

relieve existing congestion, and to help reduce trip times and frustration for travelers.

III. Alternatives

To address these needs, the MIS developed alternatives ranging from low-cost conventional buses to Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), light and heavy rail systems and various combinations of each. Each alternative was evaluated to identify benefits, costs and potential environmental issues. A community-based planning process was used throughout the study, including extensive participation from citizen, business and environmental groups, and municipalities, as well as representatives from many of the areas largest educational and medical institutions. The extensive public involvement program included workshops, outreach briefings and general public meetings with a working committee and its subcommittees, providing input and guidance throughout the process.

Though this public process, the range of alternatives was steadily reduced from fifteen down to three. All three alternatives consist of Transportation System Management (TSM) measures, BRT service, supporting elements such as new commuter rail stops at Urban Ring interfaces, and rail service. They differ in the type of rail service.

Alternatives A1 and B include Light Rail while Alternative A2 utilizes Heavy Rail. A multi-phase implementation concept and schedule was developed where each phase builds upon the previous one until all the components of the alternatives are in place.

Phase I: TSM

Phase II: TSM + BRT and supporting elements

Phase III: TSM + BRT and supporting elements + Rail Transit

The phased approach enables tangible service improvements to occur sooner and enables the level of investment and service to increase with demand and available levels of funding. In Phase I, Transportation System Management (TSM or Bus Optimization) elements not requiring major new construction are proposed. In Phase III, the rail technology and alignment will be determined during a subsequent environmental process. The subject of this EIS, and the focus of the scheduled scoping session, will be the BRT and supporting commuter rail connections proposed in Phase II of the Project.

For Phase II of the Urban Ring Project three alternatives were examined during the MIS. These alternatives will be examined in greater detail during the EIS as follows:

No-Build Alternative: Consists of the transportation network contained in the Regional Transportation Plan for the year 2010 in the absence of any other transportation improvements in the study corridor; *TSM Alternative:*

Consists of continued operation of the proposed Phase I TSM bus routes within the 2010 network with no other transportation improvements in the study corridor; and *BRT Alternative:* Consists of the seven proposed BRT routes plus the supporting elements and continued operation of the non-redundant Phase I bus routes. A more detailed description of the BRT Alternative follows.

For Phase II, a fleet of low emission, low-floor, 60-foot articulated BRT vehicles would be purchased and additional BRT vehicle maintenance facility capacity provided. The Phase II BRT routes and vehicle maintenance facilities are planned for implementation in coordination with the MBTA Silver Line service and facilities that will be operational at that time. The TSM bus routes from Phase I would continue where not redundant to the BRT service. The BRT routes would operate at frequencies comparable to existing transit lines. During Phase II the environmental filings would be made to select the subsequent rail system to be added in Phase III.

Phase II would include segments of exclusive busway, Intelligent Transportation Systems features, and supporting elements to improve connections with radial transit and commuter rail lines. Some of the BRT routes in Phase II would be new, and other are modified or converted versions of the Phase I bus routes. A total of seven BRT routes are proposed in Phase II.

Supporting Elements: New or Expanded Commuter Retail Stations

Downtown Chelsea: Expand and improve existing station on Newburyport/Rockport Line.

Sullivan Square: New station stop near junction of Newburyport/Rockport and Haverhill Lines.

Gilman Square: New station stop on the Lowell Line.

Union Square: New station stop on the Fitchburg Line.

Yawkey: Expand and improve existing station on the Framingham/Worcester Line.

Ruggles: Expanded stop with platforms on both sides of Northeast Corridor.

Uphams Corner: Improved stop on the Fairmont Line.

IV. Probable Effects

The MBTA will consider probable effects and potentially significant impacts to social, economic and environmental factors associated with the Phase II alternatives under evaluation in the EIS. Potential environmental issues to be addressed will include: land use, historic and archeological resources, traffic and parking, noise and vibration, environmental justice, regulatory floodway/floodplain encroachments, coordination with transportation and economic development projects, and construction impacts. Other issues to be addressed in the EIS include: natural areas, ecosystems, rare and endangered species, water resources, air/surface water and groundwater quality, energy, potentially contaminated sites, displacements and relocations, and parklands. The potential impacts will be evaluated for both the construction period and long operations period of each alternative considered. In addition, the cumulative effects of the proposed project alternatives will be identified. Measures to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts will be developed.

