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HIGH DESERT CORRIDOR
Frequently Asked Questions

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High Desert Corridor Project: Frequently Asked Questions

Why a High Desert Corridor (HDC)?

The continued growth of the Antelope and Victor Valley areas, together with the pressure to move goods efficiently through Southern California and provide access to regional airports, has created a need to improve east/west connectivity across the High Desert region. This growth is resulting in inadequate capacity and accessibility along the existing roadways such as the SR-138 and Palmdale Bl.

When will Caltrans select one of the alternatives?

Metro and Caltrans studied five functional alternatives and four physical variations in the Draft EIS/EIR and identified the Preferred Alternative (PA) in July 2015. The PA is a multipurpose alternative that includes freeway/tollway with high speed rail in the median along with green energy and the bikeway. The PA includes two previously considered variations (Variations D and B1) as part of the alignment.

VARIATION D – located in Lake Los Angeles, will reduce the number of residential displacements and avoid an existing vineyard.

VARIATION B1 – located in Adelanto, will avoid impacts to several water wells owned by the Phelan Piñon Hills Community Services District.

The PA was carried to the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report (Final EIS/EIR), which is anticipated to be released during the Spring 2016.

How was the Preferred Alternative (PA) selected?

The environmental evaluation of the alternatives combined with public input were used to select the PA. Caltrans decision makers carefully reviewed the potential impacts and benefits of each alternative, as well as the cost, funding and public input to make the final decision.

What is the earliest date construction could commence?

Funding for future phases of this project, beyond the current environmental study phase, has not been identified. Therefore, it is not possible to establish when the HDC will be ready for construction. Typically, the availability of adequate funding is a key determinant of any potential construction schedule in addition to the completion of all the required technical studies and environmental analyses that are required in an EIS/EIR.

How will the HDC be funded?

The planning, technical and environmental studies for the HDC are being funded through a variety of sources, including local (Measure R in Los Angeles County, Measure I in San Bernardino County), state and federal funds. These funding sources will carry the project through the environmental study phase; however, it will be necessary to seek additional funding for future phases of the project. Federal, State and Public-Private Partnerships (P3) opportunities will be explored to determine how best to finance this project should the Preferred Alternative proceed into construction.

What type of rail technology will be used?

The HDC project considers electric High-Speed Rail Technology to connect with the Palmdale Transportation Center in Palmdale and the planned XpressWest in Victorville. The HDC Rail Alternatives Analysis considered the use of diesel and electric powered systems. However, due to various factors, including air quality, train speed and connectivity, the analysis concluded that electric High-Speed Rail technology is the best suited for the HDC.

Does the project include toll lanes?

The HDC Preferred Alternative includes toll lanes. However, a final decision has not been made on the tolling options and mechanisms. Toll lanes may be delivered as part of Public-Private Partnership (P3) funding strategy. Generally the location of the toll operation would be between 100th St East and US 395. This section of roadway can most effectively be tolled because there are limited local road options that trucks and motorists could use to avoid the toll.

Will this lead to increased truck traffic on local roads?

One of the goals of the HDC is to provide a safe and efficient highway for trucks to use between SR-14, through I-15 and to SR-18 that could result in less truck traffic on local roads and improve safety. Any potential traffic impacts of the HDC will be analyzed and documented in the Draft and Final EIS/EIR.

Where will the new overpasses/underpasses be located?

There are currently 18 proposed on/off ramps along the HDC (eight in LA county and 10 in San Bernardino county). The list of ramps was initially developed in coordination with the project partner agencies and then refined based on the data from the Traffic Model Demand Forecast Study. To see the latest project map with a list of the proposed ramps, please visit Metro's HDC webpage at www.metro.net/hdc.

What is an environmental study and how long does it take?

