

The Depressed Meridian Variation Alternative Reduced with Shift design variation is estimated to cost \$823 million in 1997 dollars. Of this amount, \$143 million is attributable to the modifications as identified in this document. In addition to the freeway elements of the - selected alternative as described above, this decision includes implementing a coordinated set of interim highway improvements. These interim highway improvements are directed at providing transportation relief in the corridor during the short term, while the freeway is being designed and constructed. A proposed set of interim improvements is described in detail in the Conditions and Commitments section of this document. The selection of interim improvements is subject to refinement through discussions among FHWA, Caltrans, SCAG, and the corridor design advisory groups. The interim highway improvements are estimated to cost approximately \$8 million, depending on the final selection of improvements for implementation.

As described above, the selected alternative is environmentally enhanced from the preferred alternative (Meridian Variation Alternative) described in the FEIS. In preparing this ROD, the FHWA evaluated whether or not the selected alternative was sufficiently different from the FEIS preferred alternative to warrant the preparation of a supplemental EIS. In conducting the Reevaluation, FHWA was guided by the provision in the FHWA/Federal Transit Administration regulation on environmental impact procedures (23 CFR §771.130) which governs the preparation of supplemental EIS's. As characterized in the latest Environmental Reevaluation (April 1998), virtually all of the modifications had as their purpose the lessening of adverse environmental impacts evaluated in the EIS. The Environmental Reevaluation further concludes that the modifications to the project do not result in new significant impacts that were not evaluated in the EIS. In accordance with the regulation, a supplemental EIS is not required under these conditions.

CONDITIONS AND COMMITMENTS

FHWA and Caltrans have agreed to a number of conditions and commitments associated with the development and implementation of the selected alternative. These measures were finalized only after the October 3, 1997 meeting and subsequent consultation with interested Members of Congress, SCAG, the corridor cities, the Council on Environmental Quality, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. On November 14, 1997 the Secretary of the Department of Transportation concurred with FHWA's "Proposed Decision" document which identified the selected alternative with preliminary conditions and commitments. The final conditions and commitments are as follows:

1. Caltrans will establish community design advisory groups (DAG) with each of the impacted communities, including El Sereno, to consider the specific community mitigation needs of their community. These mitigation measures will include, but are not limited to, additions and deletions to the interim improvement measures, traffic operations and pedestrian safety issues; school impact and mitigation measures; historic impact mitigation including measures to protect and secure relocated or replaced structures; neighborhood preservation; visual impact and urban landscape considerations including pocket parks and joint use; and community integrity and cohesion issues including structural considerations (such as pedestrian overpasses, underpasses, and cut-and-cover tunnels), relocation assistance and replacement housing, property management, construction impacts and community targeted job opportunities and training programs. The FHWA will be involved on the advisory groups and in the selection of members. Technical assistance, as needed, will be provided by Caltrans to the DAG's. Memberships on the DAG's will include local

officials, neighborhood representations, preservationists and other interests (eg., schools, safety advocates, environmental justice interests etc.) Furthermore, FHWA and Caltrans will work with interested groups and agencies to determine their interest in serving or being represented on the DAG's.

2. All mitigation features promised in the environmental documents and developed and agreed to since approval of the FEIS in 1992, and those developed by the design advisory groups and agreed to by FHWA and Caltrans, will be implemented. These commitments are documented in the FEIS, Enhancement and Mitigation Advisory Committee report and Caltrans agreement, and Section 4(1) Evaluation. Additional measures may be added as a result of the design work on the project and recommendations of the DAG's. Working through the DAG's will allow the design teams to adequately address the major issues. Also, active involvement with all DAG members will make the SR 710 project an international showcase of historic preservation.

3. From a point between Alhambra Avenue and Templeton Street to the south end of the cut-and-cover tunnel under Bank Street, the mainline SR 710 will have a vertical alignment depressed below ground. The depressed alignment shall generally be within the right-of-way limits envisioned by the original vertical alignment. Should further design studies prove this modification infeasible from an engineering, cost or other perspective, this ROD will be null and void and FHWA will treat this as a new project.

4. Cut-and-cover sections or tunnels, without ventilation, will be provided through residential neighborhoods and in the area of the Sierra Vista Elementary School unless they are proven to be infeasible because of engineering impediments. Alignment impacts and cut- and-cover mitigation treatment will be coordinated with the DAG's. This provision applies to the entire newly depressed segment of the project. A minimum of 6 cut-and-cover tunnels are committed. Should they prove infeasible, this ROD will be null and void and FHWA will treat this as a new project.

