



Board Report

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Agenda Number:

Attached is the official record distributed to the board.

JUNE 27, 2022

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**THROUGH: STEPHANIE WIGGINS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**FROM: JAMES DE LA LOZA
CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER**

**SUBJECT: EASTSIDE TRANSIT CORRIDOR PHASE 2 PROJECT DRAFT EIR PUBLIC
RELEASE**

ISSUE

Metro has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 Project (Project) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) regulations. The Draft EIR will be released for public review on June 30, 2022, followed by a 60-day public review period. Following the review of comments, staff will recommend Board approval in the fall 2022 of a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) from among the three alternatives evaluated in the Draft EIR.

BACKGROUND

The Project is proposed to extend the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) L (Gold) Line, a light rail transit (LRT) line, from its current terminus at the Atlantic Station in the unincorporated community of East Los Angeles to the city of Whittier. It would extend the existing Metro L (Gold) Line approximately 3.2 to 9.0 miles, depending on the Alternative. The project would serve five cities of Commerce, Montebello, Pico Rivera, Santa Fe Springs, and Whittier and the communities of unincorporated East Los Angeles and Whittier-Los Nietos.

The Project follows an environmental process defined by state environmental requirements in CEQA. In October 2018, the Board approved a recommendation to restart the environmental studies and clear the Project under CEQA and NEPA and complete and Advanced Conceptual Engineering design (Legistar file #2018-0303). Following the study and community input on the three project alternatives, at its February 27, 2020 meeting, the Board approved the withdrawal of the SR 60 and Combined Alternatives from the Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 environmental study. The Board also approved proceeding with a focused CEQA environmental study for the Washington Alternative

(Legistar file #2020-0027).

DISCUSSION

Three Build Alternatives (Attachment A), as well as a No-Build Alternative, are evaluated in the Draft EIR. The alternatives include one full-length alternative and two Interim Operating Segments (IOS):

- Alternative 1: Washington-Atlantic to Lambert in Whittier
- Alternative 2: IOS Commerce/Citadel-Atlantic to Commerce/Citadel in Commerce
- Alternative 3: IOS Greenwood-Atlantic to Greenwood station in Montebello

The “environmentally superior alternative” is the alternative that has an overall environmental advantage over the other alternatives under consideration. Identifying the “environmentally superior alternative” is a requirement under CEQA and is based on the results of the technical analysis of the alternatives prepared in support of the Draft EIR. The goal of identifying the “environmentally superior alternative” is to assist decision-makers in the project approval process. However, the public agency is not required by CEQA to select the “environmentally superior alternative” as the approved project.

After circulation of the Draft EIR, agency staff will compile and consider comments received from the public and other stakeholders on the Draft EIR. Based on public input, staff will recommend an LPA for Board consideration. Subsequently, the Board could select the recommended LPA or a build alternative to be implemented. However, as elected representatives of the community, the Board can modify the staff recommendation or select another alternative that best meets the project objectives.

The Board is currently scheduled to select the LPA for the Project in fall 2022, following the release and comment period for the Draft EIR. The LPA will then be advanced for further analysis and included in the Final EIR, which is expected to be released in 2023.

Public Outreach and Circulation of the Draft EIR

Following the release of the Draft EIR, a 60-day public comment period will be held to promote the review of the Draft EIR and gather public comments. Metro will also host three (3) in-person public hearings and one (1) virtual hearing to present findings of the Draft EIR and solicit public comments on the document. All noticing of these public hearings will be compliant with the relevant CEQA statutes. In person public hearing are subject to change and may be held virtually based on changing COVID-19 safety regulations.

Public Hearing #1

Thursday, July 21, 2022

6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

Kaiser Permanente Medical Offices

(Northeast Parking Lot)

5119 Pomona Bl, Los Angeles, CA 90022

Public Hearing #2

Saturday, July 30, 2022

10:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Applied Technology Center High School
1200 W Mines Ave, Montebello, CA 90640

Virtual Public Hearing #3
Thursday, August 11, 2022
6:00 PM to 8:00 PM
Link: tinyurl.com/3k8pms7f
Meeting ID: 814-9183-9547
Call-in: +1 213-338-8477

Public Hearing #4
Wednesday, August 17, 2022
6:00 PM to 8:00 PM
Whitter Community Center (Gymnasium)
7630 Washington Ave, Whitter, CA 90602

To enhance project awareness and access to the latest updates, several multi-media tools will be launched to inform users about the project corridor and environmental process. Communications Toolkits also will be shared with the project's Community Based Organization Roundtable and community leaders to support their engagement with constituents, and presentations and project updates are available by request.

During the 60-day comment period for the Draft EIR, agencies and the public may also submit comments directly to Metro. The Draft EIR will be distributed on Metro's website (metro.net/eastside2022), and paper copies will also be made available for public review. Comments will be collected at the public hearings as well as through the following methods:

Mail: Ms. Jenny Cristales-Cevallos
Project Manager
Metro
One Gateway Plaza, M/S 99-22-7
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Helpline: 213.922.3012

Website: metro.net/eastside2022

NEXT STEPS

After the conclusion of the 60-day review period, the Board will select the LPA in fall 2022. Public comments received on the Draft EIR will be considered as part of the selection process.