

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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February 14, 2022

Peter Carter
Project Manager
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, California 90012

**SUBJECT: SCH# 2021110432; LACMTA, Metro Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project Draft Environmental Impact Report, Notice of Preparation**

Dear Mr. Carter,

The California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) has jurisdiction over the safety of highway-rail crossings (crossings) and rail transit projects in California. All rail fixed guideway systems are subject to the Commission's Safety Oversight Program requirements. Safety Certification Plan (SCP) approval and Safety Certification Verification Report (SCVR) approval from the Commission are required for rail transit projects to be placed in revenue service. In addition, the California Public Utilities Code requires Commission approval for construction or alteration of crossings and grants the Commission exclusive power on design, alteration, and/or closure of crossings in California. The Commission's Rail Transit Safety Branch (RTSB) will review rail transit project matters and the Rail Crossings and Engineering Branch (RCEB) will review crossing matters. The Commission has received a copy of the *Notice of Preparation (NOP)* from Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA or Metro), who is the lead agency for the proposed Metro Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project.

According to the NOP, the Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project is a proposed high-capacity fixed guideway transit option between the San Fernando Valley and the Westside of Los Angeles. The fixed guideway public transportation line would be constructed across the Santa Monica Mountains in the vicinity of the Sepulveda Pass. Six build alternatives will be carried into the Draft Environmental Impact Report for further analysis. All six build alternatives would have a northern terminus station near the Van Nuys Metrolink/Amtrak station and a southern terminus near the Metro E Line (formerly Expo), and would include stations with connections to the Metrolink Ventura County Line, the planned East San Fernando Valley Light Rail Transit Project, the Metro G Line (formerly Orange), the D Line (formerly Purple), and the E Line (formerly Expo). Three build alternatives would be monorail with aerial alignments, two alternatives would be heavy rail with a mixture of underground and aerial alignments, and one alternative would be heavy rail with entirely underground alignment. The Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project would provide local and regional connections to existing and future LACMTA rail and bus lines, and would improve access to major employment, educational and cultural centers in greater Los Angeles.

All six build alternatives described in the NOP will be subject to several rules and regulations involving the Commission. These may include, but are not limited to:

- California Public Utilities Code, Sections 1201 et al, which requires Commission authority to construct rail crossings,
- California Public Utilities Code, Sections 2111, 2112, 99152; rail transit safety, and
- Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, which details the Formal Application process for construction or modification of public crossings.

The design criteria of the proposed project must comply with Commission General Orders (GOs), such as:

- GO 26-D, Clearances on railroads and street railroads as to side and overhead structures, parallel tracks and crossings,
- GO 72-B, Construction and maintenance of crossings – standard types of pavement construction at railroad grade crossings (if any),
- GO 75-D, Warning devices for at-grade railroad crossings (if any),
- GO 95, Overhead electric line construction (if any),
- GO 128, Construction of Underground Electric Supply and Communication Systems,
- GO 143-B, Design, Construction and Operation Safety Rules and Regulations Governing Light-Rail Transit, and
- GO 164-E, Rules and Regulations Governing State Safety Oversight of Rail Fixed Guideway Systems

The project must ensure compliance with federal regulations including:

- 49 CFR Part 674, Rail Fixed Guideway Systems: State Safety Oversight

The following link provides resources on the Commission's rules and regulations regarding rail safety:

<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/PUC/safety/Rail/>

The proposed project options may disrupt the heavily used roadway network in the surrounding communities. The potential impacts should be identified, discussed, and evaluated for necessary safety improvements and mitigations at each proposed construction stage. This includes considering traffic circulation and queuing, level of service, emergency service response, and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

For those build alternatives that contain elevated guideway, Commission authorization is required to construct the grade-separated crossings above streets and intersections. LACMTA will have to apply to the Commission for approval of its crossing designs and authorization to construct those crossings. Applications to the Commission must include a copy of the environmental analysis undertaken by the applicant. We encourage early coordination with Commission staff in order to provide consultation

on proposed design and engineering of the Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project prior to filing applications seeking Commission authorization to construct.

Additionally, careful consideration should be given to station configurations, including pedestrian paths of travel through the stations as patrons move between LACMTA trains and the other modes of transportation at the station locations. Pedestrian paths of travel should avoid crossing the tracks at grade to access or depart from the station platforms, where feasible.

The Commission appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the project described in the NOP. Please feel free to contact me at (916) 928-6858 or daren.gilbert@cpuc.ca.gov or contact our lead staff on this project: Ainsley Kung at (213) 330-9496 or ainsley.kung@cpuc.ca.gov for transit safety matters and Jose Pereyra at (213) 576-7083 or jose.pereyra@cpuc.ca.gov for crossing matters.

Sincerely,



Daren Gilbert, Manager
Rail Transit Safety Branch
Rail Safety Division

cc: (all via e-mail)

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