

7.1 Introduction and Summary of Outreach Efforts

Metro initiated a comprehensive outreach program for the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor Project in 2011, at the outset of the Alternatives Analysis (AA) phase. Metro has continued to keep elected officials, community leaders and the general public informed of the status of the technical analysis and schedule for completion of the environmental documents throughout the preparation of this Draft EIS/EIR. The outreach program is focused on increasing project awareness and education, disseminating project information, garnering public input, and supporting the technical and legal environmental processes. Through the use of traditional and innovative outreach methods, the outreach activities conducted during the AA, Draft EIS/EIR, and post-scoping phases have yielded nearly 300 comments; Metro has hosted and presented at over 100 meetings sharing project information with over 2,900 participants. As the Draft EIS/EIR was being prepared, Metro continued to provide project updates and answer questions at public meetings throughout the San Fernando Valley. These efforts have included an array of project stakeholders, including elected officials, the San Fernando Valley Council of Governments, resource agencies, the residential and business community (including the chambers of commerce and neighborhood councils), civic and professional organizations, and many others. A complete listing of stakeholders and meetings is included in Appendix DD, Agency Coordination and Public Involvement, of this Draft EIS/EIR.

Through the use of public open houses, focus groups, workshops, tours, participation in community events, social media outlets, and webinars, project stakeholders have been involved in each of the major technical milestones of the project development process that has occurred to date.

This chapter, together with the supporting information included in Appendix CC, Final Scoping Report, and Appendix DD, Agency Coordination and Public Involvement, of this Draft EIS/EIR, documents the outreach efforts completed during the AA phase through the release of the Draft EIS/EIR.

7.2 Background

In 2011, Metro initiated a comprehensive public participation program for the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor Project. This program used various communication tools to reach out to the large project study area, which encompasses the length of the 9.2-mile project corridor. Stakeholders and interested parties were informed and educated about the various project development phases, including the AA phase, the Draft EIS/EIR phase, and future project development phases, including the Final EIS/EIR and preliminary engineering.

7.3 Public Participation Plan

To inform the public and provide opportunities for comment at key milestones throughout the study, a detailed Public Participation Plan (PPP) was developed at the commencement of the AA phase (included in Appendix CC, Final Scoping Report, of this Draft EIS/EIR). The PPP includes

community profiles illustrating the unique characteristics of each community within the project area, detailed stakeholder database categories, collateral material recommendations, AA and Draft EIS/EIR notification strategies, communication protocols, proposed schedules for interfacing with the public and elected officials, and recommendations for meeting formats throughout both the AA and Draft EIS/EIR phases. The PPP served as a blueprint for outreach activities and has been integrated into the technical project schedule.

In order to adapt to the communities' needs and allow appropriate modifications and refinements to the project alternatives, the PPP strategies are flexible and can be modified to meet the project demands and political climate when and where necessary. As detailed below, the PPP for the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor Project is consistent with outreach requirements outlined in the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) and incorporates the public participation requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Starts Program.

7.4 Government and Other Agency Consultation

7.4.1 Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU

Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU promotes efficient project management by lead agencies and enhanced opportunities for coordination with the public and other federal, state, local, and tribal government agencies during project development. In accordance with these requirements, Metro, in coordination with FTA, prepared and mailed Participating Agency invitation letters to the following agencies on March 8, 2013:

- California Air Resources Board
- California Department of Conservation Division of Land Resource Protection
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- California High Speed Rail Authority
- California Highway Patrol
- California Native American Heritage Commission
- California Public Utilities Commission
- California Transportation Commission
- California Wildlife Conservation Board
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
- California Department of Toxic Substances Control
- California State Clearinghouse
- Federal Aviation Administration
- Federal Highway Administration
- Federal Transit Administration

- Los Angeles Police Department
- State Historic Preservation Officer, Office of Historic Preservation
- State Water Resources Control Board
- Transportation Security Administration
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Department of Energy
- U.S. Department of Energy Western Area Power Administration
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- U.S. Department of the Interior
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Agencies were given until May 6, 2013 (8 weeks from the date of the letter) to respond. None of the agencies invited to be Participating Agencies accepted the invitation to become a Participating Agency.

Considering the role and responsibility of cooperating agencies, it was determined that no federal, state, or local agency was to be a cooperating agency, therefore no agencies were invited to be cooperating agencies.

