

completed an EIR and "Subsequent EIR" for the study corridor. These studies and environmental documents led to the identification of a preferred rail alignment along the existing Southern Pacific Burbank/Chandler Branch, following Chandler Boulevard, Oxnard Street, Victory Boulevard, and Topham Street, which the MTA subsequently purchased in 1990. Environmental documents meeting California standards were certified in 1990 and 1992, addressing alternatives along both the SP Burbank/Chandler Branch and the Ventura Freeway median alignments. In 1994 the MTA Board of Directors endorsed the SP Burbank/Chandler Branch alignment.

An alternatives screening report and major investment study was prepared in 1995/96. The report evaluated the relative cost-effectiveness of a broad range of project alternatives, including all the previously studied rail transit options. In 1997 a Draft EIS was in preparation when the MTA began a financial and organizational restructuring which put several rail projects, including rail planning for the San Fernando Valley, on hold.

As part of the restructuring, the MTA and other regional agencies studied the feasibility of building non-rail (bus) transit enhancements in previous rail corridors. In addition, the MTA board directed staff to proceed with a Bus Rapid Transit demonstration project. One of the demonstration lines is on Ventura Boulevard in the San Fernando Valley.

Description of the Study Area: The study corridor extends from the North Hollywood Red Line station (currently under construction), located at Lankershim Boulevard and Chandler Boulevard, west across the entire San Fernando Valley to the vicinity of the Warner Center Transit Hub. The length of the corridor is approximately 14 miles.

Alternatives: A range of alternatives is being considered as part of the EIS/EIR. These include the following:

No Build: This alternative would include the transit system primarily as it exists today, augmented by those additional projects for which a funding commitment has been made or which are reasonably expected to be in place by 2020. The Red Line would terminate at the North Hollywood station.

Highway and HOV projects would be provided on a number of freeways. Existing bus headways would be maintained and the Rapid Bus Demonstration project on Ventura Boulevard would be implemented.

Transportation Systems Management/Best Bus: This alternative would not

require major investment for capital cost items, but would rather focus its efforts on maximizing the efficiency of existing facilities and expanding and improving the existing bus system. Headways on routes covered by the TSM would be significantly reduced. TSM improvements would include various projects to enhance the performance of bus transit on major arterials where bus service frequencies would be increased.

Bus Rapid Transit Alternatives: Buses would run along an exclusive roadway built within the SP Burbank/Chandler ROW between the North Hollywood Metro Red Line Station on the east and the Transit Hub in Warner Center. Stations would be placed approximately every mile along the 14-mile route, at major cross streets and trip destinations. Buses would be given priority at signals. Headways within the busway would vary between five and two and one-half minutes during peak periods, and the existing Valley bus network would be integrated with the busway. In addition to the busway, enough space is available for a parallel bikeway along the corridor.

The corridor is being considered in two phases. If funding is limited, a segment of the full project busway between Woodman Avenue and Balboa Boulevard would be constructed as an initial phase, or Minimum Operable Segment. This first phase would include five stations. Buses would run on-street along Oxnard Street and Victory Boulevard to complete their runs from North Hollywood to Warner Center, and provide cross-Valley service.

Probable Effects: The FTA and MTA will evaluate all significant environmental, social and economic impacts of the alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS/EIR. Potential impact categories which will be evaluated include: Land Use and Development; Economic and Fiscal Impacts; Displacement and Relocation; Traffic Circulation and Parking; Community and Neighborhood Impacts; Environmental Justice; Visual and Aesthetic Impacts; Air Quality; Noise and Vibration; Geotechnical Considerations; Water Resources; Natural Resources; Energy; Safety and Security; Cultural Resources; Community Facilities and Parklands; and Construction Impacts. The impacts will be evaluated both for the construction period and the long-term period of operation. Measures to mitigate adverse impacts will also be addressed.

FTA Procedures: The EIS process will be performed in accordance with Federal Transit Laws and FTA's regulations and guidelines for preparing

an Environmental Impact Statement. The impacts of the project will be assessed, and, if necessary, the scope of the project will be revised or refined to minimize and mitigate any adverse impacts. After its publication, the draft EIS will be available for public review and comment. At least one public hearing will be held. On the basis of the draft EIS and comments received, the project will be revised or further refined as necessary and the final EIS prepared.

