

**Regional Connector Transit Corridor  
Draft Environmental Impact Statement/  
Draft Environmental Impact Report**

**APPENDIX G**



**SCOPING REPORT**



# **Regional Connector Transit Corridor Scoping Report**

**October 20, 2009**

**FINAL**

**State Clearinghouse #2009031043**



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# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Overview

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) has begun preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Regional Connector Transit Corridor Project in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is the lead agency for the purposes of NEPA, and Metro is the lead agency for the purposes of CEQA.

Over the past two decades, Metro and its predecessor agencies (Los Angeles County Transportation Commission and Southern California Rapid Transit District) have initiated rail transit service in multiple corridors spanning much of Los Angeles County. Three of Metro's current and under-construction light rail transit (LRT) lines serve downtown Los Angeles, but they do not directly connect to one another. The existing Metro Blue Line to Long Beach and the Metro Expo Line to Culver City (scheduled to open in 2010) terminate at 7<sup>th</sup> Street/Metro Center Station in the southern part of the downtown area. The Metro Gold Line to Pasadena and East Los Angeles (East Los Angeles extension is scheduled to open in late 2009) passes through the northeastern portion of the downtown area with stops at Union Station and Little Tokyo/Arts District Station. Passengers must transfer to the heavy rail Metro Red and Purple Lines in order to make connections between these light rail lines.

The proposed Regional Connector project would provide new LRT tracks through downtown Los Angeles that would link the Metro Blue, Expo, and Gold Lines and enable them to operate as a single system. For example, trains would run directly from Long Beach to Pasadena and from East Los Angeles to Culver City via the Regional Connector route, with no need for passengers to transfer to the Metro Red or Purple Lines. The proposed Regional Connector project would also include new stations in downtown Los Angeles, thereby expanding the rail transit coverage of the central business district.

A Final Alternatives Analysis (AA) Report was prepared for the Regional Connector Transit Corridor and published by Metro in January 2009. The AA report is incorporated into this Scoping Report by reference. During the AA process, Metro hosted agency and public early scoping meetings and community updates. The input received at these meetings, as well as subsequent technical analysis, formed the basis for narrowing the initial 32 conceptual alternatives to two LRT alternatives for study in the EIS/EIR, along with a No Build Alternative and a Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative. Subsequent to the release of the Final AA report, FTA and Metro initiated the public and agency NEPA and CEQA scoping to obtain input on the scope of the EIS/EIR. The Notice of Intent/Notice of Preparation (NOI/NOP) identified the four alternatives carried forward from the AA for study. This report summarizes the results of the NEPA/CEQA scoping process.

The Draft EIS/EIR (DEIS/DEIR) will build upon the AA study and form the basis for selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA), performance of Preliminary Engineering, and preparation of a subsequent Final EIS/EIR. One of the primary purposes of scoping is to identify possible environmental impacts of the project, and eliminate proposed alternatives with substantial environmental impacts from further analysis. High-capacity transit improvements in the Regional Connector Transit Corridor would be financed with a mix of local, state, federal New Starts, and other federal funds. Accordingly, the project will be executed in compliance with current FTA Section 5309 New Starts guidelines, and all environmental documents will satisfy NEPA and CEQA requirements.

The proposed Regional Connector Transit Corridor Project is also designated to receive funding from Measure R, a half cent sales tax measure passed by Los Angeles County voters in November 2008. The project is also included in Metro's Draft 2008 Long Range Transportation Plan. Final adoption of the 2008 Long Range Transportation Plan by the Metro Board of Directors is expected to occur in mid-2009.

## 1.2 Project Area

The proposed project lies entirely within the downtown area of the City of Los Angeles. The project area is generally bounded by US Highway 101 on the north, 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Streets on the south, Alameda Street on the east, and State Route 110 on the west. A map of the project area is provided in Figure 1-1.

## 1.3 Alternatives

Four alternatives were carried forward from the AA process for study in the EIS/EIR (See Appendix A for maps of alternatives). These include the No Build Alternative, the TSM Alternative, and two LRT Alternatives. The **No Build Alternative** would maintain existing transit service through the year 2030. No new transportation infrastructure would be built, except projects identified as funded under Metro's 2008 Long Range Transportation Plan. Transit service under the No-Build Alternative would be focused on the preservation of existing services and projects. By the projection year of 2030, some bus service would have been reorganized and expanded to provide connections with the new rail lines; however, the transit network within the project area would largely be the same as it is now.

The **TSM Alternative** would include the provisions of the No Build Alternative and add two shuttle bus routes from 7th Street/Metro Center station to Union Station, providing an enhanced link between the unconnected LRT lines. One route would run along Grand Avenue and 1st Street, and one along Figueroa, Flower, 2nd, and 3rd Streets. The shuttle buses would use existing bus-only lanes, where available, and would be fitted with transit-priority signalization devices similar to those used on Metro Rapid. Stops would be located every few blocks so as to provide full coverage of the area. Each shuttle route would be one and one-half to two miles in length.



The **At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative** would extend north under Flower Street from 7<sup>th</sup> Street/Metro Center Station, surface to at-grade north of 5<sup>th</sup> Street, cross 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, enter Bunker Hill, and turn northeast through a new entrance to the existing 2<sup>nd</sup> Street tunnel. The alignment would continue along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street where it would split into an at-grade couplet configuration on Main and Los Angeles Streets (one track on each roadway) to Temple Street. Then it would head east on Temple Street, realign into a dual track configuration east of Los Angeles Street, and join the Metro Gold Line just north of the Little Tokyo/Arts District Station on Alameda Street. Trains headed east toward East Los Angeles would then proceed to Little Tokyo/Arts District Station. Trains headed north toward Pasadena would bypass Little Tokyo/Arts District Station and proceed to Union Station. An automobile underpass and pedestrian overpass would be constructed at the intersection of Temple and Alameda Streets to reduce pedestrian-train and automobile-train conflicts.

There are two options for the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative's configuration on Flower Street. For Option A, tracks would extend north under Flower Street from 7<sup>th</sup> Street/Metro Center Station to a new underground station just south of 5<sup>th</sup> Street, then surface just before crossing 3<sup>rd</sup> Street at grade. For Option B, tracks would extend north under Flower Street from 7<sup>th</sup> Street/Metro Center Station and surface between 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets before reaching a new at-grade station just south of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, then the tracks would continue across 3<sup>rd</sup> Street at grade. In total, the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would add 1.8 miles of new double track to the light rail system.

