



Metro’s Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project is part of our plan to make it easier to get around, creating better transit between the San Fernando Valley, the Westside and ultimately to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). This high-capacity rail line will help take cars off the road and provide more traveling options. The natural barrier created by the Santa Monica Mountains makes traveling between the Valley and the Westside challenging – and will require innovation and multiple solutions. Metro is studying several projects in this area, including a new rail line with the Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project.

### **Project Status**

#### **1. What is the status of the project?**

This project is currently in the planning phase, which is analyzing six rail alternatives along with the No Project alternative, consisting of varying potential routes and modes. During the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) environmental review process, Metro is working with two private sector proposers, LA SkyRail Express and Sepulveda Transit Corridor Partners, under a first-of-its-kind pre-development agreement to potentially accelerate delivery of this project. The environmental study kicked off in November 2021 with scoping. This phase of the study is designed to examine project objectives and alternatives early in the environmental review process to identify issues to be addressed in the environmental document and possible mitigation measures to avoid potentially significant environmental effects. Public outreach will be ongoing, and information will be shared as it becomes available, during the scoping process and following the preparation of state and federal environmental documents.

#### **2. What is a Pre-Development Agreement (PDA)?**

A PDA is an agreement with a contractor to initiate the development of a project through a public-private partnership model designed to incentivize innovations in design, engineering, construction approach, financing and operations. The use of a PDA for the Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project was approved by the Metro Board of Directors in 2019 and was a critical component of several unsolicited proposals submitted to Metro’s Office of Extraordinary Innovation in 2016. The PDA contractors will bring their expertise and creativity to the table early—when critical planning, design and engineering decisions can have the greatest impact on the project’s ultimate success.

#### **3. Is Metro open to innovation and new technologies for this project?**

The Metro Board approved the use of the PDA process for the Project to solicit the most innovative ideas from the private sector. All PDA proposers, whether selected or not, proposed a proven rail technology, either light rail, heavy rail, or monorail.

## Project Goals

### 4. What are the goals of the project?

For this Project, Metro has established six goals:

1. Improve Mobility
  - Increase transit frequency and decrease travel time
  - Increase transit ridership
  - Prioritize connections to high traffic points of interest
  - Promote efficiency of transfer experience
  - Support non-automobile First-Last Mile connections
2. Improve Accessibility and Promote Equity
  - Improve access for Equity Focused Communities
  - Target infrastructure and service investments towards those with the greatest mobility needs
3. Support Community and Economic Development
  - Maximize benefits to the public relative to cost
  - Maximize potential eligibility for state/federal funding
4. Protect Environmental Resources and Support a Sustainable Transportation System
  - Increase opportunity for economic growth around stations
  - Minimize physical barriers to communities
  - Prioritize station placement and design that is consistent with community context
5. Provide a Cost-Effective Solution and Minimize Risk
  - Reduce vehicles miles travelled, greenhouse gas emissions, and other air pollutants
  - Minimize impacts to environmental resources
6. Enhance Resiliency
  - Provide resilience to natural disasters and climate change

## Cost/Funding

### 5. How much will the Project cost? Why is Metro considering alternatives that may exceed the funding currently available for a project?

Environmental clearance of a project requires the environmental process to consider a reasonable range of project alternatives. The alternatives will be analyzed for environmental benefits and impacts across their proposed modes, alignments, station locations, and above-ground -or below-ground configurations. The Feasibility Study that Metro completed in 2019 began by considering many potential concepts for fulfilling the goals of the Project, and it narrowed down these concepts after conducting multiple rounds of analysis, receiving public feedback, and applying evaluation criteria. The range of Project alternatives was further informed by the PDA proposals, which included both heavy rail and monorail concepts.

Cost estimates for the alternatives will be provided during public review of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR), after design of the alternatives has been advanced.

The initial cost estimates in the Final Feasibility Report and in the PDA proposals\* are based on preliminary designs. As the designs for the alternatives advance, the cost estimates will be refined. As part of the environmental review process, Metro will evaluate the cost estimates and construction time frames of all proposed alternatives.

