

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the purpose of this Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Division 20 Portal Widening/Turnback Facility Project (Proposed Project) and a summary of the Proposed Project and the environmental and community outreach processes. This Final EIR has been prepared to comply with the requirements of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000 et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR], Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15000 et seq.).

1.1. PROJECT SUMMARY

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) is proposing to widen the existing portal for the Metro Red and Purple Lines Maintenance Yard (Division 20 Rail Yard), develop a high-capacity turnback facility, increase train storage capacity, and reconfigure the existing internal tracks and access roads.

The improvements to the Division 20 Rail Yard would provide core capacity improvements to accommodate increased service levels previously approved for the Metro Red and Purple Lines and allow trains to provide faster service times at Union Station. Collectively, the Metro Red and Purple Lines carry over 140,000 passengers daily, with ridership expected to significantly increase following the Purple Line Extension to the Veterans Affairs West Los Angeles Medical Center. In order to effectively serve the additional patronage during weekday peak hours, planned service improvements include operating trains every four minutes on each line – which is every two minutes in the trunk portion of the system – and expanding the fleet. Currently, eastbound trains in the trunk portion of the system use special trackwork at Union Station to reverse directions (i.e., ‘turnback’). However, the capability of turning back trains is capped at 7.5 minutes on each line, or 3.75 minutes combined due to the original design of Union Station. The Proposed Project aims to address the service and capacity limitations with three core improvements, which include:

- Widening the heavy rail tunnel portal south of the U.S. Highway 101 (US-101) freeway to accommodate additional special trackwork and high-speed train movements;
- Developing a new, surface-level turnback facility in the existing Division 20 Rail Yard; and
- Reconfiguring and expanding the surface-level rail storage tracks.

For additional details regarding the Proposed Project, refer to Chapter 2.0 Project Description of the Draft EIR.

1.2. INTENDED USES OF THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

As the Lead Agency, Metro has initiated a Final EIR for the Proposed Project. This Final EIR is intended to assist Metro in making decisions regarding the adoption of the Proposed Project. It is required by Section 15132 of the CEQA Guidelines to include the Draft EIR or a revision of the draft; comments and recommendations received on the Draft EIR (either verbatim or in summary); a list of persons, organizations, and public agencies who commented on the Draft

EIR; responses to significant environmental comments raised in the review and consultation process; and any other relevant information added by the lead agency. Revisions to the Proposed Project since circulation of the Draft EIR include an addition of 56 vehicle parking spaces and eight bicycle parking spaces to the Viertel's Central Division Police Garage property and construction of a column in the portal area to support the California High-Speed Rail Project. Both of these components are further discussed below. This document contains comments received on the Draft EIR and their responses, as well as updates and clarifications to the text and graphics of the Draft EIR. This Final EIR format is used by Metro to save paper and not reprint the Draft EIR.

1.3. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

As defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15050, Metro is the lead agency responsible for preparing the EIR for the Proposed Project. In compliance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was issued on October 18, 2017 and sent to the State Clearinghouse, various public agencies, and other interested parties for the required 30-day review and comment period. Scoping meetings were held on October 25, 2017 and November 8, 2017 to initiate the public engagement process. The Proposed Project was subsequently modified to include the acquisition of a commercial building at 100-120 North Santa Fe Avenue for administrative Division 20 Maintenance of Way (MOW) activities. A revised NOP was issued on January 3, 2018 to notify the public and relevant agencies of the modified project description. A fact sheet was produced and updated as needed, an information hotline and e-mail account were set up and monitored regularly, and the Proposed Project web page was provided as a resource of project information. Metro also maintained online social media presence for the Proposed Project on Facebook and Twitter.

Preceding the Draft EIR public review period, Metro hosted briefings for elected officials on September 26, 2017, September 28, 2017, December 1, 2017, January 12, 2018, and February 13, 2018. These briefings targeted the offices of the following elected officials:

- City of Los Angeles Mayor Garcetti
- City of Los Angeles Councilmember Huizar (Council District 14)
- County of Los Angeles Supervisor Solis (District 1)

The Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Draft EIR was issued on March 16, 2018 to 1,812 mailing addresses, consisting of federal, State, and local agencies, local stakeholders, and property owners and occupants located within 1,000 feet of the Project area. The NOA provided a link to an online digital copy of the Draft EIR and addresses for three locations where hard copies could be found. It also indicated the time and location of the public hearing. Metro used a variety of notification methods to engage the public and encourage participation, including print (direct mail and public counter distribution at community organizations) and electronic (e-blasts and social media) meeting notices. The Metro outreach efforts included the following prior to the public hearing:

- Metro provided door-to-door noticing within the Little Tokyo/Arts District area to maintain awareness of the Draft EIR and notify the public about the upcoming public hearing.

