



Metro

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

213.922.2000 Tel
metro.net

12

**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 5, 2014**

SUBJECT: EASTSIDE TRANSIT CORRIDOR PHASE 2

**ACTION: APPROVE ALIGNMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AND FURTHER
TECHNICAL STUDY**

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Approve carrying forward two build alternatives and the associated maintenance yard(s) into further technical study as described below:

1. SR 60 North Side Design Variation (NSDV) (Attachment A) which would extend the existing Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension from the Atlantic/Pomona Station, approximately 6.9 miles to Peck Rd. in the City of South El Monte. The Alternative would operate primarily within the southern portion of the SR 60 Freeway right-of-way (ROW). The NSDV, which would transition to the north side of the SR 60 just west of Greenwood Ave. and back to the south side just west of Paramount Blvd. is selected so as to minimize potential impacts to the OII Superfund site.

Coordination and refinements to the Alternative would be carried out to address comments received from Cooperating and Public Agencies;

2. Washington Blvd. Alternative (Attachment B) which extends the existing Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension from the Atlantic/Pomona Station, approximately 9.5 miles to Lambert Rd. in the City of Whittier. The Alternative includes two grade separated design variations at Rosemead Blvd and at San Gabriel River/I-605/Pioneer Blvd. in order to minimize potential traffic impacts and physical constraints, respectively.

Refine the Alternative to identify an alternate north-south connection to Washington Blvd.

Coordination and refinements to the Alternative would be carried out to address comments received from Cooperating Agencies, Public Agencies and stakeholder concerns;

3. Analyze environmental impacts and performance with both Alternatives in operation, including conducting cost containment studies.

- B. Eliminate from further study as described below:
1. State Route 60 (SR 60) Baseline Alternative (Attachment A) from further study due to potential Environmental impacts and concerns expressed by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
 2. Washington Blvd. Alternative Aerial configuration on Garfield Ave. between Via Campo and Whittier Blvd. (Attachment B) due to Community and Neighborhood, Visual and Aesthetic impacts and stakeholder concern.
- C. Receive the Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 (Eastside Phase 2) Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIS/EIR). Attachment C contains the Executive Summary. The full Draft EIS/EIR is available upon request.

ISSUE

The adopted Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) includes the Eastside Phase 2 project in the Constrained Element with funding becoming available starting in 2026, and also identifies a second Eastside Phase 2 project for the corridor not selected in the Strategic Unfunded Plan, Tier 1. Measure R allocates \$1.27 billion (2014 dollars) to the Eastside Phase 2 project.

The Draft EIS/EIR contains the technical analysis to inform the public and decision makers of the potential adverse and beneficial impacts of the alternatives. Coordination efforts with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the project's three Cooperating Agencies, EPA, United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Caltrans, helped inform the development of the Draft EIS/EIR. In addition, a strong public participation process supported the technical analysis. While the Draft EIS/EIR demonstrates a need for both alternatives and community support for having service to the two subregions was strong, further technical and environmental analysis is warranted in order to provide additional detail that is necessary to address environmental comments received during the public comment period from Cooperating Agencies, Public Agencies and stakeholders. Board approval of conducting further technical studies before entering the Final EIS/EIR is being requested.

DISCUSSION

Per the Draft EIS/EIR, both build alternatives studied would provide environmental and social benefits for the project area and would help address mobility challenges faced by the project area by 2035, including connecting the project area to Metro's regional rail network and providing much needed transportation services.

Comments received from stakeholders and project cities during the public comment period indicated strong support for both alternatives. Comments received from Cooperating and Public Agencies indicated a need to conduct additional technical

studies in order to provide the additional detail that is necessary to address comments provided in their area of expertise and jurisdictional oversight.

SR 60 North Side Design Variation Alternative

The SR 60 NSDV would extend the existing Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension from the Atlantic/Pomona Station, approximately 6.9 miles to Peck Rd. in the City of South El Monte. The alternative is approximately 94% grade separated and would operate primarily within the southern portion of the SR 60 Freeway ROW. The NSDV, would transition to the north side of the SR 60 just west of Greenwood Ave. and back to the south side just west of Paramount Blvd. was analyzed in coordination with the project's three Cooperating Agencies. Potential impacts to the south side of the Oil Superfund Site are minimized. This alternative proposes four stations with supporting park and ride lots.

The SR 60 NSDV is estimated to generate approximately 16,700 daily boardings with an estimated travel time of 13 minutes from the Peck Rd. terminus to the existing Metro Gold Line station at Atlantic/Pomona. The capital cost in 2010 dollars is estimated to range between \$1.2 and \$1.3 billion. Travel time savings are estimated at 21.9 minutes per boarding.

