

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Federal Highway Administration

RECORD OF DECISION

State Route 710 Freeway

Between Interstates 10 and 210
Los Angeles County, California
FHWA-CA-EIS-74-15-F

SUMMARY

This Record of Decision (ROD) documents the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) decision to approve the selected alternative for the California State Route 710 Freeway. This approval constitutes FHWA's acceptance of the project location and concepts described in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) dated March 2, 1992 as modified in the Environmental Reevaluation (April 1998), the Final Revised Section 4(f) Evaluation (April 1998), and this ROD.

Since the Federal-aid highway program is a Federally assisted State program, this decision must be viewed in the context of the State decisionmaking process. As such, it is FHWA's role to ratify the State's decision once FHWA determines that the requirements of Federal law have been satisfied. This involves considerable coordination and negotiations, often resulting in changes in the proposal to ensure that both State and Federal requirements are met. The FHWA decision to approve the Route 710 project builds on the 1994 California Transportation Commission (CTC) decision to adopt the Meridian Variation alignment. While ratifying the CTC decision, FHWA has added conditions concerning both specific elements of the proposal and the process by which the project will be advanced. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has accepted these conditions.

The FHWA decision also builds on the decisions of the metropolitan transportation planning process for the Los Angeles area. Federal transportation law establishes the metropolitan transportation planning process as the forum for determining which Federally assisted highway and mass transportation improvements should be implemented. Decisions regarding transportation priorities are State and local governmental decisions, made through this cooperative process; they are not Federal decisions. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), the Federally recognized metropolitan planning organization for the Los Angeles area, has designated Route 710 project as a priority for implementation by including it on the long range transportation plan and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This FHWA decision focuses on approving a proposal that is consistent with these metropolitan planning decisions while also satisfying all Federal environmental and transportation mandates.

The California Route 710 Freeway project is not a typical highway project. It provides a vital link in the nation's most severely congested freeway system. It also causes impacts of a magnitude that is unusual in today's highway program. Both proponents and opponents of the project have pursued their respective interests very forcefully, with lawsuits on each side. In view of this highly contentious atmosphere, the process for selecting an alternative for implementation has not been typical. Rather than advancing immediately from an FEIS to a

ROD in a matter of weeks or months as is normal with most major highway projects, the FHWA and Caltrans have engaged in an extensive six-year effort to refine the proposal and to reduce and mitigate the associated impacts. This project development and decisionmaking process has demanded flexibility and innovation to shape a proposal that FHWA finds acceptable. The resulting selected alternative has remarkably fewer and less severe impacts than those described in the FEIS. This reduction in impacts has come at the expense of increased costs and minor diminishment of transportation service as compared to the preferred alternative in the FEIS; however, the FHWA is convinced that on balance, the selected alternative represents a sound investment, one that gives adequate weight to both transportation needs and community and environmental quality.

This ROD is executed in conformance with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA and documents FHWA compliance with NEPA and all other applicable Federal statutes, regulations, and requirements. The sections that follow state the decision and provide information that has been germane in the decisionmaking process. This information summarizes and complements information provided in numerous other documents in the project record.

DECISION

The decision is to select a modified version of the Meridian Variation Alternative as described in the FEIS. The selected alternative is named the **Depressed Meridian Variation Alternative Reduced with Shift design variation**. This name reflects the adoption of the general alignment of the Meridian Variation Alternative with modifications that include a reduced highway width, a shift to avoid the Short Line Villa Tract Historic District and include a commitment to further depress the highway in the El Sereno and South Pasadena area. Each modification was based on a process to reduce overall impacts of the project.

This selected alternative involves completing the State Route (SR) 710 freeway gap between Interstate 10, the San Bernardino Freeway (I-10), in the city of Alhambra and Interstate 210, the Foothill Freeway (I-210), in the city of Pasadena, a distance of 6.2 miles (4.5 miles unconstructed). The freeway will also pass through the cities of Los Angeles (El Sereno community) and South Pasadena. The freeway will have six mixed-flow lanes and two high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) lanes. Local service interchanges will be provided at various locations (Hellman Avenue and Valley Boulevard in the city of Alhambra, Alhambra Avenue/Mission Road and Huntington Drive in the city of Los Angeles, and Del Mar Boulevard in the city of Pasadena).

The selected alternative will closely follow the alignment of the Meridian Variation Alternative identified as the preferred alternative in the FEIS. Starting on the southerly terminus at I-10, it will follow the alignment of the existing Long Beach Freeway northerly to Valley Boulevard. From Valley Boulevard to Huntington Drive, the alignment will generally parallel and run just west of the Los Angeles city limits. North of Huntington Drive, the alignment will approximately follow Meridian Avenue to Bank Street. At this point, the alignment will shift westward and run between Orange Grove Boulevard and Prospect Street north to the Arroyo Seco Parkway. The alignment will continue to parallel the now eastward-curving alignment of Orange Grove Boulevard to the Pasadena city limits, where it will continue shifting eastward to join with

Pasadena Avenue at Madeline Street. From here, the project will follow Pasadena Avenue north to Del Mar Boulevard, where it will connect to the existing Long Beach Freeway stub connecting to I-210/SR 134.

The freeway is depressed for about 85% of the newly constructed 4.5 mile section and is fully depressed through Pasadena and South Pasadena except for the structure over State Route 110. The freeway is depressed in virtually all of the residential areas. Approximately 25% of the 4.5 mile remaining gap closure is in cut-and-cover tunnels.

