

CHAPTER 5
ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

5.0 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

This chapter discusses options that could be considered as alternatives to the proposed project described in Chapter 2. Not discussed in this chapter are the two route alternatives that were dropped from further consideration as a result of a comparative evaluation process. These route alternatives are described in Chapter 1 of this EIR and they are fully documented in a separate document, Metro Green Line Easterly Extension Rail Transit Project Route Refinement Study (Gannett-Fleming, September 1992).

Two alternatives to the proposed project, the No Build alternative and a Bus Shuttle Connection alternative, are discussed in the sections following.

5.1 NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE

The No Build alternative would not construct a connection between the eastern terminus of the Metro Green Line at I-605 and the proposed Norwalk Transportation Center (NTC). Metro Green Line service would terminate at the I-605 station and a commuter rail station would be located at the NTC. Persons wishing to travel between these two locations would have to do so by private automobile or by regularly scheduled local transit service.

The No Build alternative would avoid the construction effects associated with the proposed project. These effects would include potentially encountering hazardous materials or contaminated soils, creating excessive surface runoff, the potential need for dewatering, impairing access to residences, businesses and public services, relocating utilities, creating prominently visible construction sites and stockpile areas, potentially encountering archaeological resources, causing traffic delays and congestion, causing construction noise and vibration, producing construction related pollutant emissions, and consuming energy for construction purposes.

The No Build alternative would not subject additional physical structures or the public to potentially adverse effects from earthquakes. It would not result in the removal of landscaping. The No Build alternative would not produce land use incompatibilities with surrounding land uses, nor would it require the acquisition of private property, either commercial or residential. The No Build alternative could have a slightly adverse effect on access to public services, resulting from increased vehicular traffic in the vicinity. The No Build alternative would not change the visual environment in the project area, nor would it affect the Paddison Ranch National Register property.

The No Build alternative would have an adverse effect on several aspects associated with transportation and circulation. Most importantly, it would not complete a regional rail gap closure that would permit convenient transfer between commuter rail and light rail service. The absence of this gap closure would hinder regional connectivity from the Norwalk area to points north and west, effectively severing the Metro system from the Norwalk area and Orange County. The No Build alternative would result in an increase in traffic associated with regional travelers who would

otherwise use the commuter rail and Metro systems, and it would likely result in some increase in local traffic using Imperial Highway by persons wanting to reach either the I-605 Metro station or the NTC. The No Build alternative would likely result in an increase in demand for parking spaces at both the I-605 Metro station and the NTC.

The No Build alternative could result in an increase in noise levels associated with expected increases in vehicular traffic. It would not result in increased vibration, however, because that effect is primarily related to rail operations. Air quality and energy consumption would be adversely affected since expected decreases in vehicular travel would not occur.

5.2 BUS SHUTTLE CONNECTION ALTERNATIVE

Another alternative to constructing the proposed project would be to institute a bus shuttle service that would connect the I-605 Metro station with the Norwalk Transportation Center. This service could use standard buses or buses similar in size to those in use in downtown Los Angeles on the "Dash" system. Buses would run along Imperial Highway at regularly scheduled times, with short headways (perhaps 3-5 minutes) during the morning and afternoon peak travel periods and less frequent service during other times of the day.

The bus shuttle alternative would avoid the construction effects that would occur if the proposed project were built. It would necessitate the purchase of buses which must be manufactured, but the construction effects associated with this activity would likely occur outside the region.

Similar to the No Build alternative, the Bus Shuttle alternative would not subject additional physical structures or the public to potentially adverse effects associated with earthquakes, nor would it require the removal of landscaping. The Shuttle Bus alternative would not produce land use incompatibilities, nor would it require the acquisition of private property. The No Build alternative could have a slightly adverse effect on access to public services by introducing another vehicular mode onto Imperial Highway, thus adding to potential congestion. If properly scheduled, however, this alternative could provide another means of reaching intermediate destinations along Imperial Highway during the midday. The Bus Shuttle alternative would not change the visual environment in the project area, nor would it affect the Paddison Ranch National Register property.

The Bus Shuttle alternative would provide a means of access between the I-605 Metro Green Line station and the Norwalk Transportation Center, but it would require users to transfer from commuter rail to bus to light rail or the reverse. This would introduce an inconvenience that would have a detrimental effect on patronage, the degree of which has not been estimated. The Bus Shuttle alternative would complete the regional rail gap closure and regional rail connectivity would be maintained, but with less efficiency than the proposed project. The Bus Shuttle alternative would add vehicles to the local street network and Imperial Highway in particular, contributing to increased congestion and reduced operating speeds. The Bus Shuttle alternative should have little effect on the demand for parking at either the I-605 Metro station or the NTC.

The Bus Shuttle alternative would add marginally to noise production associated with vehicular traffic, but would have no effect on vibration levels. Air quality and energy consumption would both be adversely affected in proportion to the amount of travel undertaken on a daily basis by the shuttle buses operating between the two stations.