V. FTA Procedures

A Draft EIS will be prepared to document the evaluation of the social, economic and environmental impacts of the alternatives. Upon completion, the Draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment. A public hearing on the Draft EIS will be held within the study area. On the basis of the Draft EIS and the public and agency comments received, a locally preferred alternative will be selected and described in full detail in the Final EIS.

Issued: September 13, 2001.

Richard H. Doyle,

Regional Administrator.

[FR Doc. 01-23255 Filed 9-17-01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-57-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Transit Administration

Environmental Impact Statement on the Santa Clara/Alum Rock Light Rail Transit Project in San Jose, CA

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

SUMMARY: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) intend to prepare an

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for a proposed Light Rail Transit (LRT) line in the Santa Clara/Alum Rock corridor. The proposed line and technology were selected following completion of the Downtown East Valley Major Investment Study (MIS) in August 2000. The MIS considered alternative modes of travel, alignments, and station locations in a 30-square mile study area. The MIS process resulted in a Preferred Investment Strategy that includes LRT improvements in the Santa Clara/Alum Rock Corridor to improve direct transit service in an approximately 4.3-mile-long corridor from downtown to the East Valley area in San Jose, California. The Santa Clara/Alum Rock Project will be further evaluated during the conceptual engineering phase of the project and carried forward in the EIS/EIR. The EIS/EIR will evaluate a No-Action alternative, LRT alignment and station options, and additional alternatives that emerge from the scoping process. Scoping will be accomplished through correspondence and discussions with interested persons; organizations; federal, state and local agencies; and through a public meeting.

DATES: *Comment Due Date:* Written comments on the scope of alternatives and impacts to be considered in the EIS/EIR must be received no later than November 2, 2001 and must be sent to VTA at the address indicated below. *Scoping Meeting:* A public scoping meeting will be held on September 19, 2001, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Mexican Heritage Plaza, Classroom #1, 1700 Alum Rock Avenue, San Jose, CA 95116. Phone (408) 928-5550. The project purpose and alternatives will be presented at this meeting. The building used for the scoping meeting is accessible to persons with disabilities. Any individual who requires special assistance, such as a sign language interpreter, to participate in the scoping meeting should contact Jennifer Rielly, Public Communications Specialist, VTA Community Outreach, at (408) 321-7575 or TDD only at (408) 321-2330. Scoping material will be available at the meeting and may be obtained in advance of the meeting by contacting Mr. Molseed at the address or phone number given below.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be sent to Mr. Roy Molseed, Senior Environmental Planner, VTA, 3331 North First Street, San Jose, CA 95134-1906. Phone: (408) 321-5789. Fax: (408)

321-5787. E-mail: scoping.santaclaraalumrock@vta.org.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Roy Molseed, Senior Environmental Planner, VTA, 3331 North First Street, San Jose, CA 95134-1906. Phone: (408) 321-5789 or Mr. Jerome Wiggins, Office of Planning and Program Development, FTA, 201 Mission Street, Room 2210, San Francisco, CA 94105. Phone: (415) 744-3115. People with special needs should contact Jennifer Rielly, Public Communications Specialist, VTA Community Outreach, at (408) 321-7575 or TDD only at (408) 321-2330.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Scoping

The FTA and VTA invite all interested individuals and organizations, and federal, state, regional, and local agencies to provide comments on the scope of the project. A summary of the MIS, Downtown East Valley Major Investment Study—Project Summary Report (December 2000), is available for public review at the following public libraries: (1) Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Main Library, 180 West San Carlos Street, San Jose, CA 95113; and (2) East San Jose Carnegie Branch Library, 1102 East Santa Clara Street, San Jose, CA 95116. The MIS summary is also available by contacting Mr. Molseed at the address and phone number given above. Mr. Molseed should also be contacted to be placed on the project mailing list and to receive additional information about the project. Written comments on the alternatives and potential impacts to be considered should be sent to Mr. Molseed.