This decision adopts a comprehensive set of modifications to the Meridian Variation Alternative as described in the FEIS. FHWA and Caltrans are adopting these modifications to reduce and mitigate the impacts that would otherwise occur; these modifications do not offer additional transportation service and in some cases result in a minor reduction in service. The modifications include the following measures:

- Reducing the freeway footprint by approximately 20 percent from 176' to 142'.
- Eliminating the freeway to freeway interchange between Route 710 and Route 110.
- Providing a minimum of 6 cut-and-cover tunnels at locations throughout the corridor.
- Relocating National Register eligible properties in Districts to their original locations on top of or in proximity to cut-and-cover tunnels to the extent feasible, or, alternatively, relocating them in the area where possible.
- Shifting the alignment to avoid the Short Line Villa Tract Historic District.
- Depressing the freeway at additional locations in El Sereno and South Pasadena.
- Incorporating extensive urban design and landscaping measures about one block each side of the freeway.
- Allowing no truck traffic on SR 710 between I-10 and I-210 except for local delivery trucks.
- Providing relocation benefits to qualified "rerenters" (renters of Caltrans owned properties), who would not normally be eligible for relocation assistance.
- Providing substantive training and job opportunities to qualified residents of the affected communities during all phases of the project.
- Establishing community design advisory groups with each of the impacted communities.
- Soundproofing and integrating the air filter system of the affected school buildings, providing the funding for temporary security and part-time custodial service at each affected school, and implementing an educational safety program in each affected school.

- Ensuring SR 710 is a candidate for the latest staging, construction and contract administration techniques to minimize construction duration and reduce storage time for structures to be relocated.

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(f) 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 advisory 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 re-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.

BASIS FOR DECISION

This decision represents the collaborative effort of FHWA and Caltrans to identify and select an alternative which effectively balances the Los Angeles area's need for an effective transportation system with the corridor communities' need to minimize adverse impacts. It reflects a lengthy process to engage all affected parties and interests and a major investment in measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts. The decision is fully consistent with NEPA and all other applicable laws and requirements. In particular, this decision is made in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 109(h), which directs that final project decisions be made in the best overall public interest, taking into account: (1) the need for fast, safe, and efficient transportation, (2) public services, (3) a broad array of social, economic, and environmental effects, and (4) the costs of eliminating or minimizing adverse effects.

Achieving compliance with Federal mandates while also taking into account State and local laws, requirements, and desires has been especially challenging for this project. The following sections address specific considerations given substantial weight in this decision.

Transportation Needs

The fundamental purpose for pursuing this project has been to serve critical transportation needs in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. The Congress provided the metropolitan transportation planning process (23 U.S.C. 134) as the mechanism for evaluating transportation needs and proposing transportation improvements in metropolitan areas. Consistency with this Federally required transportation planning process is a prerequisite for Federal funding of this transportation project.

Completion of the Route 710 freeway has been an element of the Los Angeles transportation plan for about 30 years. SCAG demonstrated continued commitment to the completion of the freeway by including it in the Regional Mobility Element (RME) of the 1994 Regional Comprehensive Plan. The 1994 RME is the latest update of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) required by Federal and State laws. The project is presented as one component of a regional strategic plan and has been developed in coordination with the Regional Growth Management Plan and the Regional Air Quality Management Plan. The SCAG's 1996/97 to 2002/03 Federal Transportation Improvement Program included funding for right of way. These actions by SCAG reflect a current reaffirmation of the critical role of the Route 710 freeway in satisfying the future transportation needs of the Los Angeles area. Among the

factors considered by SCAG in electing to support the completion of the Route 710 freeway are:

- The project is one of the last links in this regional freeway system and its location is relatively fixed, especially by the existing termini;
- The project will provide new north-south freeway service which is projected to be used by 193,000 or more vehicles daily by the year 2010. These vehicles will carry approximately 261,600 people, reduce traffic congestion on the regional freeway system, improve safety, reduce circuitous travel, and provide an important alternative travel route when major incidents close or restrict an adjacent freeway route;
- The project will remove almost 100,000 vehicles from city streets and attract an additional 100,000 or more from elsewhere in the regional highway network, (including about 50,000 vehicles a day from the Los Angeles downtown loop) and will provide substantial relief to congested city streets in the corridor. This will result in increased safety, mobility and accessibility of the area's residents to regional employment, commercial and industrial opportunities with the result of substantial user benefits;
- The project will reduce congestion on the regional freeway system by accommodating existing and projected traffic demand within the project area, and reduce out-of-direction travel. It will connect I-10 and I-210 with a high-capacity north-south link, establish links with Route 134, and provide a viable alternative route around and into the Los Angeles Central Business District;
- The project will complete a critical high volume HOV/busway link with the El Monte Busway on I-10 and the HOV lanes on I-210 and Route 134. This link will connect the corridor cities with a county wide transit and HOV network and substantially increase ridesharing in the area. Ridesharing incentives are part of the preferred strategy of SCAG;
- The project will cause the reduction of approximately 300 crashes per 100 million vehicle miles and an estimated three deaths per 100 million vehicle miles.
- The project will reduce traffic congestion, and improve traffic flow and decrease emissions of hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide;
- The project will enhance the potential for urban revitalization within the project area.

In reaching its decision, FHWA placed great weight on the assessment of transportation needs by SCAG. As the metropolitan planning organization designated under Federal law, SCAG is the officially recognized forum for adopting the long range regional transportation plan and TIP, which are prerequisites for Federal transportation funding.

All three of the build alternatives considered in the FEIS were consistent with the metropolitan transportation planning process. They met the transportation needs to a comparable degree. The selected alternative also meets the transportation needs to a comparable degree; however, the elimination of the Route 710/Route 110 interchange and the truck ban do provide

a more limited set of freeway mobility options. The selected alternative is consistent with the metropolitan transportation planning process.

The multi-mode low build proposal, developed and evaluated since the FEIS was issued, failed to meet a number of critical transportation needs. This evaluation is documented in the report entitled, **State Route 710: A Model Evaluation of the City of South Pasadena's Multi-Mode Low Build Proposal** (April 1996). The multi-mode low build proposal does not meet project purpose and need, is not consistent with the regional transportation planning process, and as such cannot currently receive FHWA NEPA approval.

Air Quality Impacts

The Los Angeles metropolitan area is located in one of the most severely deteriorated air quality regions in the United States. Under the provisions of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7521), Federally assisted transportation projects must conform with and support the State Implementation Plan for achieving national ambient air quality standards. The effects of alternatives with respect to air quality is therefore a critical decision and potentially disqualifying decision factor. Through its modeling process in support of the development of the 1994 RTP, SCAG has determined that the selected alternative would contribute to improvement of the region's air quality. By reducing congestion and improving traffic flow the selected alternative would decrease emissions of hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide as compared with the no build alternative. The alternatives considered in the FEIS would have provided comparable improvements in air quality as the selected alternative.

