



Metro

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TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THROUGH: ARTHUR T. LEAHY *ATL*
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

FROM: BRYAN PENNINGTON *BnP*
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ENGINEERING & CONSTRUCTION

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON STATE ROUTE 710 NORTH DRAFT EIR/EIS
RELEASE

ISSUE

The State Route 710 North Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (SR-710 North Draft EIR/EIS) will not be released in Spring 2014 as originally planned. The delay is the result of the need to incorporate the latest Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) travel demand information. The key technical studies that support the EIS/EIR must be based upon the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

Metro was one of the first agencies to use the new 2012 model in a major project. Calibration and validation of the model was not complete until last year and the associated travel demand forecasting for all of the alternatives was not completed until February of this year. However, it has become apparent that additional time is required to complete the technical studies, which means that the release of the Draft EIR/EIS must be delayed in order to preserve the integrity of the environmental process.

DISCUSSION

To comply with State and Federal EIR/EIS requirements, Metro, Caltrans, local cities and private developers are all required to use the regional travel demand model from the SCAG. This model predicts future (2035) traffic through a thorough analysis of projected travel patterns considering such factors as population and employment growth, goods movement, land use changes and other variables. Other critical analyses, including air quality, noise and energy effects, also depend on travel demand model data. The preparation of technical reports that support the draft environmental document was delayed while a new regional travel demand model for analyzing the alternatives was calibrated and

applied. The study team exercised due diligence and took the needed time to calibrate and validate the model to provide the best updated information for the technical reports.

Background

The 2012 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for the SCAG region is considered a “conforming plan” consistent with the State Implementation Plan (SIP). All transportation projects need to demonstrate that they are included in the conforming plan and consistent with the scope of improvements identified in the plan. Therefore, all project sponsors need to use the 2012 regional travel demand model since it is the basis for the 2012 RTP.

A detailed analysis for each alternative utilizing the model outputs will be incorporated in the SR-710 North Draft EIR/EIS. For the Alternatives Analysis phase of the contract, the 2008 SCAG RTP model was used because it was the most current model available for use at that time. In August 2012, SCAG introduced the 2012 RTP model; subsequently, there were two revisions to the 2012 SCAG RTP model that required recalibration and application. This delayed the finalization of the travel demand forecasts and completion of the technical reports for all of the five alternatives – bus rapid transit, light rail transit, transportation system management/transportation demand management, freeway tunnel and “No Build” (only currently programmed projects).

Calibration and validation of the model took an additional 8 months until July 2013 to complete which is needed prior to the start of the required travel demand forecasting. The study team initiated workarounds by advancing technical studies concurrently with the travel demand forecasting. The travel demand forecasting for all of the alternatives was completed in February 2014. The team remains committed to performing its due diligence with respect to all five (5) alternatives.

NEXT STEPS

Metro staff is working with Caltrans on a revised schedule and will inform the Board as soon as it is confirmed. Staff will provide periodic updates to the Board on the SR-710 North EIR/EIS schedule and process.

Caltrans and Metro will continue to jointly engage and ensure public participation and community outreach throughout the duration of the SR-710 North EIR/EIS process.