Date Issued: May 15, 2000.

Leslie Rogers,

Regional Administrator.

[FR Doc. 00-12639 Filed 5-18-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-57-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Transit Administration

Environmental Impact Statement on the Mid-City/Westside Transit Corridor in Los Angeles, CA

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), as the Federal lead agency, and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), as the local lead agency, are issuing this notice to advise interested agencies and the public that a joint Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Environmental Impact Report (EIR), referred to as an EIS/EIR, is being prepared for transit improvements in the Mid-City/Westside Transit Corridor in Los Angeles, California in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The EIS/EIR replaces the previous NEPA reviews by FTA and MTA of transit improvements in the Mid-City corridor, the most recent being "Los Angeles Rail Rapid Transit Project—Metro Rail Final Supplemental EIS/EIR for the Mid-City Segment from Wilshire/Western to Pico/San Vicente," August, 1992. The Mid-City extension of Metro Rail was suspended by the MTA Board of Directors in January 1998. The present EIS/EIR will study alternatives and extensions to the suspended subway in the Mid-City corridor and beyond to Santa Monica. In the course of this study, FTA expects the MTA and the Southern California Association of Governments, which is responsible for transportation planning in metropolitan Los Angeles, to establish priorities for the proposed transit improvements in

the Mid-City corridor and the myriad of other competing projects and transit needs in the region. This prioritization of proposed projects and other transit needs will involve, among other considerations, the development of a financial plan that identifies for each capital need the non-Federal funds to be used along with the proposed Federal funding.

FTA and MTA seek comments by interested parties and agencies on the scope of the Mid-City/Westside EIS/EIR. The date and location of public scoping meetings are provided below. The closing date for receiving comments on the scope of the EIS/EIR, and the address to which written comments should be sent, are also provided herein.

DATES: Comment Due Date: Written comments on the scope of the study should be sent, by June 23, 2000, to Mr. David Mieger of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority at the address given below in

ADDRESSES.

Scoping Meeting Dates: Please refer to **ADDRESSES** below for the dates, times, and locations of the public scoping meetings.

ADDRESSES: For Written Comments: Written comments on the scope of the EIS/EIR should be sent by June 23, 2000, to Mr. David Mieger, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, One Gateway Plaza, Mail Stop 99-22-5, Los Angeles, California 90012. Written comments may also be turned in at the scoping meetings.

For Scoping Meetings: Public scoping meetings for the EIS/EIR will be held at the following locations at the dates and times indicated:

- Tuesday, May 23, 2000, Peterson Automotive Museum, 6060 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90036 (5 p.m.–8 p.m.)
- Wednesday, May 31, 2000, Veteran's Administration Hospital of West Los Angeles, 11301 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90038 (5 p.m.–8 p.m.)
- Tuesday, June 6, 2000, Ken Edwards Center, 1527 4th Street, Santa Monica, CA (5 p.m.–8 p.m.)
- Wednesday, June 7, 2000, California African-American Museum, 600 State Drive, Exposition Park, Los Angeles, CA 90037 (5 p.m.–8 p.m.)
- Thursday, June 8, 2000, Veteran's Memorial Complex, 4117 Overland Avenue, Culver City, CA 90232 (5 p.m.–8 p.m.)

The scoping meetings will be held in an "open house" format with MTA representatives available to discuss the project alternatives throughout the time periods given. Informational displays

and written material will also be available. Comments may be submitted in writing at the public scoping meetings. All locations are accessible to persons with disabilities. Spanish-speaking MTA staff will be present. If hearing-impaired services will be needed, please notify Mr. David Mieger at the MTA address above, or call TTY (800) 252-9040. Other questions about the scoping workshops may be directed by voice telephone to Mr. Mieger at (213) 922-3040 or e-mail at miegerd@mta.net.

For MIS Review: A Major Investment Study (MIS) of the transportation needs in the Mid-City/Westside Corridor, dated February, 2000, and related environmental studies are available for review at the MTA Library at One Gateway Plaza, 15th Floor; Los Angeles, CA 90012 during normal business hours.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Ervin Poka or Ray Tellis, Federal Transit Administration/Federal Highway Administration Los Angeles Metropolitan Office. Phone: (213) 202-3950.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The EIS/EIR will present a comparative analysis of the environmental impacts, transportation benefits, and costs of reasonable transit alternatives in the Mid-City/Westside Corridor and will determine the appropriate mitigation measures for adverse impacts.