II. Project Purpose and Need

The project purpose is to improve public transit service in the downtown and East Valley areas of the City of San Jose by addressing the following specific goals established in the MIS: improve mobility; increase transit ridership; target the highest commute corridors with emphasis on work and school trips; promote livable neighborhoods and community support.

In general, the project would provide residents of downtown and east San Jose more efficient access to the light rail system and improved connections and greater mobility options throughout the Silicon Valley. For example, residents could travel to south San Jose, downtown San Jose, and to the cities of Santa Clara, Sunnyvale, and Mountain View via the Guadalupe, Tasman, and Capitol LRT lines. Linkages to the Caltrain commuter rail line, which provides service to San Francisco and to

communities along the Peninsula, may also be accessed at intermodal connections throughout the system.

The project would also alleviate heavy traffic congestion on major arterials; reduce the circulation impacts of increased peak-hour traffic; improve regional air quality by reducing automobile emissions; improve mobility options to employment, education, medical, and retail centers for corridor residents, in particular low-income, youth, elderly, disabled, and ethnic minority populations; and support local economic and land development goals.

III. Alternatives

The Santa Clara/Alum Rock Light Rail Project is examining alternatives to be carried forward into the environmental analysis process. The No-Action Alternative will consist of the existing conditions, in accordance with both NEPA and CEQA requirements. The Build or LRT Alternative is the Santa Clara/Alum Rock LRT Project.

Two proposed alignment options are under consideration for the segment through downtown San Jose between the Diridon Station and 10th Street. One option is along San Fernando Street from the vicinity of the Diridon Station area, north on Almaden, and then east on Santa Clara Street. The second option is from the vicinity of the Diridon Station east along San Fernando Street, transitioning north to Santa Clara Street between 7th and 10th Streets, and then proceeding east on Santa Clara Street and Alum Rock Avenue. East of King Road, the LRT would operate in an exclusive guideway; west of King Road, the LRT would operate in a right-of-way shared with vehicular traffic. Along the alignment, thirteen conceptual station locations have been identified. More precise station locations and alignment options will be developed during preparation of the Draft EIS/EIR.

The EIS/EIR will also address any additional alternatives that are identified in the scoping process.

IV. Probable Effects

The purpose of the EIS/EIR is to fully disclose the environmental consequences of building and operating the Santa Clara/Alum Rock LRT Project in advance of any decisions to commit substantial financial or other resources towards its implementation. The EIS/EIR will explore the extent to which project alternatives and design options result in environmental impacts and will discuss actions to reduce or eliminate such impacts.

Environmental issues to be examined in the EIS/EIR include: changes in the physical environment (natural

resources, air quality, noise, water quality, geology, visual); changes in the social environment (land use, business and neighborhood disruptions); changes in traffic and pedestrian circulation; changes in transit service and patronage; associated changes in traffic congestion; and impacts on parklands and historic resources. Impacts will be identified both for the construction period and for the long-term operation of the alternatives. The proposed evaluation criteria include transportation, environmental, social, economic, and financial measures, as required by current federal (NEPA) and state (CEQA) environmental laws and current Council on Environmental Quality and FTA guidelines.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS/EIR should be directed to VTA as noted above.

V. FTA Procedures

The EIS/EIR for the Santa Clara/Alum Rock LRT Project will be prepared simultaneously with conceptual engineering for station and alignment options. The EIS/EIR/conceptual engineering process will address the potential use of federal funds for the proposed project, as well as assess the social, economic, and environmental impacts of station and alignment alternatives. Station designs and alignment alternatives will be refined to minimize and mitigate any adverse impacts identified. After publication, the Draft EIS/EIR will be available for public and agency review and comment, and a public hearing will be held. Based on the Draft EIS/EIR and comments received, VTA will select a preferred alternative, which will be described in full detail in the Final EIS/EIR.