Historic Resource Impacts

The National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470) establishes a structured process for ensuring that Federal agencies give serious attention to the effects of their undertakings on historic properties. In addition, FHWA is subject to a provision, known as Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act, (23 U.S.C. 138), which prohibits the use of land from historic sites unless there are no feasible and prudent alternatives and the project includes all possible planning to minimize harm. Therefore, in addition to giving substantial weight to impacts to historic resources, this decision must assure that specific conditions have been satisfied for the selected alternative.

Impacts to historic resources were a major consideration in designating the Meridian Variation Alternative as the preferred alternative in the FEIS. All three of the FEIS alternatives had substantial impacts to historic resources; however, the FEIS determined that the Meridian Variation Alternative had fewer impacts in terms of the number and overall importance of properties impacted.

The selected alternative has markedly fewer and less severe impacts on historic resources than the Meridian Variation Alternative. Direct takings of historic properties have been reduced by narrowing the width of the freeway and by the alignment shift in the vicinity of the Short Line Villa Tract Historic District. While not retaining full historic integrity, impacts to a number of historic buildings have been lessened by relocating or reestablishing them on cut-and-cover tunnel lids, rather than demolishing the buildings. Proximity impacts to historic properties have been reduced by the cut-and-cover tunnels to be implemented at the South Pasadena High

School and Prospect Circle, Pasadena Avenue, and Markham Place historic districts. Additional efforts will be made to further reduce these effects during the detailed design phase including a cut-and-cover tunnel in the vicinity of the Short Line Villa Tract Historic District.

Community Impacts

Federal highway law (23 U.S.C. 109(h)) mandates guidelines for consideration of a number of effects to communities and people, such as those relating to air, noise, and water pollution, aesthetic values, community cohesion, availability of public facilities and services, adverse employment and property value effects, displacement of people and businesses, and disruption of desirable community and regional growth. Another section of highway law (23 U.S.C. 109(n)) prohibits approval of projects which sever or destroy existing major routes for non-motorized transportation unless alternative routes exist or are provided.

With a project of this magnitude, which has the potential to divide communities, affect community facilities, and relocate hundreds of households, the overall community impact of the various alternatives must receive considerable weight in the decision making process. The challenge is to evaluate many impacts of different types which are not amenable to simple quantitative comparisons.

All three of the alternatives considered in the FEIS involved major community impacts of various types. The Meridian Variation Alternative was preferred over the Westerly alignment because the Westerly alternative would relocate more households, would impact the tax base to a greater extent and would have a more pronounced barrier and community isolation effect, especially in areas with a high pedestrian orientation. The Meridian Variation Alternative had greater community impacts than the Meridian Alternative in some respects, such as number of relocations and effects on the tax base; however, the adverse impact of the Meridian Alternative on the historic districts of South of Mission, downtown South Pasadena business district, North of Mission and Buena Vista received great weight in establishing a preference for the Meridian Variation Alternative.

The selected alternative improves upon the Meridian Variation Alternative in a number of ways that relate to community impacts. The number of relocations has been reduced by almost a third. The impact on the tax base has been reduced by a comparable extent. The barrier and community isolation effect have been mitigated to a major degree by reducing the number of cross streets that will be closed and by providing cut-and-cover tunnels over the freeway for approximately 25 percent of the newly constructed sections (this includes the proposed cut-and-cover tunnel in El Sereno). Visual, aesthetic, and noise impacts will be reduced by depressing (and, as noted above, covering) additional sections of the freeway, reducing the number of trees to be removed, implementing a comprehensive set of urban design and landscaping measures, and instituting a ban on through truck traffic. Economic impacts will be mitigated through a renter program and an apprenticeship program. Special individual needs will be addressed through an enhanced relocation counseling effort. Community involvement in detailing many of these mitigation measures will be ensured through participation in the design advisory groups.

Environmental Justice and Nondiscrimination Impacts

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (42 U.S.C. 2000d) and related laws “provides that under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance, persons shall not be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination on the grounds of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, age, gender, or disability.” In addition, by executive order (Executive Order 12898), Federal agencies are directed to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their policies, programs, and activities on minority populations and low income populations. Nondiscrimination and not disproportionately affecting any particular segment of the potentially affected communities have been important considerations throughout the development of this project. Environmental justice concerns were a major factor in the requirement to depress the freeway, provide cut-and-cover tunnels, and specify the kinds of interim improvements that FHWA required to minimize impacts to minority communities.

The search for the best alternative has historically taken into account such factors as the number and concentrations of members of minority and potential low income populations and the age composition of the potentially affected communities. The background data show the following patterns: (1) the El Sereno community of Los Angeles is predominantly minority, while South Pasadena and Pasadena are predominantly white and the affected portion of Alhambra is predominantly minority, (2) income levels vary considerably in the corridor in the following ascending order: El Sereno, Alhambra, South Pasadena, and Pasadena; and (3) the affected portion of Pasadena has a much higher than average share of elderly residents.

Given the demographic composition of the corridor, all of the alternatives considered would impact, through relocation or proximity impacts, a large number of minority households. Minority households affected as a percentage of total households affected would be comparable between alternatives considered in the FEIS. Nevertheless, because of its greater length and resultant number of total relocations and proximity impacts, the Westerly Alternative had the potential for impacting a higher number of minority households and total households. The Westerly Alternative also had greater barrier and community isolation effects on the El Sereno community by separating a greater number of households from the remaining community.

The selected alternative includes a number of mitigation measures intended to reduce impacts for all affected parties, regardless of demographics, as summarized above, under community impacts. Nevertheless, some of these measures should be of particular benefit to certain segments of the affected population. For example, the apprenticeship program and the reenterer program will be of particular assistance to low income members of the community. The enhanced relocation counseling effort will include bilingual services and will be of assistance to elderly or disabled and non-English speaking relocatees, who may have special needs.