*\*See question #2 for more information about the PDA process.*

**6. What types of funding are available for the project?**

The Project is funded in part by Measure M, the transportation sales tax approved by 71 percent of Los Angeles County voters in 2016. Measure M has identified \$9.5 billion in funding from local, state and federal sources (\$5.7 billion for the Valley-Westside segment currently being studied and \$3.8 billion for the future Westside-LAX segment). Metro's project funding plans for major capital projects include assumptions of other federal, state, and local revenue including discretionary grants that Metro must secure through competitive process and local political support.

**Study Next Steps**

**7. What kind of feedback did Metro seek during scoping?**

Scoping occurred between November 30, 2021 and February 11, 2022. Metro sought feedback from the public about:

- Alternatives being considered
- How the alternatives might be enhanced or modified
- Other alternatives that should be evaluated
- Issues and concerns with the project plans
- Questions that should be answered as part of the study

**8. How many comments did Metro receive during scoping and how are they being used?**

Metro received input from nearly 3,100 individuals, organizations and institutions during the scoping period. Many of those contained multiple comments. Metro is currently reviewing and organizing the comments. They have been shared with the technical teams working to refine the alternatives and develop the Draft EIR. In Spring/Summer 2022, Metro is also planning to release the Scoping Report and hold additional community update meetings to discuss the findings of the Report and further study developments.

**9. What is the schedule and next steps in the environmental review process?**

Metro is continuing to analyze the alternatives and prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) is evaluating alignments, station locations, and both monorail and heavy rail project alternatives to address the transportation needs of the Sepulveda Corridor. Based on the current schedule, we anticipate that the DEIR will be completed in the second half of 2023 when it will be circulated for public review and comment. Following that public review period, a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) will be recommended to the Metro Board of Directors in early 2024. After the Board selects the LPA, the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) and the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared over the next 12-18 months to complete the environmental review process. During this process, there will be multiple opportunities for the public to review and comment on the project alternatives and the environmental analysis.

## 10. What will the Draft EIR include?

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will include a summary evaluation of the alternatives, including:

- Costs: construction cost, right-of-way cost, annual operating costs
- Benefits: overall ridership, reduction in vehicle miles traveled, increased mobility for Equity Focus Communities
- Impacts: effects on natural and human environments, including property acquisitions

It will also have conceptual engineering plans for each alternative, including track alignment, typical cross-sections, station layouts and right-of-way impacts.

Environmental technical reports analyzing each alternative will also be included in the Draft EIR.

Please see our [Environmental Review Fact Sheet](#) for more information on the study process.

## 11. What technical analyses will be conducted during the environmental review process?

Potential topics for environmental study under CEQA include:

- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality
- Community and Neighborhood
- Ecosystems and Biological Resources
- Energy
- Geotechnical, Subsurface, and Seismic Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Historic, Archeological, and Paleontological Resources
- Land Use and Development
- Mineral Resources
- Noise and Vibration
- Parklands and Community Facilities
- Real Estate and Acquisition
- Safety and Security
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Visual Quality and Aesthetics
- Water Resources
- Wildfire

The purpose of the technical analyses is to provide a comprehensive assessment of all potential environmental impacts associated with the project alternatives while also addressing the environmental resource topics listed in the [State CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G](#) while also covering federal requirements for the subsequent NEPA document.

## **Project Alternatives**

### **12. What alternatives are under consideration?**

Metro is evaluating six alternatives for a high-capacity fixed guideway transit option between the San Fernando Valley and the Westside. The northern end of the project would be at the Van Nuys Metrolink/Amtrak station, and the southern end point at the Metro E Line (Expo).

