitute project approval. It is a key milestone that focuses the environmental review on a single alternative. After an LPA is selected, Metro completes additional environmental analysis including, if applicable, Federal environmental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In addition, Metro will prepare the Final EIR, and the Board must later *certify* the final environmental documents before official project approval is achieved.

7. What role does public input play after the comment period?

Public input received during the Draft EIR comment period is part of the administrative record considered by staff and the Board in selecting the LPA. Metro responds to comments in the Final EIR, and the Board's decisions will reflect a balance of technical analysis and public and stakeholder feedback. Additional opportunities for public engagement will occur before the Metro Board considers project approval.

8. What comes after LPA selection?

After the Board selects an LPA the following occurs:

1. **Design Refinement** – Advancement of project design for LPA including updates to reflect LPA and comments received on the Draft EIR. For the Sepulveda Transit Corridor, this is planned to also include evaluation of phasing and identifying opportunities for value engineering.
2. **Evaluation of Public-Private Partnership (P3) Delivery Model** – Evaluation of the value trade-offs between using a P3 delivery model and a traditional delivery method for the project to determine the best way to deliver this project for Los Angeles
3. **Advance CEQA and NEPA Environmental Process** - Continue to advance the CEQA environmental clearance process and approach Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to initiate the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process. This will include updates to the project description to reflect the selected LPA and subsequent refinements.
4. **Community Outreach** – Ongoing opportunities for community input and engagement including but not limited to gathering public input on Project refinements throughout the CEQA and NEPA environmental processes.
5. **Develop Funding Plan and Secure Funding.**

9. Can an LPA be created using elements of more than one alternative?

An LPA can include components or design features drawn from multiple alternatives evaluated in the Draft EIR.

This approach is sometimes referred to as a “hybrid” or “refined” alternative. Under CEQA and NEPA, the Metro Board may identify an LPA that combines alternative features (such as alignments, station locations, or operating characteristics).

If the selected LPA differs substantially from the alternatives analyzed, such that it would result in new significant impacts or substantially increase the severity of previously identified impacts, additional environmental analysis would be required.

10. What is the staff-recommended LPA for this project?

Based on technical evaluation and community and stakeholder input, Metro staff has proposed a Modified Alternative 5 as the LPA. Modified Alternative 5 is heavy rail transit underground between the Van Nuys Metrolink Station and E Line Expo/Sepulveda Station modified to connect to the Van Nuys G Line Station and future East San Fernando Valley Light Rail station at the G Line at Van Nuys Boulevard.

The staff recommendation also includes project phasing to allow for mobility benefits to be realized as funds become available. Nearly all Metro rail projects have been phased. Specifically, the recommendation includes focusing on an initial operating segment (IOS) between the San Fernando Valley (G Line) and the Westside (D Line). The modifications to Alternative 5 facilitate direct connections to the transit network as part of the IOS, avoiding the need to transfer twice to access the project. Direct connections enhance the time competitiveness of transit and anticipated ridership.

11. Why is it called Modified Alternative 5?

Modified Alternative 5 incorporates key elements of Alternative 5, including automated vehicles in a single-bore tunnel, a terminus at the E Line Expo/Sepulveda Station and 2.5-minute frequencies during peak travel times. It leverages the strengths of Alternative 5 – high ridership, high frequencies, platform screen doors, and shorter station construction sites, while avoiding construction of a ventilation shaft in the Santa Monica Mountains. It also offers the connectivity benefits of Alternative 6 along Van Nuys Boulevard instead of Sepulveda Boulevard, which reduces the project’s overall length and is anticipated to reduce project costs.

12. Where would the stations be located?

Modified Alternative 5 is planned to include the following station locations:

- Van Nuys Metrolink Station
- Metro G Line (Orange) Station (Van Nuys Bl)
- Ventura Boulevard Station
- UCLA Gateway Plaza Station
- Wilshire Boulevard/Metro D Line (Purple) Station
- Santa Monica Boulevard Station
- Metro E Line (Expo) Station (Expo/Sepulveda)

13. There was strong support for a Getty Center Station. Why didn't the staff-recommended LPA include a Getty Center Station?

The Getty Center is located west of the 405 freeway, while the Modified Alternative 5 tunnel would be located more than 1.5 miles east of the 405 connecting a Ventura Boulevard station directly with a UCLA station. Given the Getty Center's location, serving the Getty Center would require an indirect route thereby increasing project costs and travel times and likely reducing forecasted ridership for those traveling between the Valley and the Westside (due to less competitive travel times). In addition, the Getty Center Station (included in Alternatives 1 & 3) had the lowest ridership of any station studied in the Draft EIR (across all five Draft EIR alternatives). While it doesn't include a station stop at the Getty, Modified Alternative 5 provides better regional access to the Sepulveda Corridor, which will in turn facilitate better transit access to the Getty from across the region.

