

University Corridor

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

Public Meetings/Open Houses

August 13, 2007

5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Holiday Inn Select- Greenway*

Windsor Ballroom

2712 Southwest Freeway

Houston, TX 77098

* Garage parking (only) will be validated

August 14, 2007

5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church

Fellowship Hall

3826 Wheeler Avenue

Houston, TX 77004

Public Hearing

August 27, 2007

1:00 pm Open House (Fellowship Hall)

2:00 pm Public Hearing (Sanctuary)

South Main Baptist Church

4100 Main Street

Houston, Texas 77002

University Corridor Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

Public Hearing

August 27, 2007

1:00 pm Open House (Fellowship Hall)

2:00 pm Public Hearing (Sanctuary)

South Main Baptist Church

4100 Main Street

Houston, Texas 77002

Purpose of Today's Meeting

- ❖ Inform community of the findings of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)
- ❖ Describe the alternatives under consideration
- ❖ Provide the community and public agencies an opportunity to present their views and ask questions before the Public Hearing

NEPA Process for an EIS

NOTICE OF INTENT **May 2006**

Start of Federal Process

SCOPING

June – July 2006

- Define the Range of Alternatives

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT STATEMENT (DEIS)

Aug 2006 - July 2007

- Evaluate all reasonable alternatives

CIRCULATION of DEIS **Aug 3 – Sept 17, 2007**

We are Here

FINAL EIS (FEIS) **October 2007 – May 2008**

- Identify Preferred Alternative
- Describe Mitigation Measures

RECORD OF DECISION

June 2008

NEPA Process for an EIS

NOTICE OF INTENT
Start of Federal Process

SCOPING

- Define the Range of Alternatives

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT STATEMENT (DEIS)

- Evaluate all reasonable alternatives

CIRCULATION of DEIS

We are Here

FINAL EIS (FEIS)

- Identify Preferred Alternative
- Describe Mitigation Measures

RECORD OF DECISION

Public and Agency Involvement Continuous throughout the project

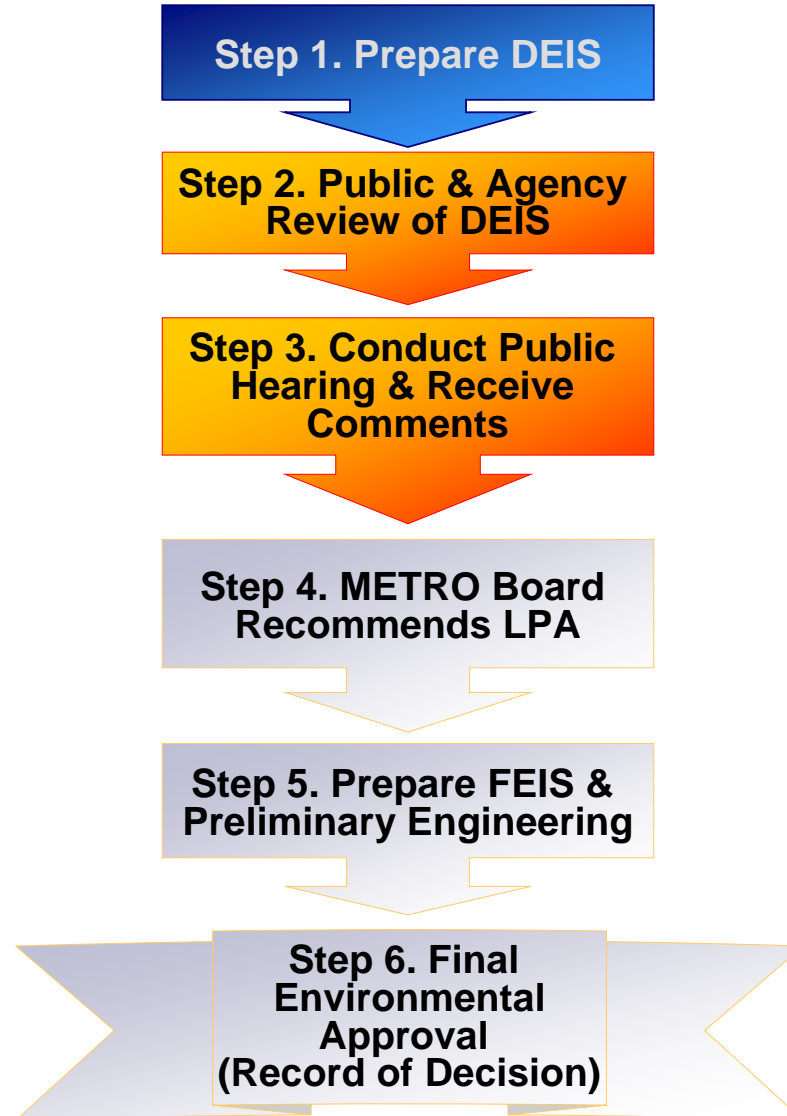
- ❖ Scoping & Public Meetings (7 held to date)
- ❖ Newsletters (1 published)
- ❖ Stakeholder/Community Meetings (20 meetings)
- ❖ Small Group Presentations
- ❖ Briefings to Elected Officials
- ❖ Information on METRO Website

