

INTRODUCTION

I-1 THE PURPOSE OF THE REVISED FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

This Draft Revised Final Environmental Impact Report (Revised FEIR) considers and analyzes three multiple-route Rapid Bus alternatives as additional alternatives to the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and the Transportation Systems Management (TSM) alternatives that were evaluated by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) in the San Fernando Valley East-West Transit Corridor EIR (Final EIR). The project as approved by MTA was BRT together with the TSM enhancements (Project).

The three multiple-route Rapid Bus alternatives (RB Alternatives) considered and analyzed in this Revised FEIR are as follows:

- Three East-West Rapid Bus Routes Alternative (RB-3)
- Five East-West Rapid Bus Routes Alternative (RB-5)
- Rapid Bus Network Alternative (RB-Network)

These RB Alternatives are fully described in Chapter 8.2.2 below. This Revised FEIR analyzes the ability of each of the RB Alternatives to feasibly attain the Project's objectives as set forth in the Final EIR, and the capability of each of the RB Alternatives to avoid or substantially lessen any significant environmental impacts of the Project.

The Revised FEIR was prepared in accordance with the decision of California Court of Appeal¹ dated July 19, 2004 (Decision), which found that the Final EIR should have considered multiple Rapid Bus routes as additional alternatives. The Decision requires the MTA to set aside its certification of the Final EIR and approval of the Project. The Court of Appeal's Decision upheld the Final EIR in connection with numerous other challenges, including a finding that the Final EIR adequately discussed pedestrian and traffic safety impacts, the Final EIR adequately responded to comments, there was no need to separately evaluate a fare reduction alternative, and the Final EIR did not improperly segment environmental consideration of a City of Los Angeles bikeway.

In order to consider multiple Rapid Bus routes in accord with the Court of Appeal's Decision, MTA prepared this Revised FEIR to supplement the Final EIR's evaluation of alternatives. The revisions to the sections of the Final EIR are set forth in this Revised FEIR. For ease of reference, this Revised FEIR is organized in the same manner as the Final EIR. For example, revisions to Section 4.1, Land Use in the Final EIR are found in this Revised FEIR as Section 8-4.1, where the number "8" is the chapter number and the following "4.1" references the Section in the Final EIR. This Revised FEIR considers and analyzes the RB Alternatives using the same categories of environmental impacts set forth in the Final EIR.

^{1/} *Citizens Organized for Smart Transit v. Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority* California Appellate Court Case No. B164434.



I-2 CEQA REQUIREMENTS FOR THE REVISED FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Summary of Prior Efforts

Originally, the Project was to be approved under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in addition to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because MTA was pursuing federal funding for the Project. Accordingly, the draft environmental document (DEIS/EIR) for the Project was written as a combined Draft Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to NEPA and a draft EIR pursuant to the CEQA. At the time the DEIS/EIR was being prepared, it was intended that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) would be the federal lead agency under NEPA and MTA would be the lead agency under CEQA. After the DEIS/EIR was circulated, and in accordance with NEPA, MTA identified the proposed Project, BRT, as the locally preferred alternative. Thereafter, MTA abandoned its efforts to seek federal funding for the Project. Thus, the final environmental document was identified as a final EIR and certified under CEQA only. Since the Court of Appeal found the EIR for the Project needed to also consider a multi-route Rapid Bus alternative under CEQA, it ordered the Superior Court to direct MTA to set aside its certification of the Final EIR.

Reasonable Range of Alternatives

The RB Alternatives considered and analyzed in this Revised FEIR, in conjunction with the alternatives previously evaluated in the Final EIR, permit MTA's Board to make a reasoned choice in accordance with California Code of Regulations ("*State CEQA Guidelines*") Section 15126.6(f).

Environmental Setting

In order to evaluate the further alternatives in compliance with the Decision, it is necessary that it be assumed that none of the Project construction has occurred. Accordingly, the environmental setting, or baseline, for analyzing the RB Alternatives is, except as noted herein, the same as that used in the Final EIR. This approach provides the reader with an appropriate comparison of the RB Alternatives to the BRT and the other alternatives analyzed in the Final EIR. Further, this approach is consistent with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.2 that sets the "existing physical conditions" as the time when the Notice of Preparation was published—May 2000. The Final EIR set its "existing physical conditions" as the year 2000 for analyzing the environmental impacts. In certain sections of this Revised FEIR, the environmental setting had to be augmented with additional information. If year 2000 data were unavailable, this year's conditions were used. See the description of the setting in each section of this Revised FEIR for precise environmental setting or baseline used.

Public Comment

This Revised FEIR is being circulated for public review and comment separately from the Final EIR because the revisions to the Final EIR are solely contained in this Revised FEIR. Pursuant to *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15088.5(f)(2), MTA hereby requests that reviewers limit their comments to this Revised FEIR because MTA already circulated the Final EIR and received comments on it.



The Office of Planning and Research approved a public comment period of 30 days for this Revised Final EIR.² The starting and ending dates of the public comment period are set forth in the Notice of Completion and Notice of Availability. Once the public comment period has expired, MTA will evaluate and respond to the significant environmental issues raised in comments. The comments and responses will be incorporated into the Revised FEIR. Once completed, the Revised FEIR will be presented to the MTA Board for consideration of certification and approval of the Project.

^{2/} Office of Planning and Research email dated September 23, 2004.