Outreach efforts to agencies affiliated with the project included agency scoping meetings, participation in the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and one interagency scoping meeting attended by representatives of Caltrans District 7 and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Additionally, SAFETEA-LU requires that the planning processes “be developed in consultation with all interested parties and provide that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on the contents of the transportation plan.” As part of the outreach program during the AA and Draft EIS/EIR phases, Metro has held over 100 meetings with a wide array of stakeholder groups, including:

- 18 community meetings;
- 85 small group meetings, including neighborhood groups, chambers, interested groups, business associations, schools, universities, churches, foundations, and hospitals;
- 6 elected official briefings with federal, state, regional, and local officials;
- 5 meetings with City staff;
- 2 meetings with the executive office and transportation committees of the San Fernando Valley Council of Government;
- 3 meetings with the Metro Board of Directors staff and committees;
- 1 meeting with regulatory and other agencies, at which only representatives from Caltrans and the Army Corps of Engineers attended, with comments on impacts to freeway ramps, and coordination for Section 404 permits, respectively; and
- 10 TAC meetings.

A complete list of meetings, and briefings is included in Appendix DD, Agency Coordination and Public Involvement, of this Draft EIS/EIR.

7.4.2 Section 106 Consultation

To comply with Section 106 requirements, FTA sent a Letter of Initiation to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) initiating consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The letter also included the area of potential effects (APE) maps for the build alternatives and requested SHPO's concurrence with these maps.

The project team (Metro and the FTA) consulted with the project reviewer at OHP to determine the scope of identification efforts and to delineate the APE. In accordance with the Section 106 requirements, FTA and Metro consulted with SHPO via conference call on April 14, 2013 to discuss the appropriate level of effort for the identification and evaluation of built environment historical resources and to determine the appropriate APE. FTA sent a letter to the California SHPO on April 17, 2015 (resubmitted April 28, 2015). Metro's consultants sent letters to the Native American parties on March 18, 2016. A letter of concurrence was received from the California SHPO on June 2, 2015.

During preparation of the Draft EIS/EIR, Metro contacted local historic groups and stakeholders who potentially have an interest in the project. Metro also contacted and consulted with Native American groups, as identified in the State of California's Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) scoping comment letter submitted on March 17, 2016. An inventory of properties within the APE and listed in the National Register of Historic Places, as well as those properties potentially eligible for listing, has been conducted. SHPO's concurrence on the determinations of effects for federal historic resources occurred on April 5, 2017, with a follow-up letter from the SHPO on June 21, 2017. (Refer to Section 4.16, Historical, Archaeological, and Paleontological Resources, and Appendix S, Cultural Resources Technical Report, for more information.)

7.4.3 Tribal Coordination

During preparation of this Draft EIS/EIR, the team conferred with the NAHC, local California Indian organizations, and interested public historical and cultural organizations. The NAHC conducted a search of the sacred lands file and provided the results on March 17, 2016. As recommended by the NAHC, individuals who may have further knowledge of sacred or prehistoric cultural resources within the project area were contacted. These included individuals from the San Fernando Band of Mission Indians, Gabrielino/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians, Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians-Kizh Nation, Gabrielino/Tongva Nation, Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians, Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians, Gabrielino-Tongva Tribe, and the LA City/County Native American Heritage Commission. Coordination with SHPO, interested parties of the Native American Heritage Commission, and the Native American community is ongoing. A complete list of all parties consulted during preparation of this Draft EIS/EIR is included in Appendix DD, Agency Coordination and Public Involvement, of this Draft EIS/EIR.

As of July 1, 2015, Public Resources Code Sections 21080.3.1 and 21080.3.2 require public agencies to consult with Native American tribes identified by the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) for the purpose of mitigating impacts to tribal cultural resources. It should be noted that this proposed project's environmental analysis began with the Notice of Preparation and Public Scoping period in March 2013, and thus pre-dates the new requirements under Public Resources Code Sections 21080.3.1 and 21080.3.2. Therefore, tribal coordination as described in the preceding paragraph was carried out according to the protocol prior to passage of AB 52, which established Public Resources Code Sections 21080.3.1 and 21080.3.2.

7.5 Community Outreach

A variety of notification tools were used during the AA and Draft EIS/EIR phases to reach out to targeted audiences. Outreach methods included:

- Direct mail notification
- Email notification
- Newspaper display ads and online ads
- Meetings with cities, chambers of commerce, councils of governments, and educational institutions
- Placement of pamphlets in Metro buses and trains
- Stakeholder briefings
- Posters at key locations along the corridor
- Project website
- Project helpline
- School district meeting flyer
- Social media – Facebook and Twitter
- Online blogs
- City and chamber newsletters
- City cable channels and electronic boards
- Door-to-door canvassing efforts
- Information booths at various community events

This set of notification tools was customized throughout the AA and Draft EIS/EIR phases of the project, taking into account cost-effectiveness and trying to maximize stakeholder participation.

