



NEWS

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MTA BOARD TO REVIEW SAN FERNANDO VALLEY EAST-WEST CORRIDOR MAJOR INVESTMENT STUDY

Ten alternatives for improving mass transit along the East-West San Fernando Valley corridor have been developed as part of the MTA's Major Investment Study (MIS) which will be considered by the Board during its upcoming May meeting.

The Major Investment Study was begun in May 1995, following the MTA's adoption of the Southern Pacific (SP) Burbank Corridor for the East-West Valley Project. The goals of the study are to obtain federal environmental clearance for a project and identify cost-effective solutions, both necessary preliminary steps in competing for federal funding.

The MTA Planning and Programming Committee will consider the MIS at its May 15 meeting. The Board of Directors at its May 22 meeting will be asked to endorse five alternatives for further consideration, and to initiate the Environmental Impact Study (EIS).

The five alternatives recommended for further consideration in a follow-on EIS are:

- Red Line extension to I-405 via the Southern Pacific (SP) right-of-way;
- Red Line extension to I-405 via Oxnard Street;
- Light Rail Transit to Valley Circle;
- Enhanced bus service; and
- No Project (required by federal law to be studied among the alternatives).

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The five options not recommended for further study are:

- Light Rail Transit to I-405;
- Red Line subway extension to Valley Circle via SP right-of-way;
- Red Line extension to Valley Circle via Sherman Way;
- Alternate Rail Technology to Chatsworth; and
- Busway to Warner Center.

“This study is an important early step in realizing improved transit for the San Fernando Valley,” said Joe Drew, MTA chief executive officer. “The report looked at cost estimates and ridership forecasts for each alternative, and gives a basis of comparison among the options available to us.”

Red Line extensions to the 405 Freeway via either the SP right-of-way or Oxnard Street would run six miles west from the North Hollywood station at Lankershim Boulevard and Chandler Avenue. They were considered in a combination of modes, including deep bore subway, cut and cover subway, open air subway, and an aerial guideway. These alternatives were recommended because of their high ridership projections and relative cost-effectiveness of construction.

A Light Rail line from North Hollywood to Warner Center/Valley Circle was recommended for further consideration because of significantly lower construction costs. Offsetting this benefit would be lower ridership and the extra cost of a light rail maintenance yard.

Enhanced bus service was studied to compare upgrading service with rail transit. This option would require service levels significantly higher than what is currently in place.

The No Project option was included to determine what would happen if no transit improvements were made in the Valley during the next 20 years.

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For example, a trip from Sherman Oaks to Downtown that takes 37 minutes today would take 60 minutes in 2015, if no improvements were made. This alternative will be used as a basis of comparison for all other alternatives.

Light rail transit to the 405 Freeway was not recommended for further study because the light rail option was not cost-effective if built in phases. Riders who might be willing to change from subway to light rail for a longer, cross-valley trip would be less likely to do so for a relatively short ride.

Extending the Red Line subway to Valley Circle via the SP right of way or Sherman Way were not recommended for further study because the high costs of subway construction in the West Valley were not justified by sufficiently high ridership projections.

The Alternate Rail Technology and Busway alternatives would have utilized the SP right-of-way from North Hollywood to the West Valley. They were both not recommended for further study because of slow travel speeds and corresponding low ridership projections.

The MIS was conducted by Gruen Associates, who also will prepare the EIS and Supplemental Environmental Impact Report..

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