



## NOTICE OF COMPLETION AND AVAILABILITY OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

**DATE:** July 28, 2021

**TO:** Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties

**SUBJECT:** Notice of Completion (NOC) and Availability (NOA) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

**PROJECT TITLE:** Antelope Valley Line Capacity and Service Improvements Program

**SCH NUMBER:** 2020109001

**FROM:** Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro)

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN:** In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), as Lead Agency, has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Antelope Valley Line (AVL) Capacity and Service Improvements Program (Proposed Project). As a project for the institution or increase of passenger and commuter services on rail already in use, the Proposed Project is exempt from CEQA under Public Resources Code section 21080(b)(10) and CEQA Guidelines section 15275(b), but Metro has elected to prepare a Draft EIR to provide a clear record of the potential environmental impacts of the Project. This notice provides the public, responsible agencies, and other interested parties with a summary of the Proposed Project, and information regarding the availability of the Draft EIR.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The Proposed Project involves the construction of three capital improvements which would provide the capacity required to allow Metrolink commuter rail service to increase along the AVL to 30-minute bi-directional headways between Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS) and the Santa Clarita Valley and up to 60-minute bi-directional headways between the Santa Clarita Valley and the Lancaster Terminal by the year 2028. The three capital improvements include the Balboa Double Track Extension located in the City of Los Angeles, the Canyon Siding Extension located in the City of Santa Clarita, and the Lancaster Terminal Improvements located in the City of Lancaster. **Figure 1** shows the regional context of the Project corridor as well as the three capital improvement locations.

The three capital improvements, shown in **Figure 1**, are described below, with two capital improvements having options for alternate station platform configurations, which are proposed to provide additional flexibility for future operation. Construction of each capital improvement project and their associated options as well as the operational impacts of increased Metrolink services have been assessed in the EIR:

- **Balboa Double Track Extension.** The Balboa Double Track Extension would extend the existing double track approximately 6,300 feet north from Balboa Boulevard to Sierra Highway in the City of Los Angeles. This would provide operational capacity for Metrolink to schedule more regular services especially in the off-peak period. Subject to design, retaining structures will be considered to avoid encroachments outside of right-of-way (ROW).
- **Canyon Siding Extension.** The Canyon Siding Extension would add approximately 8,400 feet of new double track between Soledad Canyon Road and Golden Oak Road in the City of Santa Clarita. This improvement would include a second side-platform at the existing Santa Clarita Station and a new crossover track south of the Station would be added to facilitate turnback of Metrolink trains at Santa Clarita Station and improve operational flexibility and reliability.
  - *Platform to Platform Pedestrian Undercrossing Design Option.* – This design option would provide a grade separated pedestrian undercrossing at Santa Clarita Station to connect the existing platform to the proposed second platform.
  - *Island Platform with Platform to Parking Lot Pedestrian Undercrossing Design Option* – This design option would provide a new island platform (with two platform faces) and would include a grade separated pedestrian undercrossing connecting the Santa Clarita Station parking area to the new island platform.
- **Lancaster Terminal Improvements.** The Lancaster Terminal Improvements would include expansion of the existing train layover facilities by adding one new 1,000-foot-long and two 500-foot-long train storage tracks in the vicinity of the existing Lancaster Station in the City of Lancaster with provisions for fueling.
  - *Island Platform with Pedestrian Undercrossing Design Option* – This design option would provide an island platform with two platform faces at Lancaster Station and a grade separated pedestrian undercrossing (tunnel) to provide access to the new platform.
  - *Island Platform with Pedestrian Overcrossing Design Option* – This design option would provide an island platform with two platform faces at Lancaster Station and a grade separated pedestrian overcrossing (bridge) to provide access to the new platform.
  - *Island Platform with Pedestrian At-Grade Crossing Design Option* – This design option would provide an island platform with two platform faces at Lancaster Station and two at-grade pedestrian crossings at the north and south ends of the new platform.

**PROJECT LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING:** The AVL is an existing 76.6-mile rail corridor that runs from LAUS in the City of Los Angeles to the Lancaster Terminal in the City of Lancaster within the County of Los Angeles. The corridor consists of the former Southern Pacific Valley Line and parallels the Interstate 5 (I-5) freeway from Los Angeles to Santa Clarita, turns east, then north, to parallel State Route 14 (SR 14) to the City of Lancaster. Locally, the AVL corridor traverses many densely populated residential areas along the southern portion of the corridor and less populated suburban and rural areas along the northern portion of the corridor. From south to north, the Cities and communities along the AVL include the City of Los Angeles, City of Glendale, City of Burbank, City of San Fernando, City of Santa Clarita, Unincorporated Los Angeles County, the Town of Acton, City of Palmdale, and the City of Lancaster.

