

1. All practical measures for continued public information and involvement including broad representation on the DAG's, the provision of a storefront in the project area for continuing information and service, and commitment to a public hearing.
2. A commitment to design technical assistance to the DAG's and an independent consultant review of landscape plans, and structural and architectural proposals.
3. Relocation Plan to address maximum protection of stored, relocated, or replaced structures.

This project has had a long history with various supporters for the project formalizing their positions at different points in time. The affected local jurisdictions, with the exception of South Pasadena, while differing in their preferences for alternatives, have consistently agreed that completion of a freeway is what they wanted. On March 24, 1989, the SCAG East Los Angeles/West San Gabriel Valley Area Technical Study Policy Advisory Committee, (composed of local elected officials) voted overwhelmingly to move as quickly as possible to finalize all requirements and construct the selected alternative to complete the Long Beach Freeway (SR 710). The California State legislature, on two occasions, has given clear indication of its opinion that completion of the freeway is necessary; first, when it passed AB 1623 in March 1982, and again in 1994, when it passed additional legislation supporting the Meridian Variation Alternative. The CTC adopted the Meridian Variation Alternative on September 19, 1994.

A crucial element in this long project history is the sustained efforts of public involvement. Through a variety of forums during critical points in the process, FHWA and Caltrans have worked with the public to identify an alternative that satisfies the purpose and need. While achieving an alternative that meets the purpose and need, FHWA and Caltrans have painstakingly refined that proposal to minimize impacts, using the public involvement as a tool to determine levels of acceptability. FHWA and Caltrans have determined that the changes in project design discussed above since the approval of the FEIS will neither change the general project alignment nor will they compromise the project's purpose and need. In fact, the changes to the project design will result in a lessening of adverse environmental impacts which were evaluated in the FEIS.

ALTERNATIVES

More than 24 alternatives and design variations (including low build plans) were considered and discussed in past SR 710 environmental documents. Only the No-Build alternative and the three freeway alignments were carried forward and evaluated in the March 2, 1992 FEIS. The ACHP's referral to the CEQ in early 1993 required an analysis of a Multi-Mode/ Low-Build type alternative. The alternatives which were evaluated in the FEIS and discussion of the Multi-Mode/Low Build are described below

No-Build Alternative (FEIS page 1148)

The No-Build Alternative involves no improvements in the corridor where SR 710 remains unfinished and the ends of the freeway would remain at Valley Boulevard in Alhambra and Del Mar Boulevard in Pasadena. Under the No-Build Alternative, Caltrans would need to dispose of the excess land which it presently owns. There are approximately 515 dwelling units on this

and. A disposition program would be developed taking approximately three years to dispose of the properties. The No-Build Alternative was not selected because it does not meet any of the regional or local transportation needs, is generally not supported by any local agency or public entity nor does it solve the safety issues and traffic disruption in the area.

Meridian Variation Alignment (FEIS page 11-19)

This alternative is the preferred alternative in the FEIS and the description is the same as the selected alternative described above except for the design width (176 feet instead of the reduction to 142 feet), the minor alignment shift which avoided any taking of the Short Line Villa Tract Historic District, the interchange with SR 110 (eliminated), and the five additional cut-and-Cover tunnels. The estimated cost of construction for this alternative would have been \$426 million in 1986 dollars.

Meridian Alternative (FEIS page 11-31)

The Meridian Alternative would provide a 6.2 mile six-lane mixed-flow freeway with two HOV lanes and provisions for Light Rail Transit from 1-10 to California Boulevard in Pasadena within the median, with auxiliary lanes provided where necessary. On line transit stations with parking, suitable for light rail transit and/or Bus/HOV, would be located at Valley Boulevard and Huntington Drive. With an approximately north-south alignment, the Meridian Alternative would be coincident with the Meridian Variation Alternative, except for the segment between Bank Street in South Pasadena and Arlington Drive in Pasadena. Here, the Meridian Alternative would continue northerly along Meridian Avenue crossing the Pasadena Freeway west of Fremont Avenue before joining the Meridian Variation Alternative near Arlington Drive.

The Meridian Alternative was not selected because it had far more adverse impacts on historic resources than any other alignment studied. It would totally obliterate the North of Mission District and remove 75 percent of the South of Mission District's contributive properties. The Meridian Alternative would have resulted in the removal of 102 historic structures. The estimated cost of construction for this alternative would have been \$429 million in 1986 dollars.