www.metro-solutions.org

Public and Agency Involvement Continuous throughout the project



Steps to Recommending a Preferred Alternative



Tentative Project Schedule

(If a Build Alternative is selected)

- ❖ Environmental approval: Summer 2008
- ❖ Acquire right-of-way: 2009
- ❖ Final design and construction: 2008 - 2012
- ❖ Open for service: 2012

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

To meet the goals of the NEPA process and comply with laws, regulations and policies, projects need to consider:

- **Avoiding** adverse (negative) impacts.
- Where adverse impacts cannot be avoided, they should be **minimized**.
- Unavoidable adverse impacts should be **mitigated**.
- Environmental **enhancements** should be developed as appropriate.
- Mitigation and enhancement measures are eligible for Federal funding.

**“Avoid, Minimize, Mitigate,
Enhance”**

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

❖ Discusses the social, economic and environmental effects of the proposed alternatives

❖ DEIS outline:

- Executive Summary
- Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action
- Alternatives Considered
- Social Effects
- Environmental Effects
- Economic Effects
- Transportation Effects
- Section 4(f) Evaluation
- Financial Analysis
- Secondary and Cumulative Impacts
- Evaluation of Alternatives Carried Forward
- Public Coordination and Comments

Section 4(f)

“IT IS NATIONAL POLICY: that special effort should be made to preserve the natural beauty of the countryside and public park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, & historic sites.”

In the USDOT Act of 1966, a special provision was included to provide protection to these resources. It is known as Section 4(f). It stipulates that the Secretary of Transportation will not approve any program or project which requires the use of any publicly owned public park, recreation area, or wildlife or waterfowl refuge, or any land from an historic site of national, state, or local significance unless:

There is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use, and
All possible planning to minimize harm resulting from such use
is included.