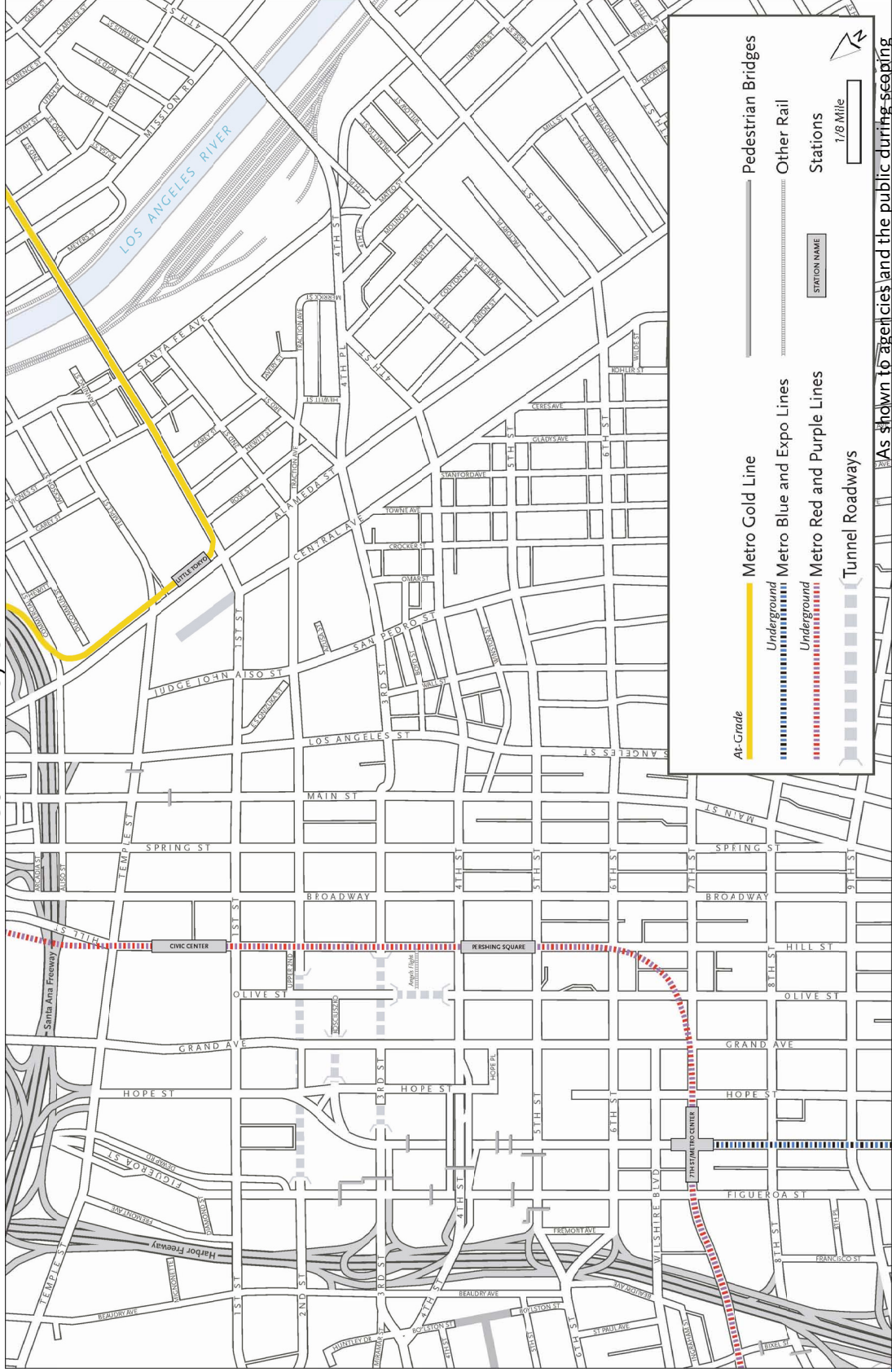
In addition to the Option A and Option B Station configurations, there would be an underground station south of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Hope Streets and a split station on Main and Los Angeles Streets between 1<sup>st</sup> and Temple Streets.

The **Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative** would extend north along Flower Street from 7<sup>th</sup> Street/Metro Center Station with a new underground station north of 5<sup>th</sup> Street. At 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, the underground tunnel would extend east. New underground stations at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Hope Streets and on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street between Los Angeles Street and Broadway would provide access to Bunker Hill and to the area south of the Civic Center. The tunnel would emerge to at-grade connections just southwest of the intersection of 1<sup>st</sup> and Alameda Streets. At 1<sup>st</sup> and Alameda Streets, a new underpass would carry car and truck traffic along Alameda Street below the rail junction, and a new overhead pedestrian bridge structure would eliminate most conflicts between pedestrians and trains. Trains headed north toward Union Station and Pasadena would then proceed to the Little Tokyo/Arts District station, while trains headed east toward East Los Angeles would bypass the station and continue to Pico/Aliso station. This alternative would have a single at-grade crossing at the intersection of 1<sup>st</sup> and Alameda Streets. The rest of the route would be underground. The length of this proposed route would be 1.6 miles.



**Metro**

FIGURE 1-1 PROJECT AREA



As shown to agencies and the public during scoping.

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## 1.4 Summary of Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to improve the region's public transit service and mobility. The overall goal of the project is to improve mobility within the corridor by connecting the light rail services of the Metro Gold Line to Pasadena, the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension, the Metro Blue Line, and the Metro Expo Line.

The proposed Regional Connector Transit Corridor project would improve region-wide public transit service, despite being located in a relatively small portion of downtown Los Angeles. The connection would allow direct light rail service from Long Beach to Pasadena and East Los Angeles to Culver City, with both services using the same tracks and stations in downtown Los Angeles. This service improvement would in turn eliminate many transfers, reduce wait time, overcrowding at stations, and shorten trip times across the entire light rail system.

The project area is located within the largest regional employment center of Los Angeles, and is densely developed with multi-family residences, industrial and public lands, commercial and retail establishments, government office buildings, and private high-rise office towers. The enhanced transit services made possible by the proposed Regional Connector project would serve communities across the region, allowing greater mobility between existing light rail corridors and improved access to downtown Los Angeles. The project would thus help the transportation system accommodate the population and employment growth projected to occur in central business district between now and 2030. Mobility issues throughout the region and the identified need to join the unconnected segments of the light rail system have been documented in several past studies, including the *Pasadena – Los Angeles Light Rail Transit Project Environmental Impact Report* (1993), the *Blue Line Connection Preliminary Planning Study* (1993), and the *Regional Light Rail Connector Study* (2004).

Additional considerations that support implementation of the proposed Regional Connector Transit Corridor project include:

- Potential for increased travel times and station overcrowding in the absence of substantial capacity increases. This is primarily due to the number of transfers required to traverse the project area, and the need to reverse trains in the busiest parts of the system. Station overcrowding is a safety concern.
- Poor schedule reliability due to the need to reverse trains in downtown Los Angeles, the busiest part of the regional rail system.
- Current system enhancements under construction will increase transit ridership in the project area and magnify the effects of poor system connectivity and station overcrowding due to transfers.
- High numbers of transit dependent residents living in the project area.

- Existing high transit ridership in the project area is projected to increase.
- High concentrations of transit-supportive land uses in the project area.
- Substantial population, employment, and congestion growth in the project area is expected by 2030.
- Location of several redevelopment areas within the project area, where improved transit access can support properly located economic growth.

## 1.5 Project Participants

The project participants include FTA, Metro, and Metro's consultants. Metro's consultants include the Community Participation Program Consultant (The Robert Group), the Environmental and Engineering Consultant (CDM), and CDM's subconsultants. Other project participants include federal, state, and local participating agencies identified in accordance with the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) 6002.