Scoping: The initial set of alternatives for the Mid-City/Westside Corridor were defined through a Major Investment Study (MIS) completed in February 2000 by the MTA, in accordance with USDOT regulations. Additional alternatives that may emerge from the scoping process will be considered.

FTA and MTA invite interested individuals, organizations, and public agencies to attend the scoping meetings and participate in identifying the scope and content of the EIS/EIR, including any significant environmental, social, or economic issues associated with the alternatives. The public is invited to comment specifically on the alternatives to be addressed, the transit modes and technologies to be evaluated, the alignments and termination points to be considered, the environmental, social, and economic impacts to be analyzed, and the evaluation approach to be used to select a preferred alternative. During scoping, comments should focus on identifying specific social, economic, or environmental impacts to be evaluated and suggesting alternatives that are less costly or less environmentally damaging, while meeting the identified transportation and other needs in the

Mid-City/Westside Corridor. Scoping is not the appropriate time to indicate a preference for a particular alternative. Comments on preferences should be communicated after the Draft EIS/EIR has been issued for public review.

An information packet describing the purpose of the project, the location, the proposed alternatives, and the impact areas to be evaluated is being mailed to affected Federal, State, and local agencies. Others may request these scoping materials by contacting Mr. David Mieger at (213) 922-3040 or by writing to him at his address above. If you wish to be placed on the project mailing list, please call the Project Hotline at 310-366-6443.

Description of Study Area and Project Need: The Mid-City/Westside Corridor is approximately bounded on the north by Sunset Boulevard, on the east by Hill Street, on the south by Manchester Boulevard, and on the west by the Pacific Ocean. The projected trip-making increase and resulting congestion would occur because of expected population growth, from 1.5 million persons in 1994 to 1.9 million in 2020, and of expected employment growth, from one million jobs in 1994 to 1.2 million jobs in 2020. The purposes of the project are to improve east-west travel options in the Mid-City/Westside areas of Los Angeles and to provide a connection to the previously completed Metro Rail Red Line and other portions of the regional rail and bus network.

Alternatives: In order to address current and long-range traffic congestion in the Mid-City and Westside areas of the Los Angeles Basin, the MTA has examined a wide range of east-west transit alternatives, including Bus Rapid Transit, Light Rail Transit such as the Blue Line to Long Beach, and Heavy Rail Transit such as the Red Line to Hollywood. In accordance with the intent of the MIS process, the MIS, in conjunction with the guidance provided by the MTA Board of Directors, resulted in a set of refined alternatives to be evaluated in detail in the EIS/EIR. These alternatives are: (1) No Build; (2) Transportation System Management; (3) Wilshire Bus Rapid Transit (BRT); (4) Exposition BRT; (5) Exposition Light Rail Transit (LRT); (6) Phased length combinations of Wilshire BRT and Exposition BRT or LRT; (7) Any additional alternatives that may result from the scoping process. Alignments for BRT extend from the Metro Red Line in downtown Los Angeles to downtown Santa Monica and include Wilshire Boulevard and the former Exposition railroad right-of-way. An alignment for LRT extends from downtown Los

Angeles to downtown Santa Monica along the Exposition railroad right-of-way. The TSM Alternative is not specific to an alignment but would rather improve service levels of existing bus service in the general Westside Corridor. Additionally, a No Build Alternative will evaluate the impacts of doing nothing to improve transit service during the twenty year planning timeframe of the project, beyond those improvements already scheduled and funded.

Probable Effects: The FTA and MTA will evaluate all significant environmental, social and economic impacts of the alternatives in the Draft EIS/EIR. Potential impact categories which will be evaluated include: Land Use and Development; Economic Impacts; Displacement and Relocation; Traffic Circulation and Parking; Community and Neighborhood Impacts; Environmental Justice; Visual and Aesthetic Impacts; Air Quality; Noise and Vibration; Geotechnical Considerations; Water Resources; Natural Resources; Energy; Safety and Security; Cultural Resources; Community Facilities and Parklands; and Construction Impacts. The impacts will be evaluated both for the construction period and the long-term period of operation. Measures to mitigate adverse impacts will also be addressed.