- Predetermined bundles of notice postcards were placed at key stakeholder locations, providing additional opportunities for public engagement. Refer to Appendix A of the Final EIR for the Public Engagement Report for specific locations.
- The Proposed Project web page was updated to reflect the public hearing date and public comment period.
- Ten e-mail notices were sent to stakeholders in the Proposed Project database to provide notification of the release of the Draft EIR, the public hearing, and the close of the comment period.
- Notifications were sent to targeted local, multi-cultural print and online news media, blogs, and social media.
- Formal legal advertisements were placed in the Los Angeles Daily News, Downtown News, Eastside Sun, La Opinión (Spanish language), and Rafu Shimpo (Japanese).
- Metro maintained contact with staff of local elected official offices with interest in the Project area, holding one formal briefing with Los Angeles Councilmember Huizar's Office, Council District 14.
- Metro provided stakeholder briefings to the Los Angeles Conservancy, Arts District Business Improvement District, and Metro Technical Advisory Committee.

As indicated in the NOA, the Draft EIR was circulated for a 45-day public review period from March 16, 2018 to April 30, 2018. During the public review period, a public hearing was held by Metro on April 12, 2018 at the Metro Headquarters Boardroom where comments were gathered in the form of public testimony and written comments on the Draft EIR. The public hearing on the Draft EIR was attended by 11 stakeholders with four people providing verbal comments. No written comments were received at the public hearing. The format of the meeting included an open house followed by a PowerPoint presentation, and concluded with verbal public comment, which was recorded by a court reporter. Spanish and Japanese translation was made available at the meeting. The public hearing was recorded for a live webcast, and there were 15 webcast observers. Links to the video were subsequently posted for viewing by the public on the Metro website.

Following the public hearing, social media outlets were used as an avenue for the public to provide their input on the project during the public comment period. Metro managed the social media for the project, engaging with the online community and posting two to three times a week about the project, the release of the Draft EIR, and reminding people about the public hearing and public comment deadline.

Four e-mail notices were sent out including a "thank you" to stakeholders who attended and three reminders to submit comments prior to the public comment deadline. The e-mails provided a link to the Project website and the methods to provide public comment. The last reminder e-mail was sent on April 30, 2018 and served as a final call for comments prior to the deadline. A final e-mail thanking the public for comments was sent on May 3, 2018.

A total of 49 public comments were received at the end of the public comment period. The public comments are addressed in Chapter 3.0 Responses to Comments of this Final EIR. Refer to Appendix A of this Final EIR for the Public Engagement Report and Chapter 7.0 Public and Agency Outreach of the Draft EIR for additional details regarding the outreach process.

1.4. CONTENTS OF THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

This Final EIR is comprised of the following chapters:

- 1.0 Introduction.** This chapter includes a project summary, the intended uses of this Final EIR, the environmental review process and community outreach efforts, and the contents of this Final EIR.
- 2.0 Corrections and Additions.** This chapter identifies any revisions made to provide more detail, clarify, and/or correct the text and graphics contained within the Draft EIR. These revisions were either initiated by the lead agency or made to address comments received during the public review period. None of these corrections or additions constitute significant new information which would necessitate a recirculation of the EIR.
- 3.0 Responses to Comments.** This chapter contains a list of commenting agencies and individuals and a copy of each comment letter received by Metro during the public review period for the Draft EIR, as well as a copy of the transcript for the public hearing on April 12, 2018. Consistent with Section 15088 of the CEQA Guidelines, each of the comment letters is followed by the corresponding responses to each of the comments within each letter that pertain to the analysis and findings contained in the Draft EIR.
- 4.0 Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP).** This chapter includes the MMRP for the Proposed Project. The MMRP lists the required mitigation measures and identifies the enforcement agency, monitoring agency, monitoring phase, monitoring frequency, and the action indicating compliance with each measure.