## 1.6 Purpose of Report

The Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA regulations and the State of California's CEQA guidelines require federal and state lead agencies to conduct agency and public scoping when defining the appropriate range of issues and depth of analysis for a major environmental document (40 CFR part 1500 et seq.; 14 CA Code of Regulations, §15082-15083). This Scoping Report documents the proposed Regional Connector Transit Corridor project's lead agencies' compliance with these requirements.

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## SCOPING PROCESS

### 2.1 Early Scoping Activities

In order to help define the purpose and need and identify a range of reasonable alternatives, Metro conducted an AA, an early public scoping process consistent with the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) guidelines. This "early scoping" process was designed to solicit stakeholders' views on the possible range of alternatives with regards to transportation modes, potential alignments, and station locations.

Between October 2007 and fall 2008, the Regional Connector Transit Corridor project conducted an extensive stakeholder outreach effort. The community outreach effort successfully raised awareness about the study, engaged stakeholders and, most importantly, garnered public input at key decision points that demonstrated widespread consensus about the study recommendations that required Board approval in order to move forward into the environmental process.

Recognizing the unique challenges and opportunities of the study, as well as its potential impacts beyond the immediate Downtown area, the AA outreach program included the following key elements:

- Public meetings, including one series of early public and agency scoping meetings, and two series of public update meetings at key study milestones
- Targeted stakeholder meetings to address specialized issues and localized concerns
- Multi-lingual outreach to include Japanese and Spanish-speaking stakeholders
- Multi-tiered meeting notifications including direct mail, print and broadcast media, advertisements, internet based distribution via e-mail and notices or ads onboard Metro buses and trains
- Employment of "new" media tools such as blogs, social networks and other internet or web-based tools to involve a wider audience in the decision-making process

Early scoping commenced with a briefing for elected officials and their staff on October 17, 2007. An agency early scoping meeting was held on October 30, 2007 at Metro Headquarters followed by publication of an Early Scoping Notice to Conduct an AA in the Federal Register on October 31, 2007. Early public scoping meetings were subsequently held on November 6 and 7, 2007 in downtown Los Angeles at the Los Angeles Central Library and the Japanese American National Museum; a daytime meeting was scheduled to ensure that people working in downtown would have an opportunity to participate in the process, and a nighttime meeting was held to encourage those living in the area to provide their input. The public outreach process is described in the "Final Project Early Scoping Report" published by Metro

in March 2008 (incorporated by reference into this scoping report and available at [http://www.metro.net/projects\\_studies/connector/news\\_info.htm](http://www.metro.net/projects_studies/connector/news_info.htm)).

Metro reviewed all public comments from the early scoping meetings and, based on this feedback, developed eight alternatives for further analysis including various modes, alignments and station locations.

A second series of public meetings was held in February 2008 to provide a general study update, review comments and outcomes from the public early scoping meetings and discuss proposed criteria for how project alternatives would be analyzed and screened. A third and final series of public meetings for the AA phase was held in October 2008. These meetings provided Metro with an opportunity to present its recommendations to the public before proceeding to the Metro Board for consideration. A majority of attendees were supportive of the Regional Connector and see this as a cost effective project that will benefit the entire County of Los Angeles and downtown residents.

In addition to these public scoping and update meetings, numerous briefings and meetings were held with key stakeholder groups throughout the AA study period. Targeted stakeholder meetings took place with local elected officials and their staff, elected citizens groups and Neighborhood Councils, residential associations, business, cultural and civic organizations, and religious congregations. These meetings allowed Metro to address stakeholder questions, issues and concerns which were instrumental in developing consensus around the ultimate recommendations.

During the AA phase, the majority of public comments submitted expressed a preference for Light Rail Transit (LRT) technology with a predominantly underground alignment. Preferred station locations included the Financial District, the Bunker Hill/Grand Avenue project area, and connections to Historic Broadway and Little Tokyo. Additional concerns were raised about impacts during construction, compatibility with existing automobile and bus traffic, and traffic management during downtown events.

Throughout the AA phase, there was widespread support for the Regional Connector project to move forward for further in-depth study and into environmental review and clearance. This support was expressed not only by residents and business interests in downtown Los Angeles, but also by transit riders and advocates from across the region.

## 2.2 DEIS/DEIR Scoping Activities

In January 2009, Metro's Board of Directors approved the Regional Connector Transit Corridor AA Study and authorized staff to proceed with the DEIS/DEIR. The AA process is described in the Final AA Report (Metro 2009) and is incorporated by reference into this scoping report. The Final AA Report may be found at: [http://www.metro.net/projects\\_studies/connector/news\\_info.htm](http://www.metro.net/projects_studies/connector/news_info.htm). This next phase will



continue the transparent and inclusive community outreach process, building upon the public engagement efforts developed during the AA.

### **2.2.1 Public Participation Plan**

In order to ensure that the public remain informed on an ongoing basis and provided with opportunities to comment at key milestones during the DEIS/DEIR process, a detailed Community Outreach and Public Participation Plan (PPP) has been developed. The plan covers both scoping activities and the DEIS/DEIR public involvement process. A summary of the Public Participation Plan by The Robert Group (TRG) can be found in Appendix B.

The PPP includes elements such as stakeholder identification, communications protocols, public input tracking, a proposed schedule for interfacing with the public and recommendations for how meetings should be conducted at various milestones during the of the NEPA process. Additional recommendations for key stakeholder interviews or briefings, inter-agency coordination, topic specific and general meetings are also included in the PPP. Additionally, it includes recommendations for generating publicity for public meetings, and information dissemination via the web and “new” media opportunities to engage the public. It is important to note, that while plans are important, the public involvement activities, especially for this complex project, were developed to be flexible enough to accommodate changing circumstances and enhanced approaches.

The PPP includes outreach to engage not only downtown Los Angeles stakeholders, but also current and potential light rail riders, and a wider population of transit users in Los Angeles County. The outreach efforts outlined in the PPP will also re-engage targeted stakeholders from the AA phase while, at the same time, identifying and involving potential new interested stakeholders who may have a special interest in this project. PPP recommendations are based on Metro’s experience with the AA.

### **2.2.2 Coordination Plan**

Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) established an environmental review process for transit projects that has now been included in Section 139 of Title 23 of the U.S. Code. Section 139 directs agencies to prepare a plan for public and agency participation and comments during the environmental review process. The Coordination Plan describes how the lead agencies will provide opportunities for public and agency input.

## **2.3 Initiation of Scoping (Notice of Intent/Notice of Preparation)**

FTA published the NOI in the Federal Register on March 24, 2009. The publication of the NOI is the official federal notification of the agency’s intent to prepare a DEIS. The NOI included notification of the dates and locations of the agency and public scoping meetings, the public comment period, as well as a description of the project purpose and need and

alternatives. The NOI initiates the NEPA scoping process. A copy of the NOI is in Appendix C.

Metro posted the NOP with the California State Clearinghouse and mailed the NOP to state and local agencies on March 17, 2009. The NOP was also recorded with the Los Angeles County Clerk's Office on March 17, 2009. Publication of the NOP with the State Clearinghouse was done in compliance with California Environmental Policy Act (CEQA) requirements. A copy of the NOP may be found in Appendix D. Publications of the legal notices were also published in local newspapers such as the Los Angeles Times and La Opinion. A copy of these legal notices can be found in Appendix E.

