

1.0 Introduction

1.1 STUDY BACKGROUND

What is the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor?

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) with the City of Los Angeles as project co-lead has undertaken an Alternatives Analysis (AA) to study the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor. The purpose of an AA is to define, screen, and recommend alternatives to be studied as part of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Report (DEIS/DEIR).

This project will enable Metro, the City of Los Angeles, and the City of San Fernando to evaluate a range of new public transit service alternatives that can accommodate future population growth and transit demand, while being compatible with existing land uses and future development opportunities. The study considered the Sepulveda Pass Corridor, which is another Measure R Project, and the proposed California High Speed Rail project. Both of these projects may be directly served by a future transit project in the study area. The Sepulveda Pass Corridor could someday link the West Los Angeles area to the east San Fernando Valley and the California High Speed Rail Project via the project corridor.

1.1.1. Study Area

Where is the study area located?

The project study area extends from Ventura Boulevard on the south, to the City of San Fernando, the Sylmar-San Fernando Metrolink Station and the Lakeview Terrace neighborhood on the north. The study area includes the two major north-south arterial roadways of Sepulveda and Van Nuys Boulevards, spanning 10-12 miles and the major north-west arterial roadway of San Fernando Road and north-east arterial roadway of Brand Boulevard. These roadways and nearby neighborhoods are the focus of the analysis presented within this document.

Bordering and traversing the area are several interregional freeways including 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). To the east is the Hollywood Freeway (SR-170). There are three major transit corridors that serve interregional trips: the Metro Orange Line (MOL), the Metrolink Ventura Line and Amtrak service, and the Metrolink Antelope Valley Line.

The study area is comprised of a variety of land uses which include neighborhood and regional commercial uses; numerous car dealerships on Auto Row along Van Nuys Boulevard south of Chandler Boulevard; government services at the Van Nuys Civic Center; major shopping and office uses at the Sherman Oaks Galleria; and medium/high density residential throughout other parts of the study area. There are a number of other major activity centers in the surrounding area that are served directly and indirectly by Metro bus



lines including The Village at Sherman Oaks; Panorama Mall; Cal State Northridge; Bob Hope Airport; Van Nuys Airport; Mission Hills Hospital; Kaiser Permanente; and multiple schools, youth centers, and recreational centers.

An overview of the project study area is illustrated on Figure 1-1.

1.1.2. Alternatives Considered

What alternatives are under consideration?

Several alternatives are being studied as part of this AA to provide improved transit services within the eastern San Fernando Valley. The alternatives will be narrowed down as they are evaluated in relation to the purpose and need and evaluation criteria developed for the project. The following alternatives being studied include:

- **No Build Alternative** – Represents existing conditions in the study area including transportation projects currently under construction or funded for construction and operations by the year 2035. This alternative includes projects funded by Measure R and specified in the financially constrained element of Metro’s Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) 2012 constrained Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).
- **Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative** – This alternative represents the No Build alternative plus lower cost capital and operational improvements to roadways including restriping, signal synchronization, and enhanced bus services designed to improve bus speeds. Additional transit service via increased frequency of bus services is a part of this alternative.
- **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Alternative** – A dedicated lane, fixed guideway, and/or mixed-flow operation would be established within the street right-of-way (ROW), for the establishment of new transit service. The BRT alternative would have station spacing approximately one mile apart, and passenger amenities similar to light rail service. This technology would be similar to the MOL or Metro Silver Lines, although it would not operate on a fully exclusive roadway.
- **Light Rail Transit (LRT) Alternative** – This alternative would use LRT vehicle technology and infrastructure that would operate within the street ROW using a dedicated guideway with stations approximately every mile. The technology would be similar to the existing Metro Blue, Green, Gold, and Exposition Lines.
- **Streetcar Alternative** – This technology is similar in some respects to light rail, but the vehicles are narrower and could operate in mixed-flow traffic within a standard roadway travel lane. The vehicles are generally operated as a single-unit or are articulated into a two-unit train. Streetcars have lower passenger capacity, less flexibility, and generally operate at lower operating speeds than LRT.