Moving forward into the technical study, the following areas would require continuing resolution and coordination with the following jurisdictions and agencies:

- EPA to further address comments regarding the Oil Superfund site;
- USACE in further addressing Executive Orders and Federal Regulations as they relate to the operation of the SR 60 NSDV and location of the proposed Santa Anita Station and supporting park and ride;
- Caltrans to address comments regarding design of SR 60 NSDV;
- Department of Interior and California Department of Fish and Wildlife to address comments related to habitat and wetlands delineation;
- Southern California Edison (SCE);
- City of Monterey Park to address comments regarding visibility.

Washington Blvd Alternative

As studied in the Draft EIS/EIR, the Washington Blvd. Alternative would extend the existing Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension from the existing Atlantic/Pomona station approximately 9.5 miles to Lambert Rd. in the City of Whittier. It includes both at-grade and aerial configurations, beginning at-grade as it departs the Atlantic/Pomona station, transitioning to an aerial configuration running on the south side of SR 60 Freeway ROW to Garfield Ave. it would turn south onto Garfield Ave. remaining in an aerial configuration. The aerial configuration would continue as it turns southeast along Washington Blvd. At Montebello Blvd., the alternative would transition to an at-grade configuration within the center of Washington Blvd to the terminus station at Lambert

Rd., in the City of Whittier. This Alternative proposes six stations with supporting park-and-ride lots at five stations.

Two design variations were studied as part of the Washington Blvd. Alternative. The first is an aerial crossing at Rosemead Blvd. in order to minimize potential traffic impacts at that intersection. The second design variation is an aerial crossing over the San Gabriel River/I-605 freeway and Pioneer Blvd. in order to address potential physical constraints.

As studied in the Draft EIS/EIR, the Washington Blvd Alternative is estimated to generate approximately 19,900 daily boardings. Travel time from the Lambert Rd terminus to the existing Metro Gold Line station at Atlantic/Pomona is estimate to range between 17 and 22 minutes. The capital cost in 2010 dollars is estimated between \$1.4 and \$1.7 billion. Travel time savings are estimated at 21.3 minutes per project boarding.

Per the Draft EIS/EIR, after implementation of mitigations, the aerial configuration on Garfield Ave. between Via Campo and Whittier Blvd. would have unavoidable adverse effects/ significant impacts. The aerial configuration would require removal of community resources, thereby altering the social and physical character within the immediate community. Changes in the visual character of Garfield Ave. would also result due to shade and shadow impacts along Garfield Ave. between Via Campo and Whittier Blvd. created by the aerial guideway. In addition, this configuration received strong community opposition. Eliminating the aerial configuration would address the potential environmental impacts and stakeholder concern.

Moving forward into the technical study, the following areas would require continuing resolution and coordination with jurisdictions and agencies:

- EPA to address comments regarding the Omega Superfund site;
- Refine the Washington Blvd Alternative to identify an alternate north south connection to Washington Blvd.

Maintenance Yards

Under the SR 60 NSDV, one potential Maintenance Yard Option has been identified. Referred to as the Mission Junction Yard, this site is approximately 11 acres and is located in the City of Los Angeles, generally bounded by 1-5 to the east, I-10 to the south, the Los Angeles River to the west and the Union Pacific rail line to the north as shown in Attachment A.

In addition to the Mission Junction Yard Option, the Washington Alternative also considers two additional locations (Attachment B). The Commerce Maintenance Yard Option is approximately 12 acres in size and is proposed to be within the City of Commerce, located west of Garfield Ave. in the SCE transmission line corridor.

A third Washington Blvd. Maintenance Yard option is within the City of Santa Fe Springs. This site is approximately nine acres in size and is located south of Washington Blvd. and east of Allport Ave.

In addition to the sites being analyzed, the Eastside Phase 2 project may also consider using the Monrovia facility that is currently under construction as part of the Metro Gold Line to Montclair.

All Maintenance Yard Options would be carried forward for further technical study.

SR 60 NSDV and Washington Blvd Alternatives

The Draft EIS/EIR analyzed each build alternative independent of one another. Given the demonstrated need for transit service in each subregion, strong community support from the subregions for their respective alternative and the identification of two Eastside Phase 2 alternatives in the LRTP, it is worthwhile to study potential impacts, performance and cost of having both alternatives in operation.