In addition, Metro mailed the NOP and scoping information to 18 Federal, 4 Native Tribes, 31 State, 6 regional, and 11 local agencies to inform them of the start of the DEIS/DEIR scoping process and invite comments. The NOP was mailed to these agencies with a return receipt requested to provide proof of receipt. The complete list of agencies notified in this manner is included in Appendix F.

Comments were accepted by Metro from the date of publication in the Federal Register (March 24, 2009) through May 11, 2009. This provided a public comment period of 49 days.

## 2.4 Agency Scoping

### 2.4.1 Participating Agencies

Participating agencies can be Federal, State, tribal, regional, and local government agencies that may have an interest in the project. In accordance with SAFETEA-LU Section 6002 requirements, Metro, in coordination with the FTA, prepared and mailed participating agency invitation letters to 159 agencies with a potential interest in the project in March 2009. The identification of potential participating agencies built on the list of agencies identified through the AA process.

The responsibilities of these agencies include, but are not limited, to:

- Participating in the NEPA/CEQA process starting at the earliest possible time, especially with regards to the development of the purpose and need statement, range of alternatives, methodologies, and the level of detail for the analysis of alternatives
- Identify, as early as practicable, any issues of concern regarding potential environmental or socioeconomic impacts of the project
- Participate in the issue resolution process, described in Section 3.4 of this Plan
- Provide meaningful and timely input on unresolved issues
- Participate in the scoping process



Accepting the designation as a participating agency does not indicate project support and does not provide the agency with increased oversight or approval authority beyond its statutory limits.

Participating agencies for the project are listed in Appendix G. They include federal agencies that did not affirmatively decline the invitation to become a participating agency, and regional, state and local agencies that affirmatively accepted the invitation to become a participating agency. Agencies were given 30 days from the date of the letter to respond. Agencies may also request to be added at any time during the process. Appendix H contains two sample invitation letters; one that was sent to federal agencies and tribes and one that was sent to state, regional, and local agencies.

### 2.4.2 Cooperating Agencies

Cooperating agencies are, by definition in 40 CFR 1508.5, federal agencies with jurisdiction, by law or special expertise, with respect to any environmental impact involved in the proposed project. A state or local agency of similar qualifications may, by agreement with the lead agency, also become a cooperating agency. The cooperating agencies are by definition participating agencies as well, and while the roles and responsibilities of both are similar, the cooperating agencies have a slightly greater degree of authority, responsibility, and involvement in the environmental review process.

No cooperating agencies have been identified for the Regional Connector Transit Corridor project.

### 2.4.3 Agency Scoping Meeting

One Agency Scoping meeting was held as follows:

**Time:** Thursday, March 26, 2009, 1:30P.M.

**Location:** Metro, Gateway Plaza Room  
One Gateway Plaza  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**Comments:** 9 verbal, 0 written

**Attendees:** 19, representing the following agencies and jurisdictions (Sign-in sheet included in Appendix I:

- City of Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)
- City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works, Bureau of Engineering
- City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works, Bureau of Sanitation

- 
- City of Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD)
  - City of Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD)
  - City of Pasadena
  - Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
  - Los Angeles County Office of Education
  - Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Transportation Safety
  - Solar Enlightenment
  - Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)
  - State of California Department of Transportation
  - University of California, Los Angeles

The meeting included a PowerPoint presentation similar to the one shown at the public scoping meetings and described in Section 2.5.4.1.

#### **2.4.3.1 Agency Scoping Meeting Comments**

The topics addressed in the question and answer session included:

- Inquiry as to current property owners along the proposed right-of-way for the two LRT alternatives
- A discussion of the capital cost estimates for each alternative and proposed funding sources
- Priority level of the project compared to other current Metro projects
- Safety issues including
  - Project's potential to relieve crowding at 7<sup>th</sup> Street/Metro Center Station
  - Safety features of at-grade crossings on the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative
- Design details including
  - Locations and depths of the proposed underground stations

- Configuration of the intersection of 1<sup>st</sup> and Alameda Streets proposed for the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative
- Issues with placing rail facilities on the northeast corner of 1<sup>st</sup> and Alameda Streets
- Operational issues including:
  - Proposed operation plans and transfer points
  - Potential service changes at Little Tokyo/Arts District Station under the two LRT alternatives
- Redefinition of rail line names and colors once Regional Connector service begins

A full transcript of the agency scoping meeting proceedings is provided in Appendix J.

#### **2.4.4 State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Coordination**

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) was provided with a scoping package and a Draft Area of Potential Effects (APE) map on March 13, 2009. FTA wrote a letter to the SHPO on April 7, 2009 asking that Metro coordinate direct with SHPO for Section 106 compliance. SHPO concurred with the Draft APE map on September 9, 2009.

## **2.5 Public Scoping**

Notification of the public scoping meetings was completed via several forms of media as described further in this section. This outreach was in addition to the official notices published in the Federal Register and posted with the State Clearinghouse. Four public scoping meetings were held as described in Section 2.5.3.

### **2.5.1 Notification Database**

Metro maintained and updated the stakeholder database developed during the AA study to track interested individuals and groups, their areas of interest, communication, and other pertinent information for the duration of the project. To the extent possible, Metro includes mailing addresses as well as email contact information on the database. A list of the public agency database entries is provided in Appendix K.

Since the project has regional benefits and, potentially, impacts, Metro is building the outreach database to be more inclusive of stakeholders beyond the downtown area. This is being accomplished by selectively importing information from Metro's existing databases from other projects into the Regional Connector database, as well as targeting councils of governments and those jurisdictions potentially benefiting from the project. The project database will be used to communicate with project stakeholders, including:

- Elected officials on the local, state and federal level
- Neighborhood councils and other elected groups
- Homeowners associations and neighborhood organizations
- Chambers of Commerce, local business improvement districts (BIDs) and business leaders
- Property management firms serving lofts and condominiums in the downtown Los Angeles area
- Community-based and civic organizations
- Large employers and operators of key destinations
- Transportation advocates and interest groups
- Print, broadcast and electronic media, including community-based publications and blogs
- Stakeholders who attended any AA meeting or provided comment
- Other interested groups and persons

For the purposes of notification for the public scoping meetings, the existing AA database was updated to include contact information for new neighborhood council members, and unit numbers for a number of residential buildings. In addition, Metro completed a walk-through of the project area to further identify stakeholders who were then added to the database. At the time of the scoping meetings, 1,542 entries were listed on the Regional Connector database.

### **2.5.2 Public Notification Activities**

A variety of methods were employed to notify stakeholders about the public scoping meetings. These meetings were publicized via direct mail notices to the project database; emails; postings on Metro's website; display advertisements in multi-lingual publications (English, Spanish and Japanese); notices placed on Metro buses and trains serving the project area; a press release which was sent to at least 83 local, regional, ethnic and multi-lingual publications as well as blogs; and through grassroots outreach to downtown property owners and residential management companies. Noticing was conducted in English, Spanish and Japanese.

### 2.5.2.1 Direct Mail

A scoping notification letter was translated into English, Spanish and Japanese and distributed by US Mail on March 16, 2009, to the postal addresses on the existing project database. The sample letter, which indicates the date, time and address of each scoping meeting, is included in Appendix L.