Westerly Alternative (Modified Plan B-C) (FEIS page 11-38)

This alternative would provide a 7.1 mile six-lane mixed-flow freeway-transitway with two Bus/l-IOV lanes, and provisions for light rail transit in the median from 1-10 to California Boulevard in Pasadena. Auxiliary lanes would be provided where considered necessary. On-line transit stations with parking, suitable for light rail transit and/or Bus/HOV operations would be located at Valley Boulevard, Huntington Drive, and Monterey Road/Pasadena Avenue. The estimated cost of construction for this alternative would have been \$476 million in 1986 dollars.

The Westerly Alternative was not selected basically because it would have disrupted the El Sereno community twice as much including acquiring a school and more housing stock while creating a larger urban island effect. The following list of bullets also support the decision not to select the Westerly alternative:

1. It would be 0.9 miles, or about 15% longer than the selected alternative. The more direct alignment of the selected alternative would result in a greater level of traffic service (particularly to the city of South Pasadena) and higher user benefits than the Westerly.

2. It would cause greater scarring of the landscape with deeper, longer and more visible cut slopes through the unstable portions of the Monterey Hills which would result in 2.7 million cubic yards more excess material needed to be hauled to disposal sites than the selected alternative.
3. It would cause greater disruption to the ethnic community of El Sereno than the selected alternative by isolating a large land area (more than twice the selected alternative).
4. It would impact at least 66 historic properties which is more than the selected alternative.
5. It would not generally align well with the grid pattern of local streets, making staged construction and the opening of usable segments to the public less convenient.
6. It would displace 1300 more people and remove 616 more dwelling units; it would require the removal of 67 more acres of urban land, and have a greater loss of open space than the selected alternative. The loss of housing stock and the impacts of relocations would be particularly severe in El Sereno.
7. It would have the least noise attenuating advantages of all the freeway alternatives because of the steep terrain. Because of the steep terrain, sound walls are less effective, fewer segments of the freeway can be depressed, and cut-and-cover tunnels are not practical. A more detailed discussion of this alternative and its impacts is contained in the FEIS (page 11-38) and the 1983 Supplemental DEIS (page 11-14).

.As with the Meridian Alternative, the footprint could be reduced for the Western Alternative. However, with the expansion of the Pasadena Avenue Historic District, the number of historic properties which would be impacted by the Western Alternative with a reduced footprint would still remain at about 60 which is more than the selected alternative.

Multi-Mode/low Build Plan

The Multi-Mode/low-Build proposal was developed by the city of South Pasadena as a direct result of the ACHP's CEO referral and was presented in a formal report prepared in September 1993. The Multi-Mode/low-Build proposal was eliminated from consideration in a formal evaluation prepared by Caltrans in consultation with the FHWA. Similar in part to previous "low-build" plans, this variation consisted of 17 actions throughout the West San Gabriel Valley. These actions were summarized into five categories as follows: 1) actions that involved transit improvements; 2) actions that dealt directly with the connection between the existing segments of SR 710; 3) actions that focused on the transition between freeway terminals and the surrounding street systems; 4) actions that affected most of the major arterial streets throughout the entire West San Gabriel Valley; and 5) actions that improved the mobility, appearance, and usefulness of a parallel corridor outside the West San Gabriel Valley.

The centerpiece of this proposal would be the completion and extension of the Blue Line Light Rail Transit by the LACMTA. In response to the proposal, Caltrans and a traffic engineering consultant prepared an evaluation of the assumptions. Their analysis presented in a formal

report on March 7, 1994 concluded that the "Low Build" did not meet the transportation needs in the area. To insure that the Multi-Mode/Low Build would receive a very comprehensive analysis, the FHWA had directed Caltrans to model the -Low-Build,- the No-Build, and the Build Alternative (freeway/transitway project as selected in this Record of Decision), using the latest state-of- the-art techniques. The modeling effort was carried out by the Caltrans LARTS section, under the direction of FHWA. The modeling assumptions were agreed to by the modeling review committee during a meeting held on October 18, 1995 at the SCAG office. The modeling review committee consisted of SCAG, Caltrans, LACMTA, FHWA, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), a representative from all cities in the affected corridor and the consultants representing the city of South Pasadena. After a thorough evaluation based on mutually agreed upon set of assumptions, the Multi-Mode/low Build proposal was found not feasible and prudent based on the following:

1. This plan would not provide through north-south freeway service;
2. Regionally, this plan would not efficiently connect two east-west interstate routes;
3. This plan would not provide an HOV link within the existing HOV network;
4. This plan has not been included in the SCAG 1994 Regional Mobility Element;
5. This plan would result in the affected corridor cities continuing to experience impaired pedestrian and vehicle access, risk of accidents, noise pollution, impaired economic development, and poor local traffic circulation; and
6. The LACMTA has projected a ridership of only 64,000 passenger-trips per day by the year 2010 for the Blue line LRT extension, with only a fraction of this ridership being drawn from the freeway. The Blue line LRT extension is expected to be completed by the year 2001,
7. The Multi-Mode/Low-Build was developed with an extensive review by FHWA technical experts.