Community Involvement

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) calls upon Federal agencies to cooperate with each other and with State and local governments and other concerned public and private organizations in working to achieve socially, environmentally, and economically desirable outcomes. The CEQ regulation on NEPA provides further direction to Federal agencies concerning interagency coordination and public involvement processes. The FHWA has

explicitly incorporated interagency coordination and public involvement requirements into its NEPA process. The FHWA views the quality of a decision as being directly related to the opportunities which affected entities were afforded to participate in the decision making process.

By any measure, affected entities have had ample opportunities to participate in the Route 710 decision. As described in the Project History section, public involvement and interagency coordination have been important elements throughout the development of this project. The establishment of the SR 710 Meridian Variation Enhancement and Mitigation Advisory Committee is an especially noteworthy effort, as it drew heavily on both agency and organizational expertise and on citizen input. In addition, the October 3, 1997 meeting and subsequent comments from participants offered FHWA an opportunity to further refine the elements of the selected alternative and the commitments associated with its implementation. The Advisory Committee and the October 3 meeting were initiated by FHWA to secure additional community involvement. Many of the commitments are directed at establishing a participatory process for the further development of the project to ensure that needs and requirements are not misconstrued in the design and implementation phase of the project.

While Federal requirements do not require unanimous support for the selected alternative, it has been FHWA's desire to craft a proposal which would meet as many of the expressed needs of the various affected entities as possible. FHWA believes that the process and decision adopted for Route 710 reflect an extraordinarily comprehensive and equitable effort to engage and respond to as many interests as could reasonably be satisfied.

Cost

Minimization of costs is a principal consideration on any major transportation project. Nevertheless, FHWA regulations and policy recognize the legitimacy of incorporating and funding measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate adverse impacts, provided that the associated costs represent a reasonable public expenditure.

The modifications to the Meridian Variation Alternative that were incorporated into the selected alternative have markedly increased the cost of the project. The 1997 cost estimates indicate that the selected alternative, with an estimated cost of approximately \$823 million is 40 percent more costly than the Meridian Variation Alternative. It is the FHWA's judgment that the increased costs are justified in that they result in much less severe and less extensive impacts to the established communities along the freeway route.

Summary

The above considerations were principal factors in arriving at the best overall public interest decision and the commitments adopted in this ROD. The FEIS expression of a preference for the Meridian Variation Alternative, and the subsequent refinement of that alternative to arrive at a selected alternative reflect a balancing of pertinent factors and values, in accordance with the requirements of a number of laws, regulations, and orders. Additional information on the project history, alternatives considered, environmental impacts and mitigation measures is summarized in subsequent sections of this ROD. The decision also relies on a more complete set of project documents, including the FEIS, the 1998 Environmental Reevaluation, the Final

Revised Section 4(f) Evaluation, and other project reports. This ROD will permit Caltrans to proceed with the design of the project and directs the preparation of a Supplemental EIS before construction will be authorized.

PROJECT HISTORY

As a project, Route 710 has had an unusually long life-span. A project in this corridor has been part of the long range transportation plan for about 30 years, and remains as an integral feature of SCAG's current transportation plans and programs. It is important to understand that the conditions that formed the basis for this project's need nearly three decades ago have continued to exist and have actually further deteriorated. In identifying a selected alternative, FHWA and Caltrans have had extensive public and agency involvement and proposed expansive mitigation to reduce the impacts.

Almost from the very beginning this project has had a high level of controversy, beginning with a lawsuit filed against FHWA by the city of South Pasadena for failing to prepare an EIS. Construction was enjoined in 1973. Before advancing to the next stage, right-of-way acquisition, this injunction will have to be lifted.

After the injunction was issued in 1973, FHWA and Caltrans started the EIS process. The project has been analyzed in one Draft EIS, three Supplemental Draft EIS's, one Final EIS, seven Section 4(f) Evaluations, and several Reevaluations.

- December 23, 1974, a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was approved.
- July 29, 1976, the first Supplemental DEIS (SDEIS) was approved, as a response to the passage of the 1975 Arroyo Seco Park Preservation Act (AB 1716) which prevented freeway construction in the Arroyo Seco Park. This first SDEIS addressed four additional alternatives which did not pass through Arroyo Seco Park.
- June 1977, Caltrans submitted a proposed Final EIS (FEIS), which presented a partial completion alternative as the preferred alternative. The FHWA rejected the proposed FEIS due to route segmentation and lack of local agency support.
- March 22, 1983, the second SDEIS was approved. This SDEIS was mandated by Assembly Bill 1623 (enacted on March 16, 1982) that established a process leading to route selection for a freeway link.
- October 24, 1986, the third SDEIS was approved, which identified the new Meridian Variation Alternative as the locally preferred and the California Transportation Commission (CTC) adopted alternative. The Meridian Variation Alternative was developed to lessen the impacts to historic properties in the corridor.
- May 1988, a Supplemental Section 4(f) Evaluation was circulated. The document addressed the impacts on the Prospect Circle Historic District, a new site found to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

- March 27, 1990, an Environmental Reevaluation was approved. The Reevaluation concluded that there was no significant changes or new information since the 1986 SDEIS and another supplemental EIS was not necessary.
- January 10, 1992, another Environmental Reevaluation was approved. This 1992 Reevaluation concluded there were no significant changes in the project and that a supplemental EIS was not necessary.
- March 2, 1992, FHWA approved the FEIS/Section 4(f) Evaluation for SR 710, Long Beach Freeway with certain provisions due to the controversy and concerns surrounding the project. These provisions required Caltrans to thoroughly investigate all reasonable techniques and measures to reduce the facility's "footprint" and to minimize the project's impact on the affected communities, both during construction and after completion. FHWA emphasized they will not execute the Record of Decision (ROD) until Caltrans satisfied these conditions.

