

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the purpose of this Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) for the Airport Metro Connector (AMC) 96th Street Transit Station Project (proposed project), a discussion of the environmental review process, and a description of the organization of the EIR.

1.1. PURPOSE OF THIS DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) has prepared this Draft EIR for the following purposes:

- To satisfy the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000, et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR], Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15000, et seq.).
- To inform public agency decision makers and the public of the significant environmental effects of the proposed project, as well as possible ways to minimize those significant effects, and reasonable alternatives to the proposed project.
- To enable Metro to consider environmental consequences when deciding whether to approve the proposed project.

Metro serves as the “lead agency” for the proposed project in accordance with Sections 15051 and 15367 of the CEQA Guidelines, which define the lead agency as the public agency that has the principal responsibility for executing or approving a project.

As described in CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, public agencies are charged with the duty to avoid or substantially lessen significant environmental impacts of a project, where feasible. In discharging this duty, a public agency has an obligation to balance the economic, social, technological, legal and other benefits of a project against its significant unavoidable impacts on the environment. This Draft EIR is an informational document, designed to identify the potentially significant impacts of the proposed project on the environment; to indicate the manner in which those significant impacts can be minimized; to identify reasonable and feasible alternatives to the proposed project that would avoid or reduce the significant impacts and to identify any significant unavoidable adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated.

This Draft EIR was prepared in accordance with Section 15151 of the CEQA Guidelines, which defines the standards for EIR adequacy as follows:

“An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in the light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of

disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure.”

1.2. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

In compliance with the CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was prepared and distributed on February 6, 2015 to the State Clearinghouse, various public agencies, and the general public for the required 30-day review and comment period. Additionally, a scoping meeting was held on February 23, 2015 at the Flight Path Learning Center (6661 West Imperial Highway, Los Angeles, CA) to facilitate public review and comment on the proposed project and the EIR. The NOP and associated Scoping Report, including the NOP comment letters received by Metro, as well as the transcript of the scoping meeting, are contained in Appendix A of this Draft EIR. The baseline condition and existing setting for the EIR is the NOP date.

In accordance with the 2016 CEQA Guidelines, this Draft EIR includes detailed analyses of the following environmental topics:

- Air Quality
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise and Vibration
- Transportation and Traffic

Metro determined that the proposed project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts related to the issues listed below. Therefore, these issues are briefly addressed in Section 4.4, Effects Determined Not to Be Significant, of this Draft EIR.

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural and Forestry Resources
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Energy Resources

This Draft EIR was prepared under the direction and supervision of Metro and reflects the independent judgment of Metro. This Draft EIR has been subjected to an internal department review by the lead agency prior to the CEQA-mandated public review and comment period. During the 45-day public review period, public agencies, organizations and individuals may submit written comments concerning the adequacy of the document by email or U.S. mail to:

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One Gateway Plaza, Mail Stop: 99-22-5
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Email: laxconnector@metro.net

Metro will conduct a public hearing to take testimony on the Draft EIR during the 45-day public review and comment period. After the public review and comment period, written responses to all written comments and oral testimony pertaining to environmental issues will be prepared as part of the Final EIR. As required by CEQA, responses to comments submitted by commenting agencies will be distributed to those agencies for review prior to consideration of the Final EIR by Metro's Board of Directors. Upon completion of the Final EIR and other required documentation, the Board of Directors may adopt the findings relative to the proposed project's environmental effects after implementation of mitigation measures and statement of overriding considerations, certify the EIR and approve the proposed project.

1.3. EIR ORGANIZATION

This Draft EIR is comprised of the following chapters:

- Executive Summary.** This chapter provides a summary of the project description, alternatives to the proposed project, and environmental impacts and mitigation measures.
- 1. Introduction.** This chapter briefly discusses the purpose of the EIR, identifies the environmental topics assessed in the EIR and describes the environmental review process and organization of this Draft EIR.
 - 2. Project Description.** This chapter provides a detailed description of the project, including project location, project objectives, project characteristics, intended use of this Draft EIR, and required discretionary actions.
 - 3. Environmental Impacts.** This chapter presents the environmental setting, project analyses, and if applicable, mitigation measures and conclusions regarding the level of significance after mitigation for each environmental impact issue that was determined to have the potential to cause significant impact.

- 3.1 Air Quality
 - 3.2 Greenhouse Gas Emissions
 - 3.3 Hazards and Hazardous Materials
 - 3.4 Land Use and Planning
 - 3.5 Noise and Vibration
 - 3.6 Transportation and Traffic
4. **Other CEQA Considerations.** This chapter provides a discussion of significant unavoidable impacts that would result from the proposed project and the reasons why the project is being proposed notwithstanding the significant unavoidable impacts. An analysis of the significant irreversible changes in the environment is also presented. In addition, this chapter analyzes the project's potential growth-inducing impacts, which could foster economic or population growth or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding area. Finally, the discussion includes possible effects of the project that were determined not to be significant.
 5. **Cumulative Impacts.** This chapter presents CEQA requirements for cumulative impact analysis and analyzes the potential for the proposed project to have significant cumulative effects when combined with other past, present, and future projects.
 6. **Alternatives.** This chapter provides an analysis of the No Project Alternative required by CEQA.
 7. **Lead Agency, Preparers and Sources Consulted.** This chapter lists the persons who contributed to the preparation of this Draft EIR. This chapter also lists all the references and sources used in the preparation of this Draft EIR.