Figure 1-1 – Project Study Area

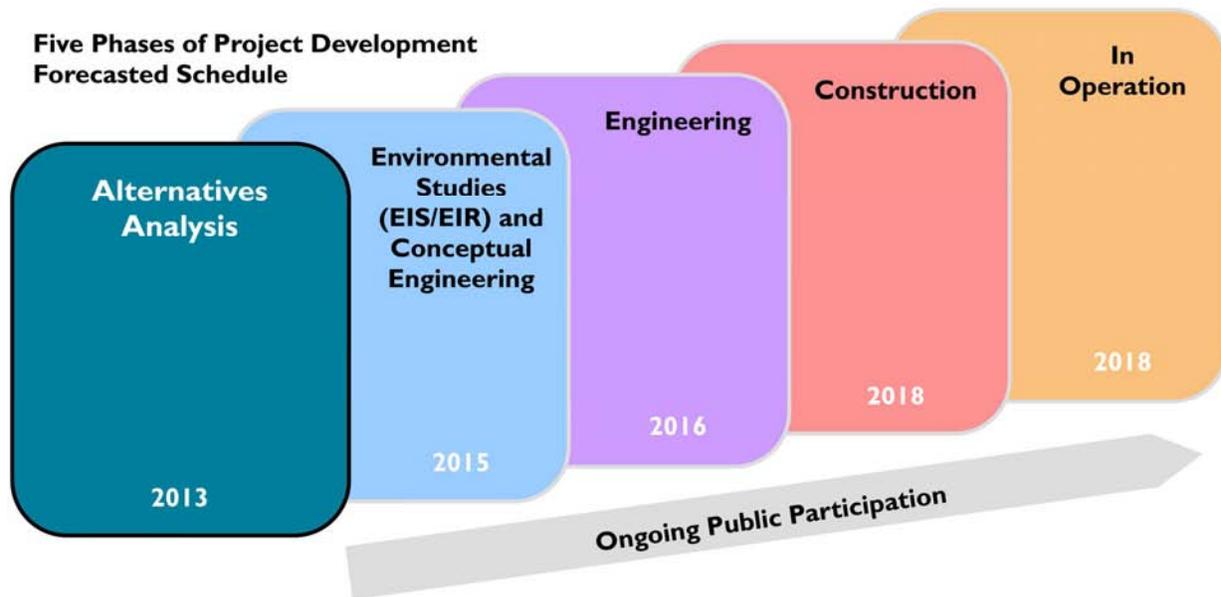


Source: Metro, 2012

1.2 ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS REPORT PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE

The AA process defines the purpose and need for a project and subsequently identifies reasonable alternatives to be screened down based on a set of evaluation criteria and performance measures developed for the project. The screening is a technical analysis that considers the project's impacts and benefits to travel and mobility, connectivity, capital and operation costs, environmental, economic, and community input. Figure 1-2 illustrates the project development for the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor project.

Figure 1-2 – Project Development



The structure of this AA is as follows:

- **Section 2.0** discusses the *Purpose and Need* for the project and details specific objectives to address mobility issues in the eastern San Fernando Valley.
- **Section 3.0** describes the *Preliminary Definition of Alternatives* which details the characteristics associated with the transit options under consideration.
- **Section 4.0** explains the *Screening of Alternatives* and the two tiered screening process used to evaluate project alternatives for the potential recommendations for further study. This involves reducing alternatives that do not meet the purpose and need. Alternatives that are recommended for further study will be analyzed in the DEIS/DEIR.
- **Section 5.0** provides a *Public Outreach Summary* of community, stakeholder, and public agency outreach efforts.
- **Section 6.0** summarizes the *Recommended Project Alternatives* that are being advanced based on the final screening of alternatives.
- **Section 7.0** summarizes the *Alternatives Eliminated from Further Analysis* based on the final screening of alternatives.