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**LOS ANGELES COUNTY
METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (LACMTA)
AND
FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA)**

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP)/NOTICE OF INTENT (NOI) OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR)**

TO: AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND INTERESTED PARTIES

SUBJECT TITLE: EAST SAN FERNANDO VALLEY TRANSIT CORRIDOR PROJECT

PROJECT LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING: The East San Fernando Valley

Transit Corridor Project area is located in the San Fernando Valley in the County of Los Angeles.

Generally, the project area extends from Ventura Boulevard in the south in the City of Los Angeles to the City of San Fernando and the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station in the north. The eastern San Fernando Valley includes the two major north-south arterial roadways of Sepulveda and Van Nuys Boulevards, spanning approximately 10 to 12 miles and the major north-west arterial roadway of San Fernando Road.

Several freeways traverse or border the eastern San Fernando Valley. These include the Ventura Freeway (US-101), the San Diego Freeway (I-405), the Golden State Freeway (I-5), the Ronald Reagan Freeway (SR-118), and the Foothill Freeway (I-210). The Hollywood Freeway (SR-170) is located east of the project area. In addition to Metro local and Rapid bus service, the Metro Orange Line (Orange Line) Bus Rapid Transit service, the Metrolink Ventura Line commuter rail service, Amtrak inter-city rail service, and the Metrolink Antelope Valley Line commuter rail service are the major transit corridors that serve interregional trips in the area.

Land uses in the area include neighborhood and regional commercial uses. Numerous car dealerships on Auto Row are located along Van Nuys Boulevard, south of Chandler Boulevard. Other uses in the area include government services at the Van Nuys Civic Center, major shopping and office uses at the Sherman Oaks Galleria, and medium- to high-density residential uses throughout the area. Major activity centers in the eastern San Fernando Valley include: The Village at Sherman Oaks, Panorama Mall,

Whiteman Airport, Van Nuys Airport, Mission Community Hospital, Kaiser Permanente Hospital, and several schools, youth centers, and recreational centers.

PROJECT INITIATION: The FTA and LACMTA will prepare an EIS/EIR for the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor Project pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). LACMTA is serving as the local lead agency for purposes of the CEQA process. FTA is serving as the lead federal agency and LACMTA as a joint lead agency for purposes of the NEPA process. This notice shall alert interested parties to the preparation of the EIS/EIR, describe the alternatives under consideration, invite public participation in the EIS/EIR process, and announce the public scoping meetings. FTA and LACMTA will invite interested federal, state, tribal, regional, and local government agencies to become participating agencies under the provisions of Regulation 23 USC §139.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT: Based on an evaluation of socioeconomic, congestion growth trends, travel conditions, and feedback from the stakeholder meetings, the existing and projected levels of traffic congestion in the corridor limit mobility and reduce the reliability of transit services. In light of these conditions, the purpose of the project can be summarized as follows:

- Improve mobility in the eastern San Fernando Valley by introducing an improved north-south transit connection between key transit hubs/routes.
- Enhance transit accessibility/connectivity for residents within the eastern San Fernando Valley to local and regional destinations.
- Provide more reliable transit service within the eastern San Fernando Valley.
- Provide additional transit options in an area with a large transit dependent population and high number of transit riders.
- Encourage modal shift to transit in the eastern San Fernando Valley, thereby improving air quality.

ALTERNATIVES: The Metro East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis Report (AA), prepared for LACMTA in 2013, studied a large number of transit alternatives in the corridor. The AA is available on the LACMTA website at http://www.metro.net/projects/east-sfv/east_sfv-reports/.

The alternatives being evaluated include:

No-Build Alternative: The No-Build Alternative represents the predicted conditions through the year 2035. No new transportation infrastructure would be built within the eastern San Fernando Valley aside from projects currently under construction, or funded for construction and operation by 2035. This alternative will include the highway and transit projects in the current constrained element of the LACMTA Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the 2012 Southern California Association of Governments Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). This alternative establishes a baseline for comparison for the other alternatives in terms of benefits and costs, and in terms of environmental analysis.

Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative: The TSM Alternative enhances the No-Build Alternative and emphasizes transportation systems upgrades. This represents the best that can be done to improve transit service without high-cost investment, and includes increased bus frequencies or minor modifications to the roadway network or traffic control systems. The TSM Alternative would consist of the No-Build bus network and enhanced bus frequencies for the existing Rapid Bus 761, which runs primarily on Van Nuys Boulevard in the Corridor. Metro Rapid Bus 761 would operate on headways reduced from 10 minutes peak/17.5 minutes off-peak to 6 minutes peak/12 minutes off-peak. In addition to reduced headways for Metro Rapid 761, Metro will evaluate the local 233 line, which also provides service to Van Nuys Boulevard and the north-south lines on Sepulveda Boulevard (approximately one mile to the west of Van Nuys Boulevard). The lines on Sepulveda include Metro Rapid 734 and local 234.

Additional TSM options include intersection improvements, minor road widening, traffic engineering actions, signalization improvements, bus stop amenities/improvements, and bus schedule restructuring. In addition, other improvements identified through the public agency scoping process will be evaluated for potential inclusion in the EIS/EIR.

Light Rail Transit (LRT) Alternative: The LRT alternative would travel from the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station south/east to Van Nuys Boulevard, and then south to Ventura Boulevard (see Figure 1). It would serve the Cities of San Fernando and Los Angeles, including the communities of Sylmar, Pacoima, Arleta, Panorama City, Van Nuys, and Sherman Oaks, with approximately 13 stations. It may be completed in phases, which could include starting the alignment at the Van Nuys Boulevard Orange Line Station to the south and terminating at Van Nuys Boulevard/San Fernando Road to the north. The entire 11.2-mile route would operate in a dedicated guideway.

This alternative would include the construction of a new rail maintenance facility. The exact location of the proposed facility has yet to be determined. However, the selection of the facility will be based on the following criteria:

- Located within an industrialized area
- Proximity to the alignment (Van Nuys Boulevard and San Fernando Road)
- Accessibility via rail tracks
- Size of facility site
- Distance from noise-sensitive receptors

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Alternative: This generally median-running BRT alternative would operate from the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station in the north to the Sepulveda Boulevard Orange Line Station or Sepulveda Boulevard and Ventura Boulevard in the south (see Figure 2), as described in Options 1, 2, and 3 below. It would serve the Cities of San Fernando and Los Angeles, including the communities of Sylmar, Pacoima, Arleta, Panorama City, Van Nuys, and Sherman Oaks, with approximately 14 stations. Approximately 9.4 miles of the route would operate in a median-running configuration. The remaining 2.6 miles would operate in mixed-flow traffic between the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station and San Fernando Road/Van Nuys Boulevard.

The BRT Alternative includes three options. Option 1 would require operation in mixed-flow traffic along Van Nuys Boulevard south of the Van Nuys Orange Line Station; Option 2 would continue operation to the west within the Orange Line guideway to the Sepulveda Orange Line Station; Option 3 would continue the dedicated lane from the Sepulveda Orange Line Station south along Sepulveda Boulevard, to Ventura Boulevard.

In addition to the alternatives described above, other reasonable transit alternatives identified through the public and agency scoping process will be evaluated for potential inclusion in the EIS/EIR.

PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS: The purpose of this EIS/EIR process is to study, in a public setting, the effects of the proposed project and its alternatives on the physical, human, and natural environment. FTA and LACMTA will evaluate all significant environmental, social, and economic impacts of the construction and operation of the proposed project. The probable impacts will be determined as a part of the project scoping. Unless further screening illuminates areas of possible impact, resource areas will be limited to those uncovered during scoping. Measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate adverse impacts will also be identified and evaluated.

SCOPING: Scoping is the process of determining the scope, focus, and content of an EIS/EIR. FTA and LACMTA invite all interested individuals and organizations, public agencies, and Native American Tribes to comment on the scope of the Draft EIS/EIR, including the project's purpose and need, the alternatives to be studied, the impacts to be evaluated, and the evaluation methods to be used. Comments should focus on: alternatives that may be less costly or have less environmental or community impacts while achieving similar transportation objectives, and the identification of any significant social, economic, or environmental issues relating to the alternatives.

SCOPING MEETINGS: Public scoping meetings to accept comments on the scope of the EIS/EIR will be held on the following dates:

- Saturday, March 16, 2013; 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM at Panorama High School, 8015 Van Nuys Boulevard, Panorama City, CA 91402.