Summary of Evaluation of Alternatives

	Segment I (Hillcroft Transit Center to Wesleyan Street)					Segment II (Wesleyan Street to Main Street)					Segment III (Main Street to Eastwood Transit Center)										
	No Build	TSM Baseline	Richmond/ Westpark (Cummins)	Richmond/ Westpark (Greenway Plaza)	Richmond/ U.S. 59/ Westpark (Kirby)	No Build	TSM Baseline	Richmond/ Westpark (Cummins)	Richmond/ Westpark (Greenway Plaza)	Richmond/ U.S. 59/ Westpark (Kirby)	No Build	TSM Baseline	Alabama (U.S. 59/ Alabama/ UH)	Wheeler (Ennis/ Elgin/ Eastwood Transit Center)	Wheeler (Ennis/ Alabama/ UH)						
Land Use																					
Compatible with Local Plans	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes						
Acres of Land Needed for Right-of-Way	0	0	0.44	0.44	0.47	0	0	2.54	3.74	3.24	0	0	1.93	2.70	3.07						
Property Acquisition (Number of Parcels)																					
Businesses	0	0	3	3	3	0	0	32	35	26	0	0	8	16	13						
Residential	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	7	4	0	0	18	24	30						
Other (i.e., government, religious, vacant)	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	4	4	1	0	0	15	7	17						
Total	0	0	5	5	5	0	0	43	46	31	0	0	41	47	60						
Number of Displacements																					
Businesses	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	11	12	0	0	5	8	8						
Residential	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	13	24	0	0	10	10	14						
Other (i.e., government, religious)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1						
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	24	36	0	0	16	18	23						
Historic and Archeological Resources																					
Historical Sites Adversely Affected	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0						
Potential Historic Districts/Contributing Structures Adversely Affected	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0	0	1/15	1/19	2/23						
Visual/Aesthetics*			<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>					
Sensitive Receptor/Assets Impacted	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	3	9	5	9	8	13	7	15	12	13	10		
Biota and Habitat**																					
Number of Trees Removed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	197	153	93	0	0	27	55	12						
Air Quality/2030 Annual Emission	<u>No Build (All Alternatives)</u>					<u>BRT (All Alternatives)</u>					<u>LRT(All Alternatives)</u>										
CO (tons per year)	141,798					141,771					141,764										
NOx (tons per year)	9,217					9,215					9,214										
VOC (tons per year)	9,601					9,599					9,599										
PM10 (tons per year)	1,832					1,832					1,832										
Reduction in CO2 from No Build*** (tons per million BTUs)						-6,277.7					-7,820.2										
Noise			<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>			
Residential Impacts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	4	133	78	91	46	103	46			
Vibration			<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>			
Residential Impacts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	48	0	9	0	16	0		
Hazardous/Regulated Materials																					
Potential Contaminated Sites	0	0	32	32	32	0	0	62	57	36	0	0	10	16	8						
Transportation****																					
Level of Service (LOS) Traffic (2030), # of Intersections at:																					
LOS A-B (a.m./p.m.)	0/1	0/1	2/3	2/3	2/3	4/10	4/10	17/10	13/9	7/1	5/6	5/6	12/13	7/10	8/10						
LOS C-D (a.m./p.m.)	0/0	0/0	3/0	3/0	3/0	11/10	11/10	13/12	12/10	10/10	9/9	9/9	14/14	13/12	13/11						
LOS E-F (a.m./p.m.)	9/8	9/8	8/10	8/10	8/10	3/8	3/8	5/13	5/11	4/10	4/3	4/3	4/3	10/8	3/3						
Construction Impacts	0	Low	Low	Low	Low	None	Low	Medium	Medium	High	0	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium						
Section 4(f) Properties Impacted	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	15	19	23						
Length (miles)	0		3.6	3.6	3.6	0		2.9	3.3	3.5	0	9	2.3	3.3	2.3						
Total Cost (millions)		Combined See Segment III	Combined with Segment II (see Segment II)				Combined See Segment III	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>LRT</u>	<u>BRT</u>		
	\$0					\$0		\$534	\$303	\$567	\$342	\$617	\$394	\$0	\$24	\$181	\$130	\$219	\$168	\$181	\$137

Source: Carter & Burgess, April 2007

Notes: * Primary sensitive receptors include users of adjacent parks and residential areas facing or immediately adjacent to the proposed alternative alignments. Museums and historic structures are visual resources generally with high visual quality. Visual and aesthetic assets include historic structures, parklands, and undeveloped open space/natural areas;** Biota includes animals, plants, etc., of a region; *** Change in emission from No Build vs. BRT-Convertible and vs. LRT;**** Level of Service (LOS). See Table 6-27: 2030 Traffic Delay and Level of Service, p. 6-42 in DEIS.