### 2.5.2.2 Take Ones

Preceding the public scoping meetings, “Take One” brochures inviting transit users to the scoping meetings were placed on Metro buses and the Metro Gold and Blue Lines in or adjacent to the project area. The “Take Ones” were identical in content to the direct mail notices described in Section 2.5.2.1 and are included in Appendix M.

### 2.5.2.3 Email Blasts

The project team disseminated e-mail blasts, or electronic mailings, to all stakeholders in the database with email addresses, including elected officials, neighborhood councils, and community-based organizations. These groups then were asked to forward these e-mails to their constituents and/or members. E-mail blasts are typically used to distribute the scoping meeting announcements and other project information instantly and to large numbers of people.

Electronic distribution of the meeting notice took place on March 16, 2009. Notices were sent to 721 email addresses within the existing project database. A copy of the email is included in Appendix N.

### 2.5.2.4 Newspaper Advertisements

Display advertisements for the scoping meetings were placed in five newspapers within the project area and were selected based on their geographic focus, language needs, and audited circulation numbers. A sample newspaper advertisement is included in Appendix O.

- *Rafu Shimpo* (English/Japanese)
  - Date: March 23, 2009
  - Circulation: 45,000 weekly
  - Serves the Japanese and Little Tokyo community within study area
- *Downtown News*
  - Date: March 20, 2009
  - Circulation: 49,000 weekly

- Serves Downtown Los Angeles and is widely distributed in the study area, including at transit stops
- *Daily Trojan*
  - Date: March 23, 2009
  - Circulation: 9,000 daily
  - Serves the University of Southern California Campus in the Exposition Park/South Park area adjacent to the study area
- *Garment and Citizen* (Spanish/English)
  - Dates: March 20, 2009
  - Circulation: 25,000 weekly
  - Serves Downtown Los Angeles area and is widely distributed to Spanish speaking workers within the study area
- *Pasadena Star News*
  - Dates: March 23, 2009
  - Circulation: 89,000 daily
  - Serves the City of Pasadena and wider portions of the San Gabriel Valley

#### 2.5.2.5 Project Webpage

The project website, located at [www.metro.net/regionalconnector](http://www.metro.net/regionalconnector), that was initially used for the AA, was updated for the purposes of the DEIS/DEIR, including publicizing the public scoping meetings. Website content for the Regional Connector included a project overview, information about upcoming meetings and other materials including Fact Sheets, presentations made at the public meetings, and other information of interest to the public from the AA. The website will continue to be updated at key milestones. Some materials posted to the website were translated into Spanish and Japanese.

#### 2.5.2.6 Additional Outreach During Public Scoping Period

In order to maximize the coverage of the outreach effort for the scoping meetings, Metro undertook some creative approaches to engage the public as follows:

- Grassroots canvassing was conducted on March 26 and 27, 2009, at Union Station to distribute scoping meeting information to Gold Line riders. Over 3,000 flyers were distributed over these two days.
- Metro partnered with the California Institute of Technology to post on-campus meeting notices to publicize the Pasadena scoping meeting.
- Metro partnered with the University of Southern California to post notices on-campus to publicize the USC meeting. Notices were also forwarded to students in the School of Policy and Planning.
- The outreach team distributed bi-lingual meeting notices along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street within the Little Tokyo Service Center area.
- Capitalizing on new ways to communicate with a wider audience, Metro also established a “Regional Connector” Facebook page for the project. The Facebook page has over 100 members.
- The information phone line (213.922.7277) was monitored regularly.

### 2.5.3 Elected Official Briefing Meeting

A meeting was held with elected officials and/or their staff prior to the Public Scoping meetings. Typically, the briefing serves as a sounding board for the project team about the presentation, and provides these officials with notification about the upcoming meetings as well as preliminary information about the status of the project.

**Time:** Wednesday, March 25, 2009

**Location:** Metro  
One Gateway Plaza, 15th Floor  
Windsor Conference Room  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**Attendees:** Representatives from the following offices attended:

- Office of U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein
- Office of U.S. Representative Dianne Watson
- Office of State Senator Fran Pavley
- Office of State Senator Alex Padilla
- Office of Assembly member Curren Price

- Office of Assembly member Felipe Fuentes
- Office of Los Angeles City Councilmember Jan Perry
- City of South Pasadena

**Comments:** Metro received oral comments from attendees at the meeting. Several attendees suggested that Metro highlight the potential benefits of the Regional Connector to communities outside downtown Los Angeles and to explain how this project fits in with Metro's other corridor studies running concurrently.

### 2.5.4 Public Scoping Meetings

Four public scoping meetings were scheduled in late March and early April 2009. Meetings were conducted in compliance with NEPA and CEQA guidelines, and locations were selected to reflect equitable geographic coverage, proximity to public transportation, and to minimize overlap with other meetings scheduled in the project area. For the convenience of all attendees, bus lines to and from the meeting sites were publicized on some notices. In order to provide the greatest opportunity for community participation, meetings were scheduled in the early evening on weekdays.

An approximate total of 175 people attended the scoping meetings, with approximately 82 persons providing verbal and/or written comments at the meetings. Approximately 45 additional comments were received after the meetings through letters and email.

Individual Public Scoping meeting details are as follows:

#### Meeting 1

**Time:** Monday, March 30, 2009, 4:30 – 6:00 PM

**Location:** Alumni Room, Davidson Conference Center  
University of Southern California  
3415 S. Figueroa Street  
Los Angeles, CA 9007

**Attendees:** 24 (Sign-in sheet included in Appendix P)

**Comments:** 11 verbal, 10 written

#### Meeting 2

**Time:** Tuesday, March 31, 2009, 6:30 – 8:00 PM

**Location:** Lake Avenue Church  
393 N. Lake Ave.



Pasadena, CA 91101

**Attendees:** 29 (Sign-in sheet included in Appendix Q)

**Comments:** 11 verbal, 2 written

### Meeting 3

**Time:** Wednesday, April 1, 2009, 6:30 – 8:00 PM

**Location:** Japanese American National Museum (JANM)  
369 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**Attendees:** 45 (Sign-in sheet included in Appendix R)

**Comments:** 12 verbal, 11 written

### Meeting 4

**Time:** Thursday, April 2, 2009, 12 Noon – 1:30 PM

**Location:** Board Room  
Los Angeles Central Library  
630 W. 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90071

**Attendees:** 56 (Sign-in sheet included in Appendix S)

**Comments:** 11 verbal, 9 written

#### 2.5.4.1 Public Meeting Format

The meeting format was as follows:

- 20 minutes: Open House
- 20 minutes: Presentation
- 50 minutes: Public Comment

The scoping meetings began with an open house format to provide attendees with an opportunity to review the project information prior to the start of the presentation and subsequent comment period. Project team members were present at the project display boards to answer questions related to the technical aspects of the project. A Spanish language interpreter was made available at all meetings, with a Japanese language interpreter

at the April 1, 2009 meeting. Following the open house period, a PowerPoint presentation was made to provide attendees with information regarding the purpose of scoping and information on the project purpose and need, background, the recently completed AA process, and the alternatives being carried forward into the DEIS/DEIR. Emphasis was placed on the importance of the community providing comments before the comment deadline, at the public meetings or via email, fax, or postal mail.