Since the approval of the 1992 FEIS/Section 4(f) Evaluation, the original Meridian Variation Alternative has been further refined to minimize its impacts to the surrounding communities. The "SR 710 Meridian Variation Enhancement and Mitigation Advisory Committee" (Advisory Committee) was established to recommend measures to reduce the projects "footprint" and lessen its impacts on the surrounding communities. This Advisory Committee was composed of two members each from the corridor cities of Alhambra, Los Angeles, South Pasadena, and Pasadena and one member each from SCAG, LACMTA, the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP), the Los Angeles Conservancy, and the Sierra Club; and one representative each from Caltrans and the FHWA serving as ex-officio members. The membership of the Committee was intended to both capture the diversity of interest and craft an interdisciplinary set of recommendations for lessening the impacts of the Meridian Variation. There were also a number of subcommittees to tackle specific aspects of mitigation. After a series of 13 workshops, the Advisory Committee issued a final report in June 1993. Most of the mitigation and enhancement measures recommended in the Advisory Committee's final report have been incorporated into the selected alternative, as agreed to by Caltrans in their report "Caltrans Final Mitigation Enhancement Recommendations for SR 710 Project" dated June 1993. These recommendations have dramatically reduced the impacts of the Meridian Variation Alternative.

The June 1993 Final Report from the SR 710 Meridian Variation Enhancement and Mitigation Advisory Committee recommended several mitigation measures which were adopted by Caltrans and resulted in changes to the preferred alternative identified in the FEIS. The refined preferred alternative was then called the Meridian Variation Alternative Reduced design variation. Notification of the Meridian Variation Enhancement and Mitigation Advisory Committee report availability was published in the *Federal Register* on July 9, 1993. The basic revision was the reduction of the design width of the facility's cross section from 176 feet to 142, trucks were banned from the freeway except for local deliveries and the elimination of a proposed interchange between SR 710 and SR 110. For a more detailed account of the mitigation for the Meridian Variation Alternative, see sections entitled "Additional Mitigation for the Selected Alternative".

On January 15, 1993, before the Meridian Variation Enhancement and Mitigation Advisory Committee issued its Final Report, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) referred the SR 710 project to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) due to their concerns about the impact to historic properties and adequate evaluation of a Low-Build Alternative. The CEQ did not accept the referral, but instead recommended that FHWA and ACHP work together on designing an acceptable methodology to update the historic inventory and to identify and evaluate one technically feasible Low-Build proposal. To complete the inventory of historic properties, FHWA used the Meridian Variation Enhancement and Mitigation Advisory Committee to develop the methodology and a September 30, 1997 letter to FHWA, the ACHP stated, "...the Council is in agreement that the historic properties inventory is now complete and adequate for purposes of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act". In developing a technically feasible Low-Build, SCAG organized an October 18, 1995, meeting of government agencies and municipalities and interest groups to develop the specific parameters of the Low-Build. This group used a Low Build Plan prepared by the city of South Pasadena in a consultant prepared report dated September 17, 1993 and submitted from the ACHP on October 13, 1993 as the basis.

After the Meridian Variation Enhancement and Mitigation Advisory Committee Final Report in June 1993, FHWA and Caltrans continued to seek ways to further reduce impacts of the project. In a letter dated November 20, 1995, the Keeper of the National Register determined that the Short Line Villa Tract Historic District was eligible for the National Register. Various design modifications, depressed profiles and alignment shifts were considered and reviewed in attempt to avoid and minimize impacts through this District. It was found that a shift in alignment will fully avoid any taking of the District. The shift will be about 400 feet from the original alignment at the widest point of departure. The 3700 feet (0.7 miles) of shift varies from zero feet near Huntington Drive to 400 feet near the Short Line Villa Tract Historic District and back to zero feet near Summit Drive. It has been determined that 116 properties (including a 43-apartment complex) which would have been taken by the original alignment would be spared. This design change is a further modification to the Meridian Variation Alternative Reduced design variation, and is now referred to as the Meridian Variation Alternative Reduced with Shift design variation. A public outreach office was opened in El Sereno from December 27, 1995 to January 11, 1996 to provide information regarding the shift in project alignment and obtain comments from the affected communities of El Sereno and South Pasadena.

After the Meridian Variation Alternative Reduced with Shift design variation was developed, FHWA and Caltrans continued to work to reduce the project impacts by working with representatives of El Sereno to identify technically and financially feasible methods to depress more of the alignment in El Sereno. On October 3, 1997, a meeting of the impacted communities, key Federal agencies, and interested congressional representatives was held by the FHWA to discuss a potential approach for approving a ROD and advancing the project to final design. Based on comments received at that meeting and afterwards, the approach was refined and is incorporated in this ROD. In responding to the meeting, recommendations for conditional approval were submitted by Caltrans, and the cities of Alhambra, Los Angeles, Pasadena and San Gabriel. South Pasadena continued to oppose this action. Support from other individuals, agencies, and non-governmental organizations was mixed.

As a result of the October 3, 1997, meeting, FHWA staff worked to address all comments received from this meeting. This led to the development of the "Proposed Decision" paper. The "Proposed Decision" paper, in addition to other things, commits FHWA and Caltrans to further depress the alignment in El Sereno and South Pasadena, adds at least one additional cut-and-cover tunnel, implements a process for involving local communities in design and identifies other transportation changes that can improve existing traffic conditions on an interim basis until the facility can be built. Reflecting the latest change, the selected alternative is named the Depressed Meridian Variation Alternative Reduced with Shift design variation.

On November 14, 1997, Secretary Rodney E. Slater concurred with the "Proposed Decision" paper, thereby allowing FHWA to advance the Record of Decision.

In a November 19, 1997, letter to ACHP, FHWA reiterated that it was continuing work toward a ROD and FHWA also provided three enclosures that served FHWA in reaching the decision to proceed with a ROD. The three items were: 1) a proposed decision paper that included the conditions for the ROD (See Condition and Commitments of this ROD for a final version), 2) a four volume set of project related material on historic preservation, and 3) a revised summary table on the effects of the proposal to historic properties. The four volumes consisted of information which had already been provided to the ACHP through reinventory of historic properties and reassessment of project effects. This was an unprecedented effort which involved the preparation and submittal of over nine documents in response to comments by the SHPO and interested preservation groups and in response to identification of new historic properties. Over twenty letters were sent to the SHPO and the ACHP during this process. In addition, FHWA requested that the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places make final determinations of eligibility for properties included in the six volume Third Supplemental Historic Architectural Survey Report and the Fourth Supplemental Historic Property Survey Report. A June 23, 1996 briefing of the ACHP had also preceded this letter. The revised summary table enclosure provided to the ACHP reflected FHWA deference to the ACHP for effect determinations under §106 for the properties in the proposed corridor. FHWA changed the effect determinations of 11 historic properties, under §106 in accordance with ACHP's views, and reviewed its determinations under §4(f) in light of these changes.