Issued on: September 14, 2001.

F. James Kenna,

Deputy Regional Administrator.

[FR Doc. 01-23317 Filed 9-17-01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-57-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Transit Administration

Environmental Impact Statement on the Capitol Expressway Light Rail Transit Project in San Jose, CA

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

SUMMARY: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) intend to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for a proposed Light Rail Transit (LRT) line in the Capitol Expressway corridor. The proposed line and technology were selected following completion of the Downtown East Valley Major Investment Study (MIS) in August 2000. The MIS considered alternative modes of travel, alignment, and station locations in a 30-square mile study area. The MIS process resulted in a Preferred Investment Strategy that includes LRT improvements in the Capitol Expressway Corridor to improve direct transit service in an approximately 8-mile-long corridor in southeast San Jose, California. The Capitol Expressway Project will be further evaluated during the conceptual engineering phase of the project and carried forward in the EIS/EIR. The EIS/EIR will evaluate a No-Action alternative, LRT alignment and station options, and additional alternatives that emerge from the scoping process. Scoping will be accomplished through correspondence and discussions with interested persons; organizations; federal, state and local agencies; and through a public meeting.

DATES: *Comment Due Date:* Written comments on the scope of alternatives and impacts to be considered in the EIS/EIR must be received no later than November 2, 2001, and must be sent to VTA at the address indicated below.

Scoping Meeting: A public scoping meeting will be held on September 26, 2001, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, 5111 San Felipe Road, San Jose, CA 95135. Phone: (408) 223-1562. The project purpose and alternatives will be presented at this meeting. The building used for the scoping meeting is accessible to persons with disabilities. Any individual who requires special assistance, such as a sign language interpreter, to participate in the scoping meeting should contact Jennifer Rielly, Public Communications Specialist, VTA Community Outreach, at (408) 321-7575 or TDD only at (408) 321-2330. Scoping material will be available at the meeting and may be obtained in advance of the meeting by contacting Mr. Fitzwater at the address or phone number given below.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be sent to Mr. Thomas Fitzwater, Environmental Planning Manager, VTA, 3331 North First Street, San Jose, CA 95134-1906. Phone: (408) 321-5789. Fax: (408) 321-5787. E-mail: scoping.capitalexpressway@vta.org.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Thomas Fitzwater, Environmental Planning Manager, VTA, 3331 North First Street, San Jose, CA 95134-1906. Phone (408) 321-5789 or Mr. Jerome Wiggins, Office of Planning and Program Development, FTA, 201 Mission Street, Room 2210, San Francisco, CA 94105. Phone: (415) 744-3115. People with special needs should contact Jennifer Rielly, Public Communications Specialist, VTA Community Outreach, at (408) 321-7575 or TDD only at (408) 321-2330.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Scoping

The FTA and VTA invite all interested individuals and organizations, and federal, state, regional, and local agencies to provide comments on the scope of the project. A summary of the MIS, Downtown East Valley Major Investment Study—Project Summary Report (December 2000), is available for public review at the following public libraries: (1) Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Main Library, 180 West San Carlos Street, San Jose, CA 95113; (2) Hillview Branch Library, 2255 Ocala Avenue, San Jose, CA 95122; (3) Evergreen Branch Library, 2635 Aborn Road, San Jose, CA 95121; and (4) Seventrees Branch Library, 3597 Cas Drive, San Jose, CA 95111. The MIS summary is also available by contacting Mr. Fitzwater at the address and phone number given above. Mr. Fitzwater should also be contacted to be placed on the project mailing list and to receive additional information about the project. Written comments on the alternatives and potential impacts to be considered should be sent to Mr. Fitzwater.

II. Project Purpose and Need

The project purpose is to improve public transit service in the downtown and East Valley areas of the City of San Jose by addressing the following specific goals established in the MIS: improve mobility; increase transit ridership; target the highest commute corridors with emphasis on work and school trips; promote livable neighborhoods and community support.

In general, the project would provide residents of southeast San Jose more efficient access to the light rail system and improved connections and greater