FTA Procedures: After the scope of the EIS/EIR evaluation has been determined, FTA and MTA will conduct the analyses and interagency coordination necessary to prepare a Draft EIS/EIR. The Draft EIS/EIR will be made available for public and agency review and comment, and a public hearing will be held. On the basis of the Draft EIS/EIR and comments received, MTA will select a Locally Preferred Alternative. If FTA approves of advancing the Locally Preferred Alternative into Preliminary Engineering (PE), the Final EIS/EIR responding to comments received and incorporating the results of PE, would then be prepared and released.

Issued on: May 15, 2000.

Leslie T. Rogers,

Regional Administrator.

[FR Doc. 00-12638 Filed 5-18-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-57-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 33870]

Eastern Alabama Railroad, Inc.— Acquisition Exemption—CSX Transportation, Inc.

Eastern Alabama Railroad, Inc. (EARY), a Class III rail carrier, has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.41 to acquire and operate a rail line owned by CSX Transportation, Inc.¹ The rail line extends from milepost LAM 453.58, at Gannt's Junction, to milepost LAM 479.94, at Talladega, a distance of 26.36 miles in Talladega County, AL.

The transaction is expected to be consummated on or after May 17, 2000.

If the notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*. Petitions to revoke the exemption under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) may be filed at any time. The filing of a petition to revoke does not automatically stay the transaction.

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 33870, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Fritz R. Kahn, Esq., 1920 N Street, NW, Eighth Floor, Washington, DC 20036-1601.

Board decisions and notices are available on our website at "WWW.STB.DOT.GOV."

Decided: May 12, 2000.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik,
Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 00-12566 Filed 5-18-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

May 8, 2000.

The Department of Treasury has submitted the following public information collection requirement(s) to OMB for review and clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13. Copies of the

¹EARY represents that it has operated the rail line, as the assignee of a lease with option to purchase, since 1992 following its acquisition of the Natchez Trace Railroad's properties. See *Eastern Alabama Railway, Inc.—Acquisition and Operation Exemption—Natchez Trace Railroad*, Finance Docket No. 32044 (ICC served Apr. 16, 1992).

submission(s) may be obtained by calling the Treasury Bureau Clearance Officer listed. Comments regarding this information collection should be addressed to the OMB reviewer listed and to the Treasury Department Clearance Officer, Department of the Treasury, Room 2110, 1425 New York Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20220.

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before June 19, 2000 to be assured of consideration.

Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

OMB Number: 1545-1251.

Regulation Project Number: PS-5-91 Final.

Type of Review: Extension.

Title: Limitations on Percentage Depletion in the Case of Oil and Gas Wells.

Description: Section 1.613A-3(e)(6)(I) of the regulations requires each partner to separately keep records of the partner's share of the adjusted basis of partnership oil and gas property.

Respondents: Business or other for-profit.

Estimated Number of Recordkeepers: 1,500,000.

Estimated Burden Hours Per Recordkeeper: 2 minutes.

Estimated Total Recordkeeping Burden: 49,950 hours.

OMB Number: 1545-1545.

Regulation Project Number: REG-107644-97 Final.

Type of Review: Extension.

Title: Permitted Elimination of Preretirement Optional Forms of Benefits.

Description: The regulation permits an amendment to a qualified plan that eliminates certain Preretirement optional forms of benefit.

Respondents: Business or other for-profit.

Estimated Number of Recordkeepers: 135,000.

Estimated Burden Hours Per Recordkeeper: 22 minutes.

Estimated Total Recordkeeping Burden: 48,800 hours.

OMB Number: 1545-1685.

Regulation Project Number: REG-103735-00 NPRM and Temporary.

Type of Review: Extension.

Title: Tax Shelter Disclosure Statements.

Description: The regulations provide guidance on the filing requirement under section 6011 for certain corporate taxpayers engaged in transactions producing tax savings in excess of certain dollar thresholds.

Respondents: Business or other for-profit.

Estimated Number of Respondents/Recordkeepers: 50.