On December 3, 1997-OST/FHWA briefed ACHP on the Secretary's decision and the draft ROD that included additional mitigation and enhancements.

On January 7, 1998-OST/FHWA attended the ACHP Executive Committee meeting at which an ACHP Staff Analysis of the Route 710 proposal was presented. ACHP made a decision to postpone a vote on the referral to CEQ until March 12-13, 1998 meeting in Miami, Florida.

On March 3, 1998, FHWA Executive Director Tony Kane sent a letter to ACHP addressing the ACHP Staff Analysis on a point-by-point basis. This letter clarifies and strengthens previous commitments made as well as providing new measures. The main points were as follows:

1. As a part of the required Relocation Plan, a detailed preservation plan addressing project staging and historic structure relocation and replacement will be prepared with the objectives of maximum protection of these facilities and minimum storage duration.

2. In addition to Caltrans and SCAG endorsement of the Route 710 project, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority will be required to advance the project to construction.
3. FHWA and Caltrans will work with interest groups and agencies to determine their interest in serving on the DAG's.
4. If either the depressed alignment or any of the six committed cut and cover tunnels prove infeasible, the ROD will be declared null and void.
5. A "before and after" study on the effectiveness of mitigation on community cohesion and historic preservation will be made on the project.

At the March 13, 1998 meeting of the ACHP in Miami, FL, the DOT Secretary's Chief of Staff Michael Huerta addressed the Council and summarized the commitment made. In his address, Mr. Huerta stated that if the ROD were determined null and void (as provided for in item 4 above), the project would be treated as a new project.

At the March 13, 1998, ACHP meeting, the Council voted to recommend to the President that the project not be built and to address specific concerns to DOT Secretary Rodney Slater instead of referring the project to the CEQ. These letters were sent by Council Chair Cathryn Slater on March 20, 1998. In response to these letters, FHWA made the following additional commitments:

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 II-88)

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 land. 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 II-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 II-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 I-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 II-38)

This alternative would provide a 7.1 mile six-lane mixed-flow freeway-transitway with two Bus/HOV lanes, and provisions for light rail transit in the median from I-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 II-38) and the 1983 Supplemental DEIS (page II-14).

As with the Meridian Alternative, the footprint could be reduced for the Westerly Alternative. However, with the expansion of the Pasadena Avenue Historic District, the number of historic properties which would be impacted by the Westerly 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 CEQ 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 II-44)
2. ACHP A (1986 SDEIS page II-16)
3. ACHP B-C (1986 SDEIS page II-18, and FEIS page II-55)
4. ACHP B-D (1986 SDEIS page II-13, and FEIS page II-62)
5. ACHP E (1986 SDEIS page II-11, and FEIS page II-70)
6. ACHP E-B-D (1986 SDEIS page II-14, and FEIS page II-74)
7. Westerly Unmodified Plan B-C (1976 SDEIS page 49, and FEIS page II-78)
8. Cultural Resources Bypass (1976 SDEIS page 101, and FEIS page II- 84)
9. Atlantic Boulevard (1976 SDEIS page 121, and FEIS page II-93)
10. Huntington Drive-Main Street (1976 SDEIS page 122, and FEIS page II-95)
11. Pine Street (1976 SDEIS page 122, and FEIS page 97)
12. Dorchester I (FEIS page II-99)
13. Dorchester II (FEIS page II-102)
14. Dorchester III (FEIS page II-104)
15. One-Way Couplet (FEIS page II-106)
16. Historic Preservation Bypass (1986 SDEIS page II-16, and FEIS page II-108)
17. Partial Completion (1976 SDEIS page 69, and FEIS page II-111)
18. Raymond/Arroyo Couplet (FEIS page II-119)
19. Transit Only (1974 DEIS page 253, and FEIS page II-140)
20. 8-Lane Meridian (1974 DEIS page 139, and FEIS page II-142)
21. 8-Lane Westerly (1974 DEIS page 201, and FEIS page II-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 harm to cultural resources, continuing efforts to address these concerns were undertaken. Immediately following the FEIS the SR 710 Enhancement and Mitigation Advisory Committee was formed 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 completed its work, FHWA and Caltrans have continued to work with governmental agencies and the public to continue to further incorporate measures to reduce the impacts, including the Short Line Villa Tract Shift and the specific items in the November 14, 1997 "Proposed Decision" paper. The selected alternative, the Depressed Meridian Variation Alternative Reduced with Shift design variation, incorporates all measures to further minimize adverse impacts identified in the FEIS.

The following is a summary of environmental impacts and corresponding mitigation measures and activities which will be implemented. Each impact is followed by mitigation measures committed to in the FEIS. The mitigation discussion is followed by specific mitigation and enhancement measures for the selected alternative. This mitigation and enhancement incorporates the SR 710 Enhancement and Mitigation Advisory Committee findings and the "Proposed Decision" paper developed by FHWA and agreed to by Caltrans.

Visual Impacts

The Meridian Variation Alternative would require a side-hill type cut along the eastern slope of Monterey Hills (the most aesthetically appealing natural formation in the study area). The maximum cut will be approximately 90 feet at the centerline with slopes up to 150 feet high. The freeway will continue as a depressed facility (below the existing grade) north of Monterey Road to the existing SR 710 freeway stub at Del Mar Boulevard in the city of Pasadena. Construction will require the removal of approximately 6,000 mature trees.