**PROJECT OBJECTIVES:** The AVL plays a critical role in connecting communities in North Los Angeles County to LAUS and the cities in between. Prior to the Coronavirus Disease 19 (COVID 19) pandemic, the AVL carried the third highest ridership in Metrolink's commuter rail system and was responsible for removing approximately one million weekday automobile trips from the region's roadways a year. Consistent with the State Rail Plan and Metrolink's Southern California Optimized Rail Expansion (SCORE) program, and in anticipation of substantial population and employment growth in the North Los Angeles County region over the next 20 years, Metro seeks to improve rail service on the AVL to realize its full potential as a regional mobility enhancement and not just a peak-hour commuter service. Accordingly, the AVL Capacity and Service Improvement Program seeks to:

- Provide regular and more frequent Metrolink services to improve regional connectivity and accessibility through the enabling of 30-minute bi-directional passenger rail service to the Santa Clarita Valley and 60-minute bi-directional service to Lancaster along the AVL corridor.
- Improve passenger service reliability and efficiency on the AVL rail corridor.
- Provide necessary infrastructure improvements to enhance operational flexibility and reliability along the AVL corridor.
- Support the vision and goals for rail service in the region consistent with the California State Rail 2040 Plan and Metrolink's SCORE program.

**POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS:** The Draft EIR includes an assessment of each environmental topic identified in the CEQA Guidelines. Based on the Proposed Project description and location, the Draft EIR focuses on the following key impact areas: Transportation, Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Energy Resources, Geology, Soils and Paleontological Resources, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Noise and Vibration, Tribal Cultural Resources, and Hydrology and Water Quality. The Draft EIR identified significant unavoidable impacts related to pollutant emissions associated with increased diesel locomotive activity and noise and vibration generated by construction activities associated with the Balboa Double Track Extension and the Lancaster Terminal Improvements. All other potentially significant impacts would be less than significant with implementation of mitigation

measures as described in the Draft EIR. In addition, portions of the Canyon Siding Extension Improvement site are located within the historic boundaries of the Whitaker-Bermite Facility which is included in the Cortese List of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

**PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD:** July 28, 2021 to September 10, 2021.

**PUBLIC HEARING:** Metro will conduct a series of public hearings to take testimony on the Draft EIR during the 45-day public review and comment period. Public hearings will not be in person to promote community safety related to COVID 19. Presentations may be viewed at [metro.net/projects/avl](http://metro.net/projects/avl). Live presentations may be seen at the following dates and times.

**Date: Wednesday, August 18, 2021**  
Time: 6 pm – 7:30 pm  
Meeting Link: [bit.ly/35qFkcC](https://bit.ly/35qFkcC)  
Webinar ID: 948 3461 0205  
Call-In Number: 213.338.8477

**Date: Saturday, August 21, 2021**  
Time: 11am – 12:30pm  
Meeting Link: [bit.ly/3wD1Sms](https://bit.ly/3wD1Sms)  
Webinar ID: 998 8162 7606  
Call-In Number: 213.338.8477

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Por teléfono en español: 646.749.3335  
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**COMMENTS:** Comments on the Draft EIR may be submitted in writing or orally during the public hearings. Written comments should be sent to Metro on or before September 10, 2021 at the postal address or e-mail address shown below or submitted via an online comment form found on the project website at [metro.net/projects/avl](http://metro.net/projects/avl). You may also call the AVL Capacity and Service Improvements Program hotline number at 213.922.4844 and leave a message.

Brian Balderrama, Senior Director  
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Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Email: [AVL@metro.net](mailto:AVL@metro.net)

**DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY:** The Draft EIR is available for review at the website <https://www.metro.net/projects/avl/> and at the following locations:

- Metro Headquarters (One Gateway Plaza, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90012) – by appointment only. Please email [library@metro.net](mailto:library@metro.net) to schedule an appointment.
- Los Angeles Public Library – Los Feliz Branch (1874 Hillhurst Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90027)
- Glendale Central Library (222 E Harvard St, Glendale, CA 91205)
- Burbank Central Library (110 N Glenoaks Blvd, Burbank, CA 91502)
- San Fernando Library (217 N Maclay Ave, San Fernando, CA 91340)
- Old Town Newhall Library (24500 Main St, Santa Clarita, CA 91321)

- Acton Agua Dulce Library (33792 Crown Valley Rd, Acton, CA 93510)
- Palmdale City Library (700 E Palmdale Blvd, Palmdale, CA 93550)
- Lancaster Library (601 W Lancaster Blvd, Lancaster, CA 93534).

**ACCOMODATIONS:** Spanish and Armenian language interpretation will be available at both public hearings. Upon request, sign language interpretation, materials in alternative formats, and other accommodations are available to the public for Metro-sponsored meetings and events. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations and other translations request can be made by calling 213.922.4844 at least 72 hours in advance.

Figure 1 - Proposed Project Overview