Federal and state laws require an evaluation of project impacts and identification of mitigation measures. To be eligible to receive both federal and state funds, projects need to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Therefore, a combined Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) will be prepared pursuant to state and federal laws. The HDC environmental study is a lengthy process due to the large project area; it began in late 2010 and the final document is anticipated in Spring 2016.

Will private property need to be purchased for this project? If so, when will property owners be notified?

Caltrans and Metro identified the Preferred Alternative (PA) in July 2015. The Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report will identify the property needed to build the HDC PA; the document is expected to be released in Spring 2016. At this point Metro and Caltrans have not identified funding for the construction of the HDC. Once the sufficient resources are identified for construction, the partner agencies will proceed with purchasing the necessary property to build the HDC. If you are a property owner and are interested in following the project, you can contact the project helpline 888.252.7433, or send an email to hdc@metro.net and provide us with your contact information to ensure you are added to the project database for all notifications and updates.

Who is leading the effort/project study?

Caltrans is the lead agency for the completion of the environmental study and is the owner/operator of all public freeways in California. Metro is a funding partner and is responsible for transportation improvements in Los Angeles County. Together, Caltrans and Metro have developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that identifies the roles and responsibilities for the environmental clearance and project approval for the HDC.

Will Metro and Caltrans include considerations for environmental protections for wildlife?

The technical studies included in the Draft EIS/EIR provide an analysis of the surrounding environment to ensure that impacts to wildlife are either avoided, minimized or mitigated. These studies analyze wildlife which depend on freedom of movement to survive and will identify the need to maintain linkages to connect two main areas of habitat. In the HDC region, the document looks at the movement of all animals.

How will Metro and Caltrans address any potential impacts of the HDC on the local roads?

The Traffic Analysis Section of the Draft EIS/EIR identifies potential impacts of HDC alternatives to the local roads. Metro and Caltrans will continue working with the local jurisdictions to determine how best to integrate the proposed HDC project into the existing road network. The Final EIS/EIR is anticipated to be released in Spring 2016.

How will light pollution concerns be considered?

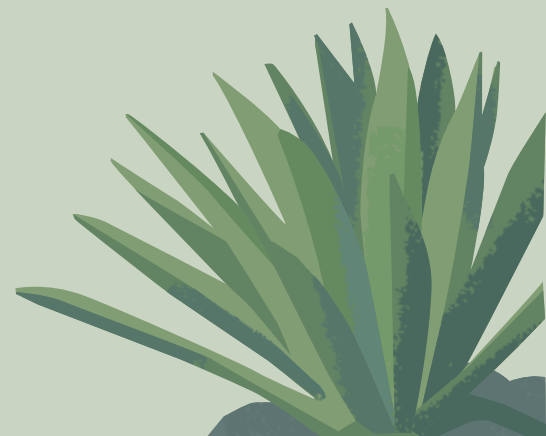
The HDC Draft EIS/EIR technical studies include an assessment of potential visual and lighting impacts to the environment. Potential measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate any light pollution from the HDC will be considered through the environmental study process.

What can I expect in the Draft and Final EIS/EIR?

The purpose of the environmental studies are to identify the potential impacts of construction and operation of each of the proposed project alternatives and to evaluate measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate the adverse impacts associated with each alternative. The following are examples of some of the topical areas under study in the environmental studies:








- > Energy
- > Climate change
- > Historic, archaeological and paleontological impacts
- > Parklands
- > Economic and fiscal impacts
- > Safety and security
- > Operation and construction
- > Traffic and parking
- > Land use and development
- > Displacement and relocations
- > Community and neighborhood impacts
- > Visual and aesthetics
- > Air quality
- > Noise and vibration
- > Ecosystems and biological resources
- > Geotechnical, seismic and hazardous materials
- > Hydrology and water quality
- > Growth inducing impacts
- > Environmental justice
- > Cost and financial analysis

The Draft EIS/EIR provides you with an opportunity to review the results of these studies.



Contact Us

Please use the following contact tools for additional information, questions, or comments:

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