Technical work to evaluate how the two alternatives could be operated would allow us to build upon the analysis in the Draft EIS/EIR to identify potential environmental impacts of constructing and operating both alternatives, impacts on ridership, identify potential frequencies and operational configuration. Cost containment strategies, including analyzing a minimum operable segment would also be studied. Analysis carried out through the technical studies would also help inform project phasing within the LRTP reserved amount.

Draft EIS/EIR Environmental Process and Community Participation

The environmental study was initiated in 2007 with the Alternatives Analysis study (AA) wherein 47 alternatives were reviewed. Through technical analysis and community input, the 47 alternatives were narrowed down to four build alternatives with the No Build and the Transportation System Management (TSM). The four build alternatives were carried into an AA Addendum where additional technical screening was carried out. In 2009, the Board authorized staff to carry forward into the Draft EIS/EIR phase the No Build, the TSM and two build alternatives, SR 60 Light Rail Transit (LRT) and Washington Blvd. LRT.

The Draft EIS/EIR phase was initiated in 2010 with the publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register and the Notice of Preparation (NOP) being sent to the California State Clearinghouse and Los Angeles County Clerk on January 25, 2010. The 80 day scoping period extended through April 14, 2010, during which time four public scoping and one resource agency meeting were held. Over 300 stakeholders participated in the five meetings. In addition, over 20 briefings with Councils of Governments (COGs), community organizations and city staff took place.

In May, 2014, in anticipation of releasing the Draft EIS/EIR, the Gateway Cities and San Gabriel Valley COGs were updated. Briefings for elected officials and agencies, and eight open houses and city council presentations in the project cities were held. In total more than 330 meetings were held during the Draft EIS/EIR phase with over 2,800 attendees.

The Notice of Availability (NOA), which serves as a notice to the public regarding the availability of the Draft EIS/EIR, was published in the Federal Register and filed with the California State Clearing House and Los Angeles County Clerk's office on August 22, 2014. A 60 day public comment period extended through October 21, 2014. Four public hearings and one agency meeting were held during this time. Open Houses were held prior to the start of each public hearing. The Draft EIS/EIR was made available on Metro's website and library as well as over 15 public locations within the project area. The document was also made available via CD upon request.

Outreach for the public hearings was robust with the NOA being mailed to almost 3,500 project stakeholders and over 22,000 postcards mailed to residents, property and business owners along the proposed corridors. In addition just under 1900 e-mails were sent informing stakeholders of the availability of the Draft EIS/EIR. Other notification methods used included press notices sent to over 50 media outlets; display ads in multiple publications, including Chinese and Spanish language papers; "take-ones" distributed on buses and trains, and delivered to cities hosting the public hearings and other key locations along the two corridors.

More than 525 people attended the four public hearings. Over 1,130 comments were received, including 120 verbal comments taken at the public hearings. Comments from community residents, local businesses and organizations expressed strong support for their respective alternatives with many expressing support for both alternatives. Concerns expressed relate to potential traffic impacts, potential property acquisitions, safety and design. Included within the total count are comments received from almost 40 federal, state, regional and local agencies.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Impact to the Budget

The Fiscal Year (FY) 15 budget included \$350,000 in Traffic Congestion Relief Program (TCRP) funds to carry out work on the Draft EIS/EIR phase. Staff will work with Regional Programming, Budget and Local Programs and the Office of Financial Services to identify a funding source for the required technical studies and will bring back a request to the Board to amend the budget when we return to award the technical study contract modifications.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board could consider:

1. Choosing not to approve further technical study on both alternatives and instead select one alternative to move forward;
2. Choosing not to approve further technical study on the alternatives and instead select that neither alternative move forward.

These options are not recommended because the technical analysis and community outreach conducted to date reflect that both alternatives meet the project purpose and goals and would address the needs of the project area. A high degree of community support for both alternatives exists.

Moving forward with the technical studies will allow us to conduct technical analysis to address comments received by Cooperating Agencies and Public Agencies, further define project costs, and analyze potential impacts and performance of having both alternatives in operation.

NEXT STEPS

Upon Board approval, a scope of work will be developed for technical work and community facilitation. Staff will return to the Board to request authorization to award the contract modifications and amend the budget.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. SR 60 and SR 60 NSDV Map
- B. Washington Alternative Map
- C. Draft EIS/EIR Executive Summary

Prepared by: Laura Cornejo, Director 213-922-2885
David Hershenson, Community Relations Manager 213-922-1340
Diego Cardoso, Executive Officer 213-922-3076
Cal Hollis, Managing Executive Officer 213-922-7319



Martha Welborne, FAIA
Chief Planning Officer



Arthur T. Leahy
Chief Executive Officer