

Regional Connector Transit Corridor Study

Environmental Review Process



NOVEMBER 2009

Environmental Review Fact Sheet

Background

The Regional Connector Light Rail Transit (LRT) study includes an analysis of alternatives to connect the 7th Street Metro Center and Union Station through Downtown Los Angeles. The project was initiated in 2007 with an Alternatives Analysis Study. Approximately 33 alternatives traversing Downtown Los Angeles were developed and analyzed based on a number of important criteria, then narrowed by the Alternative Analysis process to four alternatives. In early 2009, the Metro Board of Directors authorized the project team to move into the next phase of the project and begin work on a Draft Environmental Impact

Statement/Report (Draft EIS/EIR) to examine and complete a thorough review of the following four alternatives:

- > No Build
- > Traffic Systems Management (TSM)
- > LRT Build Alternative, At-Grade Emphasis
- > LRT Build Alternative, Underground Emphasis

Summary of Environmental Process

There are several steps in the EIS/EIR process that provide agencies, project stakeholders and the general public the opportunity to review the project and provide comments.

1. Notice of Intent (NOI)/ Notice of Preparation (NOP)

March 2009 (Complete)

WHAT METRO DOES

- > Metro initiates the CEPA/NEPA process.
- > Publication of NOI and NOP to meet the requirements of NEPA and CEQA.

YOUR ROLE (PUBLIC ACTION)

- > The NOI/NOP announces the start of the project and upcoming scoping meetings, and does not require public action other than participation in scoping.
- > Public is provided an opportunity to review and comment on Scope of the Environmental Analysis.

2. Public Scoping

March - May 2009 (Complete)

WHAT METRO DOES

- > Metro conducted public scoping meetings in April/May 2009.
- > The public was also invited to comment by e-mail or letter. Metro held meetings at four locations: Financial District, Little Tokyo, South Park/USC and Pasadena. A total of 175 people attended the scoping meetings, with 126 verbal, written and email comments received.
- > Metro publicized these meetings widely, including mail and email, on Metro transit service, via newspaper advertisements, diverse media, and neighborhood canvassing.

YOUR ROLE (PUBLIC ACTION)

- > Public is provided an opportunity to review and comment on Scope of the Environmental Analysis.
- > Public's first opportunity to provide comment about what Metro should study in the DEIS/EIR, e.g. project purpose and need, alternatives for analysis in the EIS/EIR and potential impacts and mitigations for analysis in the EIS/EIR.
- > Although the official public comment period for the DEIS/R scoping process has closed, this does not mean that you can no longer provide your input. Metro is committed to an ongoing, transparent community outreach process which includes community update meetings at important project milestones, as well as ongoing outreach to key stakeholder groups in the project area.
- > Public Scoping period closed on May 11, 2009. Metro will record and include all comments in the Scoping Report.

3. Prepare Draft EIS/EIR

March 2009 - Summer 2010

WHAT METRO DOES

- > Analyze project impacts and ongoing work with the community on project design and mitigations.
- > Metro will continue to provide updated information as results become available. However, Metro is still analyzing the four alternatives. If we are not able to answer your questions immediately, we are committed to following up when we have an answer.

YOUR ROLE (PUBLIC ACTION)

- > Attend public meetings.
- > Next round of public meetings scheduled for November 2009.
- > Be on the lookout for stakeholder meetings in your community. In addition to the public updates, Metro will continue to meet with organizations and project stakeholders as the project moves forward.
- > Now is the time to talk about what you think the impacts are and how they can be mitigated.



NEPA and CEQA Process

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) are laws that require government agencies to identify the significant environmental impact of their actions and to avoid, minimize or mitigate any adverse effects. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for NEPA and an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for CEQA are required for any action that is taken by the government or receives government funding. This project requires approvals from both NEPA and CEQA, and therefore a joint EIS/EIR will be prepared.

The EIS/EIR for the Regional Connector will consider the proposed project's environmental impacts on a wide range of topics such as air quality, cultural and historic resources,

community effects, noise, visual impacts, soil, water, biological resources and others. During the Draft EIS/EIR phase, Metro will also study the potential effects of the project both during construction and once it is operating, and will evaluate measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate adverse impacts. During this phase, Metro will further refine the alternatives (including alignments and station locations), including consideration of the cost effectiveness of the alternatives and funding options for construction.

4. Public Review & Comment On Draft EIS/EIR

Summer 2010

WHAT METRO DOES

- > Circulate Draft Environmental Document.
- > At the conclusion of the DEIS/EIR preparation, the environmental document is available and will be circulated by Metro for public review. Metro will inform the public when the document is available.
- > Metro will host formal public hearings so that the public may comment on the Draft EIS/EIR.

YOUR ROLE (PUBLIC ACTION)

- > Public reviews Draft EIS/EIR, addressing impacts, mitigations or other relevant issues.
- > Attend public hearings to again provide formal comment about the project as part of the environmental process. In this way, the public can address project design and adequacy of mitigation measures.
- > Public hearings tentatively scheduled in summer 2010.

5. Board Selects Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)

Late Summer/Early Fall 2010

WHAT METRO DOES

- > Metro Board selects Locally Preferred Alternative.
- > Metro staff will present findings of DEIS/EIR to Metro Board of Directors. The Board will be asked to adopt LPA for approval and direct staff to complete the Final EIS/EIR. The LPA is the project identified to move forward into the Final EIS/EIR.
- > Metro Board then will seek approval from Federal Transportation Agency (FTA) to begin Preliminary Engineering i.e., development of final drawings and plans for the project to be implemented.

YOUR ROLE (PUBLIC ACTION)

- > Public comment to Metro Board on the LPA recommendations.
- > Attend the Metro Board of Directors meeting. At this time, you will have an opportunity to speak to the Metro Board about the project that will move forward to implementation. This is when you can speak to the Board about the project you want to see.

6. Prepare Final EIS/EIR

Summer 2010/11

WHAT METRO DOES

- > Metro will respond to comments on the Draft EIS/EIR in the Final EIS/EIR.
- > Metro circulates the FEIS/EIR for public review.
- > This process is in compliance with NEPA/CEQA.

YOUR ROLE (PUBLIC ACTION)

- > No public action.
- > The Final EIS/R will have responded to public comments during the Draft EIS/EIR. There will be a 30 day period for public review of the Final EIS/EIR prior to approval of the Record of Decision.

7. Board Decision/Project

Approval Summer 2011

WHAT METRO DOES

- > Metro Board will decide whether to move forward with construction of Regional Connector project.
- > Metro staff will make its final presentation to the Board about the Regional Connector project recommended for implementation. If the Board approves the staff recommendation, it is only then that a project may be constructed.

YOUR ROLE (PUBLIC ACTION)

- > Public Comments made to Board about recommendation.
- > The public will have this opportunity to provide final comments to the Metro Board before a decision is made.

Contact Us

Do you have a question about the study, want more information or want to be added to our mailing list? You can also contact us about scheduling a presentation for your organization. Here's how you can send us your views or questions:

EMAIL

regionalconnector@metro.net

LETTER

Written comments can be mailed to

Ms. Dolores Roybal Saltarelli
Project Manager
Metro
One Gateway Plaza,
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

PHONE

You can also leave your questions or comments on our project phone line by calling **213.922.7277**. Phone messages are retrieved at least once every business day.

FACEBOOK

Be sure to visit us on Facebook at “Metro Regional Connector.”