Throughout the AA and Draft EIS/EIR phases, a variety of informational documents was made available to the public. These included project fact sheets, frequently asked questions, meeting notices, electronic newsletters/e-bulletins, and other collateral materials. In addition, a complete set of collateral pieces was developed and distributed at community meetings, stakeholder briefings, and public events, as well as electronically when requested. These collateral materials were updated throughout the project development process and were produced in English and Spanish. These materials are included in Appendix DD, Agency Coordination and Public Involvement, of this Draft EIS/EIR.

7.5.1 Alternatives Analysis Phase

As discussed above, in 2011 Metro initiated the AA phase of the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor Project. The focus of the outreach program during the AA phase was to increase project awareness and initiate public participation in the multi-phased project development process. Public participation during this phase assisted in the refinement of alternatives. Ultimately, during the AA phase 26 project alternatives were narrowed down to six.

At the outset of the AA phase, early scoping was conducted for the project. A total of 14 early scoping meetings, including 11 community meetings and three elected official briefings, were held between October 6, 2011 and October 9, 2012. Meeting locations were selected to maximize attendance and community input. Interpreters were available at the 11 community meetings to provide simultaneous Spanish translation. A detailed list of the early scoping meeting dates and times is included in Appendix DD, Agency Coordination and Public Involvement, of this Draft EIS/EIR.

A total of 175 attendees, representing a crosssection of the project area communities, participated in the early scoping meetings held in 2011 through 2012. Participants were well-versed on the issues and opportunities associated with the proposed East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor Project and commented on various topics, including Light Rail Technology as the preferred mode of transit, input on the most desirable alignment, and terminus points. A comprehensive summary of information presented and comments received at these meetings is included in Appendix DD, Agency Coordination and Public Involvement, of this Draft EIS/EIR.

7.5.2 Draft EIS/EIR Phase

The scoping period began with the publication of the Notice of Preparation/Notice of Intent on March 1, 2013 and continued through May 6, 2013. During the 65-day scoping period, Metro hosted a total of four scoping meetings, including four public meetings, an elected officials briefing, and one agency scoping meeting. The meetings were attended by approximately 150 people. In addition to the official scoping meetings, Metro also participated in various City and stakeholder events as requested by the respective groups to enhance the outreach effort and increase awareness during the scoping period. (For a detailed list of the scoping meeting dates and times, please refer to Appendix CC, Final Scoping Report, of this Draft EIS/EIR.)

During the 65-day scoping period, Metro accepted oral comments at meetings and via the project helpline, written comments on meeting comment card, via letters, e-mailed comments to the Metro project manager, social media comments via Facebook and Twitter and electronic comments via the Metro project website. A total of over 400 oral and/or written public comments were received from agencies and the public, including elected officials, residents, grassroots organizations, chambers of commerce, developers, hospitals, agencies, educational institutions, and businesses.

The comments received demonstrated substantial support for LRT as the preferred transit mode. Other common themes included strong support of bike lanes and bicycle facilities, improvements to existing bus operations, and ensuring the proposed project connects with any future transit line along the Sepulveda Pass in order to maintain the connection between the East San Fernando Valley and Westwood now provided by Rapid Line 761.

Appendix CC, Final Scoping Report, of this Draft EIS/EIR, includes the scoping comment log, which lists all comments received during the scoping period.

7.5.3 Post-Scoping

Outside of the scoping period and during preparation of the technical reports and Draft EIS/EIR, Metro hosted additional community meetings. These meetings included:

- Thursday, November 6, 2014, 6:00 – 7:30 pm - San Fernando Regional Pool Facility, City of San Fernando

- Wednesday, November 12, 2014, 4:30 – 6:00 pm - Marvin Braude Constituent Service Center, Van Nuys
- Thursday, November 13, 2014, 6:00 – 7:30 pm - Pacoima Neighborhood City Hall, Pacoima

Focus group meetings were also hosted by Metro to elicit feedback from the various business owners and employees along the Van Nuys Boulevard corridor. Nine meetings were held on:

- Friday, March 6, 2015 - 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. - Van Nuys Recreation Center, Van Nuys
- Monday, March 9, 2015 - 8:30 – 9:30 a.m. - Los Tres Hermanos Restaurant, Van Nuys
- Tuesday, March 10, 2015 - 8:30 – 9:30 a.m. - Plaza del Valle Community Room, Panorama City
- Thursday, March 12, 2015 - 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. - Marvin Braude Constituent Center, Van Nuys
- Friday, March 13, 2015 - 8:30 – 9:30 a.m. - San Fernando City Hall Community Room, San Fernando
- Monday, March 16, 2015 - 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. - Hometown Buffet, Panorama City
- Tuesday, March 24, 2015 - 8:30 – 9:30 a.m. - La Sirenita Restaurant, Panorama City
- Wednesday, March 25, 2015 - 8:30 – 9:30 a.m. Pacoima Neighborhood City Hall, Pacoima
- Thursday, March 26, 2015 - 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. Van Nuys Multipurpose Center, Van Nuys

7.6 Public Hearings

Following the release of the Draft EIS/EIR, a 45 day public comment period will be held from September 1, 2017, to October 17, 2017. Five public hearings will be held to receive oral and written comments on the Draft EIS/EIR. The public hearings will be held along the corridor in the Cities of Los Angeles and San Fernando. Metro will provide notice of these public hearings in compliance with CEQA and NEPA and will follow the same notification methods that proved effective during scoping. The following outreach strategies will be implemented:

- Direct mail notification
- Email notification
- Legal, display, and online newspaper ads
- Placement of notices in Metro buses and trains
- Project website
- Project helpline
- School district coordination
- Corridor City coordination and notification plan
- City and chamber newsletters
- City cable channels and electronic boards
- Social media – Facebook and Twitter
- Online blogs

During the formal comment period for the Draft EIS/EIR, agencies and the public will be able to submit comments in writing directly to Metro and FTA. Comments will also be received at the public hearings through a court reporter. The Draft EIS/EIR will also be distributed on Metro's website at www.metro.net/projects/east-sfv. CDs and paper copies will also be available for public review at the public hearings and at the following depositories:

- Metro Records Management Center, Plaza Level, One Gateway Plaza, Los Angeles, CA 90012, rmc@metro.net
- Metro Transportation Library, One Gateway Plaza, Los Angeles, CA 90012, 15th floor, (213) 922-4859, <mailto:library@metro.net>
- Lake View Terrace Branch Library, 12002 Osborne Street, Lake View Terrace, CA 91342
- Los Angeles Public Library, Central Library, 630 W. 5th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90071
- Los Angeles Public Library, Van Nuys Branch, 6250 Sylmar Avenue, Van Nuys, CA 91401
- Pacoima Branch Library, 13605 Van Nuys Boulevard, Pacoima, CA 91331
- Panorama City Branch Library, 14345 Roscoe Boulevard, Panorama City, CA 91402
- San Fernando Library, 217 North Maclay Avenue, San Fernando, CA 91340
- Sherman Oaks Branch Library, 14245 Moorpark Street, Sherman Oaks, CA 91423
- Sylmar Branch Library, 14561 Polk Street, Sylmar, CA 91342

7.7 Accommodations for Minority, Low-Income, and Persons with Disabilities

Special outreach efforts were made to reach minority, low-income, and limited English proficiency (LEP) populations and persons with disabilities. The communities along the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor are diverse, with approximately 71.7 percent Hispanic or Latino, 16 percent White (Non-Hispanic), 7.1 percent Asian, and 3.5 percent Black/African American (Non-Hispanic). In addition, of the 256 block groups in the project study area, 239 contain low-income populations; 100 percent of the block groups adjacent to the project area contain low-income populations and 93.4 percent of the study area contains low-income populations. Low-income households are defined as below 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI).

Bilingual (English/Spanish) announcements and briefings to neighborhood councils, local business groups, and non-governmental organizations were conducted. These announcements and briefings were also posted in a widely distributed Spanish language newspaper, *La Opinión*.

Strategies to reach minority, low-income, and disabled populations included holding meetings in transit-accessible locations and at a variety of meeting times, including nights and weekends, in order to allow maximum participation. All meeting announcements, advertisements, brochures, and collateral materials have been produced bilingually (English/Spanish).

In addition, Metro produced a bilingual document for the public so that meeting attendees could easily request project materials in Spanish or English. The bilingual request document was written in both Spanish and English to ensure stakeholders' full comprehension. All meeting venues were Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant and accessible.