The construction of noise attenuators along the project to mitigate the noise impacts will be a visual impact. However, with extensive creative landscaping to be planned in conjunction with local design advisory committees, the soundwalls will be more aesthetically appealing. See the noise discussion below for more detail.

Mitigation (Indicated in the FEIS)

The loss of vegetation will be mitigated through provision of extensive freeway landscaping for all communities along the freeway corridor. Landscaping, slope benching, contour grading, stepped slopes and slope rounding techniques will be used to minimize visual impacts and provide erosion control along the extensive cut slopes which reach up to 150 feet high in the Monterey Hills area of South Pasadena.

The loss of mature street landscaping will be mitigated through traditional freeway landscaping. Landscaping will commence when practicable after major construction operations have been completed. Local input will be sought to insure that the freeway will be as aesthetically appealing as possible.

A cut-and-cover tunnel will be constructed in the vicinity of South Pasadena High School and the Wynyate Residence (length: 1160 feet). Cut-and-cover tunnels generally are used for various urban design options such as street and historic building relocations, recreation facilities, and public parks to provide opportunities for continuation of the urban fabric.

Additional Mitigation for the Selected Alternative

The reduction of the freeway design width (from 176 feet to 142 feet) and the elimination of the SR 710/110 interchange will reduce the acreage for cut and fill by approximately 20%. Of the 6.2 mile total gap, the facility will be 40% elevated and 60% at grade in Alhambra, 80% depressed in El Sereno, and 100% depressed in both South Pasadena and Pasadena (except for the crossing of SR 110). These changes in the vertical alignment of the freeway and the six cut-and-cover tunnels will serve to reduce the visual aspects of the project. Specifically the additional five cut-and-cover tunnels will be located: 1) Templeton to Poplar in El Sereno (length: 980 feet); 2) In El Sereno near the Sierra Vista School and the Short Line Villa Tract Historic District with the location determined in consultation with the El Sereno design advisory group; 3) Prospect Circle District in South Pasadena (length: 1190 feet); 4) Pasadena Avenue District in Pasadena (length: 1260 feet); and, 5) Markham Place District in Pasadena (length: 610 feet). These cut-and-cover tunnels (in addition to the cut-and-cover tunnel in the vicinity of the South Pasadena High School proposed in the FEIS (1160 feet)), will encompass a total of 6000 feet of cut-and-cover tunnels.

Tree removal impacts will be reduced by identifying trees that can be relocated or incorporated into the highway planting plan instead of removal. The corridor will be professionally landscaped, with more trees replaced than removed.

An urban design consultant will be retained to work with the DAG's to assist in the restoration of historic properties or the establishment of public parks on cut-and-cover tunnels and in the aesthetic design of sound walls, retaining walls and other design details of interest to the community. The depth of earth cover over the tunnel caps will be sufficient to support a wide variety of trees and bushes. A visual consultant will develop photographs and videotape montage representations in key locations identified by the local officials. This will provide a good monitoring and public relations program in ensuring that good quality freeway aesthetics are implemented. Caltrans will provide for an independent professional review of landscape plans and architectural proposals.

An Urban Design Mitigation Plan will focus on 13 geographic subareas. For aesthetic purposes and to discourage graffiti, the Urban Design Mitigation Plan will include extensive planting of the freeway corridor using shrubs and clinging vines on both sides of the sound walls. The corridor will have more trees after the selected alternative is constructed than before. With the planned landscape and urban forest proposals, 6000 trees will be planted within the corridor. As these trees mature they will mitigate the impact of removing 6000 mature trees.

The city of Alhambra's main concern is the need for buffering their neighborhoods from the freeway and frontage roads. Heavy use of landscaping to buffer the freeway and discourage vandalism and graffiti is desired. Mitigation will include additional landscaping along both sides of soundwalls. Gateway entry improvements will include entry monument signs into the cities of Alhambra and Los Angeles, lighting and landscaping. Streetscape improvements will include landscaping, street lighting, street furniture, location signs, and other features along Valley Boulevard, Mission Road and Commonwealth Avenue.

The city of Los Angeles, in the El Sereno area, focused on using any vacant areas created by the project for replacement housing rather than for parks. Visual mitigation and pedestrian access was a special concern in the Huntington Drive interchange and Sierra Vista Elementary School area. Therefore, mitigation will include architectural ornamentation on the Huntington Drive bridge, replacement of trees in the median of Huntington Drive, creation of cul-de-sacs in neighborhoods on the north and south of the freeway, placement of large specimen trees in the loops formed by the interchange ramps, installation of landscaping buffers along the freeway using traditional California shrubs and trees, development of a five-acre park or landscaped buffer adjacent to Maycrest Road, architectural ornamentation on sound walls along with landscaping, and construction of a pedestrian access across the freeway connecting Sierra Vista Elementary School with the residential neighborhoods in Los Angeles to the east.

The city of South Pasadena's main concerns were grading, historic neighborhoods, South Pasadena High School, cut-and-cover tunnels and open space. Mitigation in South Pasadena will include a westerly realignment of Meridian Avenue to provide contiguous open space with the existing athletic field, the expansion of the high school athletic facilities and the relocation of four tennis courts to the cut-and-cover tunnel. This will allow expansion of the girls' soccer field to regulation size.

The city of Pasadena's primary issues were historic structures, neighborhood preservation, the Westridge School, cut-and-cover tunnels and open space. The West Pasadena Resident's Association preferred landscaping to create an "urban forest" instead of murals and public art.

Further details of the proposed mitigation and enhancement measures are documented in Appendix F of the SR 710 Meridian Variation Enhancement and Mitigation Advisory Committee Final Report dated June 1993 and in the "Proposed Decision" paper.

Noise Impacts

There are 18 sensitive noise receptor areas along the selected alternative which approach or exceed the noise abatement criteria or have substantial increases of 12 dBA over the ambient. The selected alternative will cause an overall increase in noise levels ranging from 3-17 dBA at sensitive land use areas along the Freeway Corridor. The preferred alternative in the FEIS would have increased noise levels by 3-30 dBA.