- Tuesday, March 19, 2013; 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the San Fernando Aquatic Center, 208 Park Avenue, San Fernando, CA 91340.
- Thursday, March 21, 2013; 6:00 to 8:00 PM at Arleta High School - Cafeteria, 14200 Van Nuys Boulevard, Arleta, CA 91331.
- Wednesday, March 27, 2013; 4:00 to 6:00 PM at the Van Nuys Civic Center-Marvin Braude Constituent Service Center, 6262 Van Nuys Boulevard, Van Nuys, CA 91401.

The project's purpose and need and the description of alternatives will be presented at these meetings.

The buildings used for the scoping meetings are accessible to persons with disabilities. Any individual who requires special assistance, such as a sign language interpreter, to participate in a scoping meeting should contact the project at least three days prior to the meeting at (818) 276-3233 or eastsfvtransit@metro.net.

Scoping materials are available on the LACMTA website (<http://www.metro.net/projects/east-sfv/>) and will also be available at the meetings. Paper copies of the scoping materials may also be obtained from the project at (818) 276-3233, or eastsfvtransit@metro.net. An interagency scoping meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 20, 2013, at 1:00 PM at LACMTA, in the Union Station Room, 3rd Floor, One Gateway Plaza, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Representatives of Native American tribal governments and all federal, state, regional, and local agencies that may have an interest in any aspect of the project will be invited to become participating or cooperating agencies, as appropriate.

COMMENT DUE DATE: Written comments on the scope of the EIS/EIR, including the project's purpose and need, the alternatives to be considered, the impacts to be evaluated, and the methodologies to be used in the evaluations should be sent to LACMTA on or before May 6, 2013 at the address below.

ADDRESSES: Comments will be accepted at the public scoping meetings or they may be sent to Mr. Walt Davis, Project Manager, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, One Gateway Plaza, Mail Stop 99-22-3, Los Angeles, CA 90012, or via e-mail at eastsfvtransit@metro.net. The locations of the public scoping meetings are given above.

FTA Procedures

The regulations implementing NEPA call for public involvement in the EIS process. Regulation 23 USC §139 requires that FTA and LACMTA do the following: (1) extend an invitation to other federal and non-federal agencies and Native American tribes that may have an interest in the proposed project to become “participating agencies;” (2) provide an opportunity for involvement by participating agencies and the public to help define the purpose and need for a proposed project, as well as the range of alternatives for consideration in the EIS; and (3) establish a plan for coordinating public and agency participation in, and comment on, the environmental review process. An invitation to become a participating or cooperating agency, with scoping materials appended, will be extended to other federal and non-federal agencies and Native American tribes that may have an interest in the proposed project. It is possible that FTA and LACMTA will not be able to identify all federal and non-federal agencies and Native American tribes that may have such an interest. Any federal or non-federal agency or Native American tribe interested in the proposed project that does not receive an invitation to become a participating agency should notify the Project Manager, identified above under **ADDRESSES**, at the earliest opportunity.

A comprehensive public involvement program and a Coordination Plan for public and interagency involvement will be developed for the project and posted by LACMTA on the project website (<http://www.metro.net/projects/east-sfv>). The public involvement program includes a full range of activities including a public scoping process to define the issues of concern, a project web page on the LACMTA website, development and distribution of project newsletters, and outreach to local officials, community and civic groups, and the public. Specific activities or events for involvement will be detailed in the public involvement program.

The EIS will be prepared in accordance with NEPA and its implementing regulations issued by the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) and with the FTA/Federal Highway Administration regulations “Environmental Impact and Related Procedures” (23 CFR Part 771). In accordance with 23 CFR 771.105(a) and 23 CFR 771.133, FTA will comply with all federal environmental laws, regulations, and executive orders applicable to the proposed project during the

environmental review process to the maximum extent practicable. These requirements include, but are not limited to, the environmental and public hearing provisions of federal transit laws (49 U.S.C. 5301(e), 5323(b), and 5324); the project-level air quality conformity regulation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (40 CFR Part 93); the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines of EPA (40 CFR Part 230); the regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR Part 800); the regulations implementing Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (50 CFR Part 402); Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act (23 CFR 771.135); and Executive Orders 12898 on environmental justice, 11988 on floodplain management, and 11990 on wetlands.

Figure 1



Figure 2