Following the presentation, attendees who completed speaker cards provided their verbal comments, which were recorded by a court reporter/transcriber. The oral comment period was moderated, and speakers were asked to limit their comments to two minutes. Those requiring translation were provided with four minutes. After the public comment portion of the meeting, the project team was again available to answer technical questions at the informational display boards.

#### **2.5.4.2 Public Meeting Materials**

The following items were distributed to meeting attendees in English, Spanish and Japanese.

- Agenda
- Scoping Packet
- Comment Form

Attendees were also invited to download a copy of the presentation made at the meetings from the Metro project website.

Copies of the boards displayed at the meetings as well as meeting handouts are included in Appendix T.

A copy of the Power Point presentation is included in Appendix U.

### **2.5 Comments Received**

The public comment period for the DEIS/DEIR was from March 24 to May 11, 2009, which was greater than the required 45 calendar days. People had opportunities to comment in writing or orally at the four public scoping meetings or they could comment in writing via email, fax, or postal letter. Email comments could be sent either directly to the Metro project manager or via a project specific email address found on the project website. In total, approximately 126 comments were received by the May 11, 2009, scoping deadline:

- Approximately 47 persons provided oral comments and 32 written statements were submitted at the public scoping meetings
- Approximately 45 emails and letters were received during the public comment period

- All comments received are included in Appendices V and W



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## SUMMARY OF SCOPING COMMENTS

Metro accepted comments on the Regional Connector Transit Corridor Project throughout the entire scoping period, from March 24, 2009 until May 11, 2009. Agencies, community groups, members of the public, elected officials, and other interested parties submitted an approximate total of 126 letters, emails, comment cards, and individuals' oral testimony during this period. The summary table (Table 3-1) in Section 3.7 provides a tally of the topics discussed in the comments. It should be noted that the combined numbers of comments listed in the following subsections and the summary table will be greater than the total number of comment submissions because some commenters discussed multiple topics in their submission. Topics covered in the comments included the purpose and need, the range of alternatives to be analyzed in the DEIS/DEIR, potential impacts and mitigation measures, and other substantive issues. This section contains a summary of comments received during the scoping period. Full, unedited copies of the public comments and public scoping meeting transcripts are included in Appendix V and agency comments are in Appendix W.

### 3.1 Summary of Substantive Comments

All comments were reviewed and categorized in an electronic database. The database contains information documenting the name of the commenter, the agency or organization the commenter represents, the method by which the comment was received, the date the comment was received, the topic categories addressed in the comment, and the full text of the comment. The comments were largely fit into four topic categories. The major categories of comments were the project purpose and need (approximately 16 comments), the alternatives to be studied in the DEIS/DEIR (including track configuration, alignment options, station location options, and potential design features; approximately 151 comments), and environmental impacts and mitigation measures (approximately 139 comments). The following sections contain summaries of the comments from each major category.

### 3.2 Comments Related to Purpose and Need

Most comments regarding the purpose and need for the project cited the benefits of enhanced light rail connectivity and new stations in the downtown area. In total, approximately 16 comments related to purpose and need were received. The general topics that these comments addressed were:

- Making the light rail system connect better through downtown Los Angeles
- Making downtown Los Angeles more accessible from other Los Angeles neighborhoods
- Attracting new riders with improved transit service
- Reducing downtown traffic congestion

- Reducing transfers and shortening transit travel times
- Revitalizing the downtown area
- Timeliness of the project
- Promoting an alternative to driving
- Encouraging a pedestrian-friendly downtown
- Improving air quality
- Accommodating short headways on the light rail system
- Focusing on transit system quality
- Addressing capacity constraints of the light rail system, such as station crowding, before they become serious
- Expanding the rail transit system

### 3.3 Comments Related to Alternatives

An approximate total of 151 comments specifically discussed the alternatives. Several comments recommend alignment routes and design features that were studied in the AA, but not carried forward. Some comments mentioned other alignments, such as Alameda Street, which were included in prior connector studies, but were not studied in the AA because they did not meet the objective of connecting the light rail system through the central business district. Many commenters simply indicated a preference for particular alternatives without indicating reasons for their choices. Some comments citing potential environmental impacts (safety, noise, traffic circulation, etc.) as the basis for preference of an alternative are counted in both this section and Section 3.4.

#### 3.3.1 No Build Alternative

Two comments mentioned the No Build Alternative. Both supported the No Build Alternative in light of the potential impacts of the other proposed alternatives.

#### 3.3.2 TSM Alternative

Approximately five comments about the TSM alternative were received. One pointed out the shuttle buses' potential to improve circulation within the downtown area for senior citizens. One supported the TSM Alternative being implemented in conjunction with one of the LRT alternatives. The remaining comments did not mention any specific advantages or drawbacks.

### 3.3.3 At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative

Approximately 30 comments were received regarding the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative. Less than 20 percent of the comments expressing an opinion about this alternative were in support of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative. Comments on this alternative included:

- Potential traffic impacts due to construction, reduced travel lanes as a result of the at-grade design, and the potential for stalled train operations to further disrupt traffic flows during operation
- Potential impacts to the regional system reliability from traffic congestion or potential collisions with cars or pedestrians which could interrupt service
- Potential safety concerns associated with at-grade train operations including the potential for emergency vehicle access to be hindered
- Potential impacts to rider mobility and inconvenient transfers due to the split station at 1<sup>st</sup> and Main and Los Angeles Streets
- Relative costs associated with operating the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative compared to the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative
- Potential impacts on vehicle access for specific buildings and the reduction in available turning radii with tracks running in the street.
- Potential visual impacts of at-grade LRT facilities
- Potential for the increased visibility of the at-grade system to attract more riders
- Potential economic impacts if the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Tunnel becomes unavailable for filming
- Potential restriction of access to driveways and public buildings along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street

### 3.3.4 Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative

Metro received approximately 64 comments regarding the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative. Over 80 percent of the comments expressed support for this alternative. Some commenters indicated specific concerns and/or potential benefits. These included:

- Potential for greater safety and reliability over an at-grade configuration
- Potential for fewer impacts on traffic circulation
- Potential for fewer impacts to downtown land uses and the potential for public/private joint development projects and other economic benefits to businesses on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street

- Potential for negative impacts on businesses in the Little Tokyo District and loss of businesses and parking at 1<sup>st</sup> and Alameda Streets
- Potential for negative impacts on traffic operations and intersection capacity at 1<sup>st</sup> and Alameda Streets as well as vehicle and freight access to buildings in this vicinity
- Several comments were related to the potential location and design of the station on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street
- Potential construction impacts associated with tunneling, such as detours for pedestrians and automobiles, noise, and loss of street parking
- Potential for easier pedestrian circulation compared to the other alternatives
- Potentially fewer visual impacts to the existing streetscape
- Discontinuation of direct service to East Los Angeles from Little Tokyo/Arts District Station
- Ability of the alternative to avoid disruption of Metro and LADOT DASH bus service
- Potential for the high volumes of trains at 1<sup>st</sup> and Alameda Streets to deter pedestrians and motorists from crossing, causing a division in the Little Tokyo neighborhood

### 3.3.5 Configuration

Approximately 25 comments were received regarding the potential configurations for the LRT tracks. Comments in this category did not specifically mention either of the build alternatives. Since both of the LRT alternatives include underground and at-grade segments, comments about configuration are relevant to both. Comments in this category were primarily related to the preference to grade separate the tracks from automobile traffic either by placing the system entirely underground or elevated. Commenters identified potential benefits to system reliability and speed and the potential to avoid impacts to traffic congestion or pedestrian circulation and safety from a grade separated configuration. Many comments suggest exclusively using one type of configuration (an entirely underground alignment, for example).