14. Why wasn't one of the five alternatives selected as the staff-recommended LPA?

Modified Alternative 5 best meets the Draft EIR goals, including:

- **Improve Mobility:** Provides an alternative to the congested I-405 Freeway through the Sepulveda Pass, high ridership and fast travel time both as an initial operating segment and as the full project
- **Improve Accessibility and Promote Equity:** Direct connection to Metrolink and Metro's E, D, G and ESFV Lines as part of the full build. Direct connections to Metro's D, G and ESFV Lines as part of an IOS.
- **Support Community and Economic Development:** Includes stations near major destinations and employment hubs, including UCLA.
- **Protect Environmental Resources/Support Sustainable Transportation:** Alt. 5 has greatest vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction; no construction or ventilation shaft in the Santa Monica Mountains
- **Provide a Cost-Effective Solution and Minimize Risk:** Shorter alignment and fewer stations could reduce costs; addresses key stakeholder comments
- **Enhance Resiliency:** Provides a new travel corridor through the Sepulveda Pass

15. Why wasn't one of the monorail options chosen, since those were less expensive and could be built faster?

The monorail alternatives didn't meet the Draft EIR goals as well as Modified Alternative 5, particularly with regards to mobility benefits, including ridership and travel times, and cost-effectiveness.

16. What does this mean for the PDA process? Are either of the PDA teams still in the running?

Modified Alternative 5 includes the elements proposed by Sepulveda Transit Corridor Partners (STCP), one of the PDA teams that Metro has been working with on this project. With this LPA milestone, STCP would have the opportunity to continue to work with Metro on development of this alternative.

17. Does the staff-recommended LPA reflect comments received on the Draft EIR?

Yes. After carefully reviewing the more than 8,000 comment submissions received during the Draft EIR public comment period, Modified Alternative 5 addresses many of the key themes voiced by the community and stakeholders:

- Fast travel times (may even be less than the current fastest end-to-end travel time of 18 minutes)
- Seamless connection to other transit lines (direct connections to Metrolink, Metro G Line, D Line, E Line and East San Fernando Valley Light Rail)
- Station locations that connect to key destinations, including UCLA
- Cost effectiveness (Alt. 5 was 2nd most cost-effective alternative evaluated in the Draft EIR and Modified Alternative 5 presents opportunities to further reduce costs and improve cost effectiveness)
- No ventilation shaft in the Santa Monica Mountains
- No aerial alignment along Sepulveda Bl in the Valley
- Concerns about property acquisitions/displacements
- Interest in an on-campus UCLA Station
- Compatible with LADWP Mid-Valley Water facility and Stone Canyon Reservoir and Dam

18. How much will Modified Alternative 5 cost? How does it compare to the costs of Alternative 5 and 6?

The preliminary capital cost for Alternative 5 is \$24.2 billion (in 2023\$). This would be updated to reflect Modified Alternative 5. Beyond the \$2.54B (in 2015\$) initial funding included in Measure M, Metro anticipates the need for additional funding and financing for the project, including from federal, state and local sources, as well as private investment through a potential P3.

Following selection of an LPA, opportunities for cost reduction would be explored, including developing a project phasing strategy so incremental investment and benefits can be matched with available funds. This approach is consistent with other rail lines in Los Angeles, including the three most recently approved Metro rail projects, which were all for an initial phase.

19. Why is Metro considering an LPA that exceeds the budget available?

It is a normal part of the process that full project funding is not identified at the environmental stage of a transit corridor project. Funding is secured once there is more certainty around the alternative approved for construction and the design being advanced. Beyond initial seed funds identified in Measure M, Metro anticipates the need for additional funding and financing for the project, including from federal, state and local sources, as well as private investment through a potential P3 beyond what was identified for the project in the Measure M Expenditure Plan.

As with many Metro projects, local sales tax Measure M provides initial funding. That local funding helps facilitate the completion of the environmental process, combined with the high projected ridership and significant time savings for this project, are all factors that should put Metro in a favorable position to compete for state and federal grant funds.

20. Will property acquisitions be needed? And what are the practical implications of those required acquisitions?

Yes, most new rail projects need to acquire temporary and permanent property rights for their construction and operation. Some projects need property for tunnels, stations, aerial structures, or other facilities. Typical examples might include acquisitions for stations, easements for emergency ingress and egress, underground easements for tunnels and stations, easements for maintenance, or air rights for aerial structures.

To ensure public safety and protect property for all parties, some easements allow Metro to review private development plans for construction above or adjacent to the Metro easement area.

However, not all projects require significant review from or coordination with Metro and, in many cases, can be quite routine and conducted as a part of the city review for the future project. The level of review depends on the proximity to Metro's facilities, site conditions, and the potential impact to Metro's facilities. There are many examples around Los Angeles where property owners have been able to build successfully above and adjacent to our tracks, tunnels, stations or other facilities.