Mitigation (Indicated in the FEIS)

Soundwalls will be constructed along both sides of the freeway right-of-way or edge of pavement for the selected alternative, except for cut-and-cover tunnel locations. At certain residential locations, soundwalls walls will not be feasible or effective in attenuating traffic generated noise due to the geographical constraints or the configuration of the soundwalls and thus, will not be cost effective.

The placement of a 1160 foot long cut-and-cover tunnel in the vicinity of the South Pasadena High School will also have the ancillary effect of dramatically reducing noise levels at the school and nearby residences.

The freeway would be constructed below the adjacent terrain through about 40% of the El Sereno Community, 80% of the city of South Pasadena, and the entire length within the city of Pasadena. Depressing the freeway will have the ancillary effect of reducing the levels of freeway generated noise for adjacent receptors.

Soundwalls have been evaluated and will be provided to mitigate the noise levels which approach or exceed the FHWA noise abatement criteria. Table IV-17 in the FEIS lists the locations and the proposed sound walls. The final height and location of the soundwalls will be determined during final design and after further consultation with the property owners affected by the increased traffic noise levels, giving full consideration to their views and preferences.

Additional Mitigation for the Selected Alternative

The elimination of trucks from the project, with exceptions for local deliveries, will further reduce noise impacts by 3 to 5 dBA.

The 6.2 mile facility will be 40% elevated and 60% at grade in Alhambra, 80% depressed in El Sereno, and 100% depressed (except the crossing over SR 110) in both South Pasadena and Pasadena further reducing the noise impacts.

The provision of five additional cut-and-cover tunnels will reduce the need to construct soundwalls by approximately 10,000 linear feet. The 1992 FEIS included recommended soundwall heights for traffic noise levels that included trucks. With the elimination of trucks, except for local deliveries, the recommended height of soundwalls will be reduced depending on the new abatement levels and therefore, result in minimizing visual impacts. In any case, the final height and location of the soundwalls will be determined during final design and after further consultation with those individuals affected by increased traffic noise levels, giving full consideration to their views and preferences (See Noise Report dated March 1996).

Other noise mitigation measures will include the proper soundproofing of walls and windows in public buildings, where feasible, consistent with State and Federal requirements; proper grading and use of vegetation to attenuate noise; and, maintaining open communication between affected individuals and Caltrans to assess the need for noise mitigation measures. These mitigation measures will be achieved through each design advisory group in their respective community.

Socioeconomic Impacts

As described in the 1992 FEIS, there are seven major neighborhoods along the project corridor. Four of these neighborhoods, Alhambra, El Sereno in the city of Los Angeles, South Pasadena and Pasadena, will be adversely impacted by the project. The area impacted by the project in the community of El Sereno and the city of Alhambra, is predominantly Hispanic, the largest minority group in this area, based on the 1980 population census tracts. Within the cities of South Pasadena and Pasadena, the population in both the study area and in the selected alternative area were predominantly White in the 1980 census data. There are no substantial changes indicated in the 1990 census data, except that data for the population in census tract 4807.02 in South Pasadena shows it to have become predominantly Asian and the percentage of Asians is increasing in both Alhambra and South Pasadena.

There are no measurable populations within the project study area meeting the low-income definition. The Department of Health and Human Services definition of the poverty level is being used for low-income and is defined as \$15,150 for a family of four. The median income levels in the census tracts within the project study area and the census tracts that will be affected by the project range from \$24,798 in El Sereno to \$69,481 in Pasadena.

Mitigation (Indicated in the FEIS)

The project has been scaled down from an initial ten lane freeway to an eight-lane facility which would result in fewer impacts to the existing population.

Businesses would benefit in Alhambra and in Pasadena. An industrial area next to the existing stub of the SR 710 in Alhambra will gain improved access from the north and will become a more attractive location for new businesses. A large redevelopment project in Pasadena will receive improved access from the south.

Additional Mitigation for the Selected Alternative

Reductions in impacts along the length of the entire project have resulted from the reduction in the project footprint. Mitigation of the project impacts is generally commensurate with the type and magnitude of the impacts, as well as the feasibility, and the cost of mitigation. However, each community was provided opportunity and strongly encouraged to identify additional mitigation and enhancement measures according to individual community preference through the Meridian Variation Enhancement and Mitigation Advisory Committee. Additional opportunities will be provided through the DAG's to refine the mitigation and enhancement measures.

The project has a total of 6 cut-and-cover tunnels and will be constructed below the adjacent terrain through the entire city of South Pasadena (except for the crossing of SR 110) and the entire city of Pasadena. Pasadena and South Pasadena will have two cut-and-cover tunnels each. These design features will lessen any perceived neighborhood disruption by placing the facility below the line of sight and will be less visually intrusive than one that is at-grade or elevated. One of the four cut-and-cover tunnels will be built in the vicinity of the South Pasadena High School to restore access and community continuity and to mitigate visual impacts. At least two cut-and-cover tunnels will be constructed in El Sereno to help to restore access and community continuity. Extensive landscaping will be provided to help the freeway blend into the communities and to minimize the visual intrusion as much as possible.

Special attention will be given by Caltrans to coordinate planning and construction activities to assure that community services are not diminished.

- Substantive training and job opportunities will be provided to qualified residents of the affected communities during all phases of the project (final design to post-construction). Such training and jobs shall be separate from and in addition to those efforts that encourage minority hiring and the participation of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises.
- All phases of planning, design and construction shall incorporate meaningful citizen participation for each community and activities within their community. This participation will

include final design updates and modifications. An “ombudsperson” shall be appointed by FHWA and Caltrans to receive, investigate, and report independently to the affected communities regarding project activities and compliance.

- Wilson High School, for which a number of relocations will occur within the eastern boundaries of the school district, has a unique Transportation Careers Academy in place which provides training in engineering, urban land use planning and architecture. Caltrans will assist, support, and fund continuation of this Academy, integrating the SR 710 Project into the class curriculum. This support will occur during all phases of the project and will include up to 25 paid student intern positions.

Community Cohesion Impacts

The selected alternative will slice across a largely stable Hispanic community separating about 5% of the population of El Sereno from the main body of the community. The selected