### 3.3.6 Station Locations and Connections

An approximate total of 25 comments suggesting new station locations were received, along with five comments about connections that the Regional Connector could make with other operating and planned transit services and activity centers at its stations. These comments relate to issues of accessibility and mobility within the project area and the regional system. The comments pertaining to station locations included:

- Suggestions for additional station locations:



- A second station at 1<sup>st</sup> and Alameda Streets, just east of the intersection, in order to facilitate transfers between the North-South and East-West LRT services.
- A station near 2<sup>nd</sup> and Spring Streets on the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative
- At-grade station at Alameda and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets
- At-grade station at Alameda Street and Olympic Boulevard
- A station location close to the Civic Center
- A station at Temple and Judge John Aiso Streets on the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative
- A station in the western portion of Little Tokyo
- A station near Weller Court
- An underground station on the Mangrove development site
- Alternate station location suggestions:
  - A station on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street between Los Angeles and San Pedro Streets instead of between Main and Los Angeles Streets on the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative
  - Moving the station planned for 2<sup>nd</sup> and Hope Streets to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and Grand Avenue
  - Replacing the existing Little Tokyo/Arts District Station with a larger underground station

Commenters suggested that the following connections be accommodated by the Regional Connector stations:

- Connection to the proposed Broadway Streetcar, potentially at the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative station at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Los Angeles Streets
- Connections to the Grand Avenue Project and Historic Core
- Connections to additional bus service

- Convenient connections for bicycles and pedestrians at all stations

### 3.3.7 Other Alignments

Metro received approximately 11 comments suggesting alignments for the Regional Connector other than the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative and the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative. These suggested alignments are as follows:

- An alignment along 3<sup>rd</sup> Street from Flower Street to Little Tokyo
- An alignment following Alameda Street from Little Tokyo/Arts District Station to Washington Boulevard and then turning west to join the existing Metro Blue Line tracks
- An underground alignment on either 3<sup>rd</sup> Street or Temple Street instead of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street
- An alignment directly south from the Metro Gold Line bridge across the 101 freeway into a subway beneath 1<sup>st</sup> and Alameda Streets leading to the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative's subway underneath 2<sup>nd</sup> Street

### 3.3.8 Design Features

Approximately 17 comments were submitted suggesting additional design features to be taken into consideration. Suggestions regarding design features were primarily related to issues of accessibility and mobility and potential visual and aesthetic impacts. These features include the following:

- Alternatives to the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative's split stations at 1<sup>st</sup> and Main Streets and 1<sup>st</sup> and Los Angeles Streets to potentially reduce confusion and prevent missed connections
- Provide knock-out panels on the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative to provide for future system connections at 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and Central Avenue to a southerly route on Central Avenue to Washington Boulevard, and at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Hope Streets to a route along Temple Street to Silverlake and Glendale
- Provide escalator access at CitiGroup Center Plaza into the proposed Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative station at 5<sup>th</sup> and Flower Streets
- Provide entrances and exits directly into nearby buildings at underground stations
- Building an underground split-level junction near 1<sup>st</sup> and Alameda streets instead of a single-level junction at-grade, so as to improve operations and avoid traffic impacts

- Double tracks (two tracks in each direction, for a total of four sets of tracks) or three sets of tracks to increase capacity
- Providing adequate capacity for transfers at Little Tokyo/Arts District Station
- Provide additional capacity beyond the provisions of either build alternative
- Include bicycle racks at stations
- Provide green space at stations
- Ensuring that the project complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act

### 3.4 Comments Related to Potential Impacts

Approximately 139 comments received pertained to specific potential impacts of the project. Commenters discussed a wide range of impacts, though the majority touched upon traffic circulation, safety, and construction impacts. The comments on each type of impact are summarized in the following subsections.

#### 3.4.1 Transportation Impacts – Traffic Circulation

Metro received approximately 35 comments regarding potential transportation impacts and traffic circulation. Most of them expressed concern over the potential for increased traffic congestion as a result of construction and operation of at-grade LRT facilities. Comments included the following issues:

- Transportation impacts and traffic circulation comments pertaining to the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative:
  - Potential impacts to traffic congestion on adjacent streets with the conversion of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to primarily rail use under the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative
  - Potential for the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative to restrict access to driveways and public buildings along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street
  - Potential for at-grade LRT to worsen traffic congestion in the downtown area
- Transportation impacts and traffic circulation comments pertaining to the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative:
  - Potential for worsened traffic due to the loss of parking on the lot bounded by 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Alameda Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, and Central Avenue under the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative

- Compatibility of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative with the encouragement of a pedestrian-friendly downtown
- Potential traffic capacity and operation impacts specifically to the intersection of 1<sup>st</sup> and Alameda Streets
- Transportation impacts and traffic circulation comments that do not pertain to a specific alternative:
  - Potential for the Regional Connector to alleviate traffic congestion in the downtown area
  - Potential impacts resulting in loss of both on and off-street parking
  - Potential to impact access to specific buildings for vehicle and freight due to changes in the current street capacity and configurations

### 3.4.2 Land Use and Development

Four comments about Land Use and Development impacts were received. The issues addressed in these comments include:

- Potential for the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative to minimize long-term impacts on downtown land use, provide sites for possible public-private joint development projects, and compatibility with continued development of properties along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street
- Potential for transit-oriented development if an underground station is located on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street between Los Angeles and San Pedro Streets
- Foreclosing options for signature development in Little Tokyo neighborhood

### 3.4.3 Community and Neighborhood Impacts

Approximately ten comments were received concerning community and neighborhood impacts. The issues addressed by these comments included:

- Community and neighborhood impacts comments pertaining to the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative:
  - Potential for the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative to divide Little Tokyo at 1<sup>st</sup> and Alameda Streets due to the high volume of trains

- Potential deterioration of quality of life in Little Tokyo due to the loss of businesses on the block bounded by 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Alameda Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, and Central Avenue under the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative
- Potential for the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative to reduce the developable size of Little Tokyo
- Community and neighborhood impacts comments that do not pertain to a specific alternative:
  - Potential impacts to the Little Tokyo and Arts District areas due to changes in traffic circulation and land use patterns
  - Potential for project facilities to force alteration of traditional parade routes
  - Potential for a grade separated alignment to have less of an impact on revitalizing neighborhoods than a non-grade separated alignment

### 3.4.4 Visual and Aesthetic Impacts

Approximately nine comments regarding visual and aesthetic impacts were received. Issues addressed by these comments include:

- Visual and aesthetic impacts comments pertaining to the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative:
  - Potential for the high visibility of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative to attract more riders
  - Potential for at-grade LRT facilities to interrupt the streetscape to an unacceptable extent
- A visual and aesthetic impacts comment pertaining to the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative:
  - Potential for the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative to avoid visual street clutter
- Visual and aesthetic impacts comments that do not pertain to a specific alternative:
  - Potential impacts to the Little Tokyo and Arts District areas
  - Potential visual impacts of catenary poles on adjacent residences, particularly those located at the same level as the wires

- Request to incorporate sound urban design and public art into the project

### 3.4.5 Noise and Vibration

Approximately eight comments about noise and vibration were received. The issues addressed in these comments included potential noise impacts from train horns sounding when approaching grade crossings, noise and vibration from the trains moving along the tracks, potential damage to surrounding buildings due to construction vibration, and engine noise.