**Alternative 1:** Monorail with aerial alignment in Interstate 405 (I-405) corridor and electric bus connection to UCLA

**Alternative 2:** Monorail with aerial alignment in I-405 corridor and aerial automated people mover connection to UCLA

**Alternative 3:** Monorail with aerial alignment in I-405 corridor and underground alignment between Getty Center and Wilshire Bl

**Alternative 4:** Heavy rail with underground alignment south of Ventura Bl and aerial alignment generally along Sepulveda Bl in the San Fernando Valley

**Alternative 5:** Heavy rail with underground alignment including along Sepulveda Bl in the San Fernando Valley

**Alternative 6:** Heavy rail with underground alignment including along Van Nuys Bl in the San Fernando Valley and southern terminus station on Bundy Dr

**No Project:** The “No Project” alternative includes all existing highway and transit services and facilities, as well as other transit and highway projects scheduled to be operational by 2045.

Learn more and see maps on the [interactive StoryMap](#)

### **13. Will the project include parking?**

Metro will be studying parking as part of the environmental process. As part of the Feasibility Study, the analysis indicated that only about 4% of users (2% driving; 2% dropping off) would park, while the rest would bike, walk or transfer. This is consistent with other Metro lines, where most people are transferring.

### **14. Do all of the proposed alternatives have sufficient capacity to accommodate the long-term demand in the corridor?**

During the 2019 Sepulveda Transit Corridor Feasibility Study, Metro established that all the alternatives that would be further studied in the environmental process must carry approximately 12,000 passengers per direction, per hour. The number of passengers that can be carried is a function of the capacity of the trains, their speed and frequency of service. Metro will continue to evaluate all the alternatives under consideration to ensure they meet this requirement.

**15. Will any of the proposed alternatives allow trains to travel on other existing or planned Metro rail lines? If so, could maintenance facilities be shared with other lines?**

None of the proposed alternatives would allow trains to travel directly onto other Metro lines nor could they use existing maintenance facilities. The Sepulveda Transit Corridor is being studied and planned as a north-south alignment. However, all of the proposed alternatives will ensure easy and convenient transfers to the Metro G (Orange), D (Purple), E (Expo) Lines, and the future East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor. This allows for more frequent and better passenger service on each of those lines as opposed to when trains alternate their service on different lines. Therefore, trains for the Sepulveda Transit Corridor project will require their own maintenance and storage facility (MSF). For more information, please see our Rail Maintenance Storage and Facilities Fact Sheet.

**16. Do the proposed monorail alternatives have stations in the median of I-405?**

The monorail alternatives (Alternatives 1-3) do not have any proposed stations in the median of the freeway. The proposed monorail stations are almost all located on the side of the I-405.

**Potential Project Impacts**

**17. Is it anticipated that eminent domain will be required?**

No alternative has been selected at this time, nor has any alternative been sufficiently defined to make a determination about property acquisitions. Metro always works to achieve a negotiated agreement with any property owner before pursuing eminent domain as a last resort. The property acquisition process is governed by the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act. More information on that process is available at [Property Acquisition Fact Sheet](#).

**18. Will easements be needed? And to what extent? And what are the practical implications of those required easements?**

Yes, most new rail projects need to acquire easements for their construction and operation. Some projects need property for tunnels, stations, aerial structures, or other facilities. Typical examples might include easements for emergency ingress and egress, underground easements for tunnels and stations, easements for maintenance, or air rights for aerial structures. Projects might also need to acquire property or easements on a temporary basis for use during project construction.

To ensure public safety and protect property for all parties, easements refer to the need for Metro to review plans for construction above or adjacent to the easement area. However, not all projects require significant review from or coordination with Metro and, in many cases, can be quite routine and conducted as a part of the city review for the future project. The level of review depends on the proximity to Metro's facilities, site conditions, and the potential impact to Metro's facilities operations/services. There are many examples around Los Angeles where property owners have been able to build successfully above and adjacent to our tracks, tunnels, stations or other facilities.

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) will identify potential easements and acquisitions for each of the alternatives. More information is available at [our Property Acquisition Fact Sheet](#).