ALTERNATIVES ELIMINATED AFTER STUDY

Besides the alternatives discussed above, many other alternatives were given considerable attention, but were ultimately eliminated after study. A list of these alternatives and their references to more detailed discussions are provided:

1. Westerly Plan B (1976 SDEIS page 49, and FEIS page 11-44)
2. ACHP A (1986 SDEIS page 11-16)
3. ACHP B-C (1986 SDEIS page 11-18, and FEIS page 11-55)
4. ACHP B-D {1986 SDEIS page 11-13, and FEIS page 11-62}
5. ACHP E (1986 SDEIS page 11-11, and FEIS page 11-70)
6. ACHP E-B-D {1986 SDEIS page 11-14, and FEIS page 11-74}
7. Westerly Unmodified Plan B-C (1976 SDEIS page 49, and FEIS page 11-78)
8. Cultural Resources Bypass {1976 SDEIS page 101, and FEIS page 11- 84}
9. Atlantic Boulevard (1976 SDEIS page 121, and FEIS page 11-93)

10. Huntington Drive-Main Street (1976 SDEIS page 122, and FEIS page 11-95)
11. Pine Street (1976 SDEIS page 122, and FEIS page 97)
12. Dorchester I (FEIS page 11-99)
13. Dorchester II (FEIS page 11-102)
14. Dorchester III (FEIS page 11-104)
15. One-Way Couplet (FEIS page 11-106)
16. Historic Preservation Bypass (1986 SDEIS page 11-16, and FEIS page 11-108)
17. Partial Completion (1976 SDEIS page 69, and FEIS page 11-111)
18. Raymond/Arroyo Couplet (FEIS page 11-119)
19. Transit Only (1974 DEIS page 253, and FEIS page 11-140)
20. 8-Lane Meridian (1974 DEIS page 139, and FEIS page 11-142)
21. 8-Lane Westerly (1974 DEIS page 201, and FEIS page 11-144)

Major Investment Study (MIS)

In compliance with the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act and the metropolitan planning regulations (23 CFR Part 450), a MIS review process was adopted and the MIS Review Committee was created. The February 21, 1995 letter from SCAG memorializes the findings of the MIS Review Committee (see 1998 Environmental Reevaluation, Appendix A). The MIS Review Committee conducted a technical review of alternatives to the SR 710 freeway project; reviewed the methods and extent of interagency consultation; and reviewed the amount and opportunities for public involvement. In a unanimous consensus, the FHWA, Federal Transit Administration, Caltrans, LACMTA, and SCAG concluded that no further analysis or study was needed to meet the MIS requirements.

Congestion Management System

The SR 710 Freeway Gap Closure is part of the Los Angeles County Congestion Management Program (CMP) as described in the MTA's 20-year long Range Plan which was adopted on April 6, 1995. The approved 1994 CMP is consistent with SCAG's 1994 Regional Mobility Element and the 1996/1997 to 2002/2003 Regional Transportation Improvement Program is consistent with the SCAG's proposed Congestion Management System.

SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

The FHWA's Environmental Policy emphasizes the identification, and implementation of measures to rehabilitate, restore, or replace impacted resources. Also, the FHWA will continue coordination efforts with other agencies during project final design and during the refinements and implementation of the mitigation and enhancement measures on this project.

The FEIS for SR 710 Freeway identifies the Meridian Variation Alternative as the preferred alternative. However, because of the controversy surrounding the project and the magnitude of the impacts relating to potential community disruption, residential relocation, business dislocation, and hanT1 to cultural resources, continuing efforts to address these concerns were undertaken. Immediately following the FEIS the SR 710 Enhancement and Mitigation Advisory Committee was fonT1ed to develop comprehensive mitigation and enhancement measures to further reduce the impacts of the project. The committee focused its efforts on developing additional mitigation and enhancements to further minimize the facility's "footprint" as described in the FEIS and Caltrans published its findings in June 1993. Since the committee