### 3.4.6 Historic Impacts

Four comments about historic impacts were received. The topics addressed by these comments included potential impacts to the historic Saint Vibiana Cathedral, the historic Higgins Building, and historic features along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.

### 3.4.7 Parklands

Two comments regarding parklands were received. One suggested that parks be created adjacent to proposed stations, and another suggested converting the area above the proposed Alameda Street underpass to open space.

### 3.4.8 Economic and Fiscal Impacts

Approximately 11 comments concerning the economic and fiscal impacts of the project were received. These comments discussed the following issues:

- An economic and fiscal impacts comment pertaining to the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative:
  - Potential for the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative to eliminate revenue from filming in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street tunnel due to the addition of tracks
- Economic and fiscal impacts comments pertaining to the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative:
  - Potential loss of businesses due to construction of the portal at 1<sup>st</sup> and Alameda Streets for the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative and subsequent potential effects on the long-term economic wellbeing of the Little Tokyo District
  - Potential for the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative's removal of businesses and parking to devalue properties in Little Tokyo and lead to financial losses, and request for direct assistance to these businesses

- Potential for an underground configuration to avoid impacts to current and future businesses on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street
- Potential impacts to small businesses on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street between Los Angeles and Alameda Streets from potential traffic congestion and construction
- Economic and fiscal impacts comments that do not pertain to a specific alternative:
  - Potential impacts to retail business volume due to disruptions in pedestrian and vehicle flow patterns both during construction and post construction
  - Potential for the project to create jobs

### 3.4.9 Safety and Security

Approximately 27 comments related to safety and security were received. Topics addressed by these comments included:

- Safety and security comments pertaining to the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative:
  - Potential for at-grade trains to collide with other vehicles or pedestrians
  - Potential for at-grade LRT facilities to compromise emergency vehicle and law enforcement access
  - Potential for the grade separated Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative to be safer than the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative due to high volumes of motorists and pedestrians crossing 2<sup>nd</sup> Street
- A safety and security comment pertaining to the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative:
  - Safety concerns for pedestrians and automobiles near the proposed Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative facilities at 1<sup>st</sup> and Alameda Streets
- Safety and security comments that do not pertain to a specific alternative:
  - Potential for overcrowding on station platforms or inadequate ingress and egress at Little Tokyo/Arts District Station due to increased ridership and additional transfers
  - Potential for security issues related to the proposed underpasses on each build alternative

- Potential security issues related to unauthorized pedestrian access into tunnel facilities
- Security considerations for public facilities near the potential stations and right-of-way
- Potential safety issues for vehicles and trucks turning in an out of buildings along streets with altered configurations and capacity
- Potential health risks posed by public transit vehicles
- Potential safety concerns of seniors and persons with disabilities
- Request that the hazard analysis study be complete and adequate

### 3.4.10 Construction Impacts

Approximately 18 comments about construction impacts were received. Topics covered by these comments included:

- Difficulty of making changes to an active revenue rail transit line without service disruptions and additional costs
- Potential impacts to traffic during construction
- Potential construction impacts from tunneling activities and the need to mitigate those potential impacts
- Potential impacts to building access during construction
- Potential impacts to businesses during construction
- Potential for construction vibration to damage buildings and property
- Order in which portions of the build alternatives are constructed

### 3.4.11 Growth Inducing Impacts

One comment about growth inducing impacts was received. It mentioned the potential for the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative to generate public/private joint development opportunities.

### 3.4.12 Air Quality Impacts

One comment about air quality was received. The comment contains a request to analyze potential smog reductions generated by each proposed alternative.



### 3.4.13 Water Resources

One comment was received requesting that the analysis evaluate potential impacts to floodplains and that the project design be consistent with the National Flood Insurance Program requirements for new development.

## 3.5 Comments Related to Policy, Scoping, Operations, and Other Projects

Approximately nine comments pertaining to policy, the scoping process, operations, and other projects were received. Some of the topics covered by these comments included:

- Extending the operating hours of the Metro Rail system
- Revising Metro policies regarding transfers
- Creation of a downtown free fare zone
- Request for information about Metro Expo Line construction activities
- Request that the Scoping Report and EIS/EIR be adequate, respond to non-environmental comments, and be subject to critical review
- Request to maintain Metro Blue Line headways
- Suggestions for new rail projects

## 3.6 Comments Submitted by Federal, State, and Other Agencies

Seven agencies submitted comments during the scoping period. Most of the topics mentioned were also covered in the comments discussed in the previous sections. However, some of the agency comments presented new issues, including requests to ensure compliance with government-mandated policies, safety concerns, and warnings of potential access restrictions to various public buildings along the proposed alignments, among others. The agency comments are summarized in the following sections, and full text of the agency comments is provided in Appendix W. Many agencies also have regulatory authority over the design and construction of a rail project. The concerns of all the agencies will be addressed both through the DEIS/DEIR analysis and through on-going coordination with Metro.

### 3.6.1 Comments Submitted by Federal Agencies

The United States District Court submitted a comment that discussed topics listed in the previous sections as well as concerns about the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative's impacts on access to the new Federal District Courthouse planned for the block bounded by 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Hill Street, Broadway, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) of the US Department of Homeland Security also provided comments related to the analysis that will need to be conducted in the DEIS/DEIR and the requirements for any proposed development within a floodplain. The Environmental Protection Agency provided additional comments regarding the issues to be analyzed.

### **3.6.2 Comments Submitted by State Agencies**

The State of California Department of Transportation, the California Public Utilities Commission, and the California Native American Heritage Commission submitted comments discussing topics listed in the previous sections. They also emphasized the need to keep the public informed of the progress of the EIS/EIR study process and provided information on CEQA guidelines.

### **3.6.3 Comments Submitted by Other Agencies**

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation, the Community Redevelopment of the City of Los Angeles, and the City of Pasadena submitted comments covering some of the topics mentioned in previous sections, as well as:

- Request for traffic impact analysis
- Design and placement guidelines for stations, the alignment, and the surrounding streets
- Request for anticipated train speeds to be included in the EIS/EIR
- Application of the Federal Rail Administration's grade crossing policy
- Security of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative during protests in the Civic Center area

## **3.7 Comment Database**

Table 3-1 provides a summary of the comments received during the scoping period. Transcripts of the spoken comments submitted at the public scoping meetings and full text of all written public comments are provided in Appendix V. Agency comments are provided in Appendix W.