**19. What about other potential alignments or station locations? Why not tunnel under Beverly Glen Boulevard or the I-405 freeway?**

The scoping period and meetings associated with the NOP provide an opportunity for agencies, stakeholders, and the public to provide input regarding the goals and objectives of the project, potential impacts, and modifications to the project alternatives (including tunneling alignments) for Metro's consideration.

**20. During construction-will there be noise or vibrations that the residents will be aware of?**

The nature of construction impacts will depend on the selected alternative. The environmental process will identify and evaluate construction impacts such as noise and vibration. Those impacts, along with mitigation measures and the effectiveness of these measures will be described in the DEIR.

**21. Would a tunnel need to be vented? Would it be on private property? If so, what are the impacts such as noise and other consequences?**

Underground trains push the air as they move through the tunnels. This air can be vented to the surface in a variety of locations. Venting occurs at stations, and where the tunnels come up to the surface. Sometimes ventilation shafts at other locations are also needed. The requirements for number, size and location of ventilation shafts will vary with the length of the underground sections, the tunnel size and design, and the number and frequency of trains. The environmental study for the project will evaluate the number of vent facilities required, potential locations, any environmental impacts and needed mitigations.

Vents can generate noise, but the amount of noise associated with a vent is dependent on its size and several design variables. Emissions from vents do not impact air quality as the ventilation system filters out pollutants before being released to the environment. The means of ventilation, any potential impacts, including property impacts, will be analyzed in the environmental document along with any associated mitigation measures. Vent facilities may require property acquisition. Please see our [Property Acquisition Fact Sheet](#) for more information.

**22. What effects does tunneling have at the surface?**

Modern tunneling methods such as Tunnel Boring Machines (TBM) and Sequential Excavation Mining (SEM) generally produce no noticeable noise, vibration, or settlement at the ground surface. This is because bored tunnels are generally deeper compared to tunnels constructed using cut and cover methods, and the ground around and above the tunnel remains fully supported at all times. Recent Metro experience with the D Line (Purple) Extension, Crenshaw/LAX and the Regional Connector have shown these underground activities can proceed with no disturbance even to sensitive neighbors, such as schools or theaters. Noticeable construction typically occurs where facilities are needed on the surface. This includes at stations, at the launch and extraction sites of boring machines, and at places where tracks transition from tunnels to the surface. Tunnel launch sites, often part of station construction sites, are generally the largest and most active of these, as they include storage of materials like tunnel lining and staging for hauling away soil and rock removed from the ground during tunneling. These locations are identified during environmental studies and will be described in the DEIR along with impacts and associated mitigations. For more information, see our [Tunneling Fact Sheet](#) and our [Station Construction Fact Sheet](#).

### **23. What monitoring takes place during tunneling?**

Extensive and continuous monitoring is part of tunneling operations to ensure no noticeable vibration or settlement occurs at the ground surface. Several types of sensors are used within the tunnel and as part of this work. Other types of sensors are placed along the alignment at ground level, below ground, and on nearby structures. Plans for monitoring are developed during environmental studies and described in the DEIR.

### **24. Will trains running in tunnels cause noise or vibration at the surface?**

In bored tunnels, trains generally produce no noticeable noise or vibration at the surface. Noise and vibration from transit operations can occur near surface facilities such as station entrances, ventilation facilities, or transitions from tunnels to the surface. The environmental process will identify and evaluate impacts due to operations, including noise and vibration. Those impacts, along with mitigation measures and the effectiveness of these measures will be described in the DEIR.

## **Decision-Making Process**

### **25. How will the decision-making process occur?**

The decisions on a preferred alternative and a project delivery method will be made by the Metro Board. These decisions will be based on a variety of factors including the environmental effects of each alternative, public and stakeholder feedback, cost effectiveness, anticipated transit benefit and constructability and operational considerations. The environmental documentation and review process will generate a substantive technical assessment of each of the alternatives under consideration. There will be several years of analysis, evaluation, and discussion. The process affords a number of opportunities for public feedback and input. The Metro Board will base its decision on a substantial array of technical information and public feedback. There will be ample time for Board deliberation to weigh and debate all aspects of the project alternatives.