2030 Total Daily Boardings

Alignment Combination		Build Alternative	
		LRT	BRT-Convertible
1	Richmond/Westpark (Cummins) and Alabama (U.S. 59/Alabama/UH)	40,190	30,560
2	Richmond/Westpark (Cummins) and Wheeler (Ennis/Elgin/Eastwood Transit Center)	43,590	32,690
3	Richmond/Westpark (Cummins) and Wheeler (Ennis/Alabama/UH)	40,840	31,172
4	Richmond/Westpark (Greenway) and Alabama (U.S. 59/Alabama/UH)	39,990	30,580
5	Richmond/Westpark (Greenway) and Wheeler (Ennis/Elgin/Eastwood Transit Center)	43,390	32,876
6	Richmond/Westpark (Greenway) and Wheeler (Ennis/Alabama/UH)	40,740	31,220
7	Richmond/U.S. 59/Westpark (Kirby) and Wheeler (U.S. 59/Alabama/UH)	27,070	20,460
8	Richmond/U.S. 59/Westpark (Kirby) and Alabama (Ennis/Elgin/Eastwood Transit Center)	31,920	23,150
9	Richmond/U.S. 59/Westpark (Kirby) and Wheeler (Ennis/Alabama/UH)	28,000	21,040

Source: METRO, April 2007



If a Build Alternative is recommended, mitigation will be documented in the FEIS

Mitigation could include...

- ❖ Noise walls
- ❖ Landscaping/vegetation and/or screening walls
- ❖ Interpretive exhibits of historical properties and photographic documentation
- ❖ Grade separated crossings
- ❖ Station locations designed to be compatible with local area
- ❖ Fencing to protect local schools
- ❖ Use of sound insulation in structures
- ❖ Use of special trackwork at crossovers
- ❖ Track treatments to reduce vibration
- ❖ Relocation of impacted property owners and tenants

Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment

- ❖ Followed procedures established by Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- ❖ Measured existing noise levels and vibration propagation conditions
- ❖ Projected noise and vibration from transit operations and facilities
 - LRT Option
 - BRT Convertible Option
- ❖ Assessed potential impacts
 - FTA Noise Criteria
 - FTA Vibration Criteria
- ❖ Assessed short term impacts from construction activities
- ❖ Mitigation Examples
 - Track treatments
 - Crossing bells re-directed to avoid residences

Acquisition & Relocation

- ❖ Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance & Real Property Acquisitions Policies Act of 1970, as amended (49 CFR Part 24)
 - Comply with Uniform Act
 - Conduct independent appraisals for fair market value
 - Acquire properties
 - Assist in relocating impacted property owners and tenants

Submission of Comments

- On-line at
<http://www.ridemetro.org/contact/comment.asp>
- During the open houses and the public hearing
- Submit comment form or letter to:
Ms. Rhonda Boyer
Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County
P.O. Box 61429
Houston, Texas 77208-1429

Comments must be postmarked by
September 17, 2007

Historic Preservation

Primary Federal Law: National Historic Places Act of 1966

- ❖ Federal agencies must consider a project's effects on historic properties
- ❖ Identify properties included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places. Potential properties include:
 - Buildings (places of worship, houses, gas stations, schools, train stations)
 - Structures (bridges, canals, dams, highways, lighthouses, aircraft)
 - Objects (fountains, monuments, statuary)
 - Non-archeological properties (battlefields, cemeteries, designed landscapes)
 - Districts (public squares, residential neighborhoods, transportation corridors)



- ❖ Criteria for eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places
 - 50 years old or older at the time on construction
 - Associated with events of historic significance
 - Associated with a person of historic significance
 - Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of Construction
- ❖ Consult with the Texas Historical Commission (THC) and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)
- ❖ Identify potential for adverse effects on historic properties including:
 - Physical destruction or damage to all or part of the property
 - Change of the character of the property
 - Introduction of visual, atmospheric or audible elements

Thank You
for Your
Attendance & Comments!