5. Except for acquisition of hardship properties or protective purchases, the FHWA will not advance mainline SR 710 projects to either right-of-way acquisition or construction authorization until it concludes that

a) For the entire SR 710 project, alignment (horizontal and vertical) has been determined, mitigation measures have been defined and right-of-way limits have been set. This generally represents 75-90 per cent geometric design completion. The DAG's will be involved throughout this development and to the point of final design approvals. In making its determination that the project is sufficiently designed to be advanced, FHWA will ascertain that both horizontal and vertical alignments are set, construction limits and right-of-way limits are fixed and mitigation measures are sufficiently designed to support detailed cost estimates. The only physical efforts that can be undertaken will be minor activities such as core borings.

b) There is, given the extraordinary circumstances and cost related to this project and the passage of time expected to elapse between the signing of this ROD and the satisfaction of the other conditions enumerated herein, a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement prepared in accordance with NEPA focussing on the project which is the product of the design process established under this ROD.

and addressing any changed conditions, including changes in project purpose and need, and results of community involvement, including design activity group activities.

c) There is an acceptable **Financial Plan** to assure that the entire project will be financially supported and expeditiously completed in order to minimize construction impacts. The **Plan** will include a staging element that contains an orderly scheduling of final design, right-of-way, and construction activities with current cost estimates of each activity, and timely completion of the facility. The **Plan** will provide that promised mitigation is completed concurrently with or before other highway elements of the project.

d) The project being advanced is currently endorsed by SCAG as a part of its long-range plan and transportation improvement program, and by Caltrans as part of the State's plan and program. Endorsement of the project will also be obtained from the Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

e) There is an acceptable Phase 2 **Relocation Plan** addressing the number and type of project displacements, available replacement units in the immediate area, provision of special relocation assistance services, relocation sequencing and last resort housing, if needed. The **Plan** must be current for right-of-way authorization. The **Plan** will address neighborhood preservation including measures to protect and secure relocated or replaced historic structures and measures to minimize storage time of the replaced structures. Relocation assistance will be provided to dislocated owners, renters, and renters of State-owned property in the corridor.

6. Construction of any segment of the mainline SR 710 project will not be authorized by the FHWA until right-of-way has been cleared for that segment of the project in accordance with Federal regulations and all individuals and families have been relocated to decent, safe, and sanitary housing or adequate replacement housing has been made available to relocatees in the immediate area as required by regulation, and displaced businesses have been assisted in obtaining and becoming established in suitable replacement locations.

7. Property currently owned by Caltrans potentially needed for construction will be properly maintained until such time it is needed for construction or unless the condition of the property requires removal of the structure.

8. In order to provide immediate relief to the impacted communities, Caltrans will work with SCAG and the DAG's to establish a list of interim improvements and traffic management measures in their communities, such as those discussed below, to be advanced in parallel with the project geometric design phase. It is expected that implementation of these measures will be expedited so that they may serve current traffic needs as the project is being designed. Additional corridor improvements may be advanced by Caltrans or the local governmental agencies. The projects listed or other replacement projects are eligible for the National Highway System and Surface Transportation Program funds apportioned to California as well as any other funds for which the mainline SR 710 project is eligible. The FHWA will work with the corridor Cities, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA), SCAG, and Caltrans to facilitate the inclusion of the projects in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

INTERIM HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS MEASURES:

- Make traffic engineering improvements to Fair Oaks Avenue, Raymond Avenue, and Arroyo Parkway to improve traffic flow.
- Calm residential streets where appropriate.
- Make parking/access improvements, including rear access, vest pocket parking, directional signs, planted medians, and system management.
- Improve Fremont Avenue south of Huntington Drive in the city of South Pasadena to match the existing street geometrics in the city of Alhambra by restriping to four lanes, providing parking management and voluntary acquisition.
- Reconstruct intersection of Fair Oaks Avenue with Huntington Drive to provide for higher roadway capacity.
- Construct Hellman ramps to Cal State University Los Angeles.
- Construct new bridges at Westminster Avenue and Palm Avenue to enhance north- south traffic flow.
- Construct major intersection improvements at Valley Boulevard with Fremont Avenue.
- Provide additional traffic operational improvements to reduce congestion on impacted arterials in the corridor such as improved signalization, provision of turn lanes, etc.
- Deploy motorist assistance patrols on the improved arterials during peak hours of operation.
- Provide additional traffic mitigation measures to reduce traffic/pedestrian conflicts in school areas including such measures as upgraded signs and markings, additional transit, lighting, crossing patrols, etc.

9. All projects proposed under the provisions of item #8 will be thoroughly reviewed and discussed with the DAG's at key points of their development during design and construction. In the early design stage of each project, detailed traffic mitigation studies will be made by Caltrans and reviewed by the appropriate DAG'S.

10. All of those interim projects which are subject to a separate National Environmental Policy Act analysis, will be appropriately processed.

11. A "before and after" study on the effectiveness of the project's mitigation measures on community cohesion and historic preservation will be made in association with interested agencies.