## **Public Engagement/Outreach**

### **26. Is Metro the only source of information for the project? Are the PDA teams able to provide information directly to the public?**

Official information regarding the Project can be found on Metro's [project website](#). Only comments made on Metro's website during formal comment periods will become part of the official administrative record for the Project.

Please note that the awarded PDA contracts are for design and development of the concepts proposed by the two PDA teams. These concepts are expected to evolve with feedback from the PDA and environmental processes. No decisions have been made to proceed to construction on any of the alternatives.

The two PDA teams may share information with the public, with the following disclaimer on all materials:

*Because Metro has not completed a CEQA review, the information contained herein does not constitute or evidence an approval by Metro of, or commitment of Metro to, any action for which prior environmental review is required under CEQA. Metro retains the absolute sole discretion to make decisions under CEQA, which discretion includes, without limitation (i) deciding not to proceed with the Project (known as the "no build" alternative) and (ii) deciding to approve the Project. There will be no approval or commitment by Metro regarding the development of the Project, unless and until Metro, as the Lead Agency, and based upon information resulting from the CEQA environmental review process, considers the impacts of the Project.*



The scoping period was the first opportunity during the environmental phase to share the project alternatives with the public and discuss the process of environmental review. Public review of the DEIR will provide another opportunity for public feedback.

**27. Why doesn't Metro have all the answers to the public's questions? Why can't the agency be more forthcoming?**

Metro is the agency that is authorized to environmentally study and approve fixed guideway projects in Los Angeles County. Our practices are designed to be impartial and to protect the process of receiving public input and disclosing environmental impacts. It is our responsibility to ensure that the process treats all alternatives impartially as they advance through the same rigorous analysis.

The purpose of the environmental study is to evaluate the alternatives, their benefits and their environmental impacts. That necessarily includes the answers to the questions that the community is asking. We understand that there is also a great deal of interest in the alternatives, including those from the PDA developers. We also understand that, at times, the process can be frustratingly slow, including at this early stage of the study when those answers aren't yet available. We will provide information as it becomes available through the study, and through ongoing outreach you will have ample opportunity to ask questions and share your thoughts with us.

**28. How was past community input incorporated into the solicitation and procurement of the PDA contractors?**

The Feasibility Study included two years of ongoing community and stakeholder outreach, including three rounds of public meetings throughout the study area. Reports from the Feasibility Study, including the public engagement and input are public information and were made available to the bidders as part of the PDA solicitation and procurement.

**29. What are the opportunities for public engagement and feedback on the project?**

Public engagement is encouraged throughout the environmental phase. Now that the Scoping period is complete, the next formal opportunity for input that will become part of the administrative is the public comment period after the release of the DEIR. Until that time, Metro will welcome input as we keep the public informed while as the study progresses.

**30. How will Metro promote equity in its outreach process for this project?**

Metro's Equity Platform commits Metro to address inequities and create more equitable access to opportunity. Equity Focus Communities (EFCs) are communities in which:

- 40% of households are low-income and 80% are non-white OR
- 40% of households are low-income and 10% have no access to a vehicle

EFCs are concentrated in the north end of the Study Area in the San Fernando Valley.

Metro is committed to an outreach process that promotes equity. The outreach consultant team that is engaged on this project reflects the diversity of Los Angeles and the project area and is working closely with Metro to develop a program that reaches the broadest range of stakeholders to engage them effectively and meaningfully. The team is planning a broad range of activities, including booths at events, outreach at transit stations, collaboration with community-based and faith-based organizations, and coordination with elected officials representing the communities throughout the project area.

### **31. Who has oversight of Metro's decisions?**

Metro is a public agency created by the State of California. Per state statute, decisions are made by the Metro Board of Directors that is comprised of 13 voting members – the five members of the County Board of Supervisors, the Mayor of the City of Los Angeles plus 3 individuals appointed by the Mayor, and four local elected officials – mayors or council members – from and chosen by the other cities within Los Angeles County.

### **Nearby Projects**

#### **32. How does this project relate to other Metro projects?**

Our region has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to redefine mobility on the Sepulveda Pass corridor, one of America's most challenging travel corridors. As such, Metro is evaluating a variety of projects that could offer a range of multimodal mobility options to address existing and future transportation needs. The Sepulveda Transit Corridor is just one of the projects considering mobility improvements. Other projects include the [I-405 Sepulveda Pass Express Lanes](#) [I-405 Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan \(CMCP\)](#), and the [Traffic Reduction Study](#).

Each of these projects must undergo their own separate planning and/or environmental clearance process. As each project advances, we will share detailed information about project benefits and impacts. Planning and environmental processes are being coordinated across projects to ensure Metro achieves a comprehensive and seamless improvement in mobility in the corridor.

#### **33. How is this Project related to the I-405 ExpressLanes Project?**

The alternatives under consideration for the Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project are consistent with implementation of the I-405 ExpressLanes, an approximately 10-mile High-Occupancy-Toll (HOT) lane project between the I-10 and U.S. 101 freeways. The ExpressLanes project is evaluating alternatives for converting the existing carpool or High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes on this segment of I-405 to HOT lanes and adding a second HOV or HOT lane in each direction. Metro's ExpressLanes provide additional freeway travel options and travel time savings, particularly during peak periods. Metro hosted scoping to begin the environmental process for the I-405 ExpressLanes project in summer 2021. Additional information is available on the [I-405 Sepulveda Pass ExpressLanes Project page](#).

#### **34. How is this Project coordinating with other projects in the area?**

The Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project will have connections to the Metrolink Ventura County Line, the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor, the Metro G Line (Orange), the Metro D Line (Purple), and the Metro E Line (Expo). Coordination with other projects planned and in construction was initiated during the Feasibility Study to promote the best possible customer experience for riders transferring from one transit corridor to another. Coordination will continue with these projects, as well as the other projects in the I-405 Corridor as the design of each of the alternatives is advanced during the environmental review process.

#### **35. How does this project relate to the I-405 Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan?**

Metro is leading the development of a comprehensive planning vision for the I-405 in LA County. The goal of the I-405 Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan (CMCP) is to address the transportation demands in and around the corridor, understand the diverse users and communities relying on and impacted by the I-405 Corridor, solicit their feedback and demonstrate how multimodal improvements can ease congestion, efficiently move more people and goods, increase accessibility for all users, support our economy, and advance equitable outcomes for historically

disadvantaged communities. The I-405 CMCP will capture the universe of planned transportation improvements within the I-405 CMCP Study Area, including the Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project. Additional information is available on the [I-405 CMCP page](#).

**36. How does this project relate to Metro’s Traffic Reduction Study?**

The Traffic Reduction Study will explore how to reduce traffic through congestion pricing (i.e. tolls) and providing more high-quality transportation options. In early 2021, Metro introduced four early concepts that are being studied to see if a traffic reduction program pilot could be successful in our region, including parts of LA County that have long suffered from chronic traffic. One of the concepts includes the Santa Monica Mountains Corridor that will explore managing traffic on freeways and parallel roadways that cross the Santa Monica Mountains between I-405 and I-5 to reduce heavy congestion from trips between the LA Basin and the San Fernando Valley. With few roads across the mountains, terrible traffic has for decades plagued the roads in the area. This study is not expected to impact the environmental planning process for the Sepulveda Transit Corridor project. However, both projects will continue monitoring progress on each of the counterpart efforts and coordinate to avoid any potential conflicts. At the earliest, a traffic reduction pilot program would not begin until 2025 — after a lot more planning, public engagement and necessary approvals from the Metro Board of Directors and other governmental bodies. Additional information on the [Traffic Reduction Study page](#).

**List of Acronyms**

- CEQA California Environmental Quality Act
- EIR Environmental Impact Report
- EIS Environmental Impact Statement
- HOT High-Occupancy Toll
- NEPA National Environmental Policy Act
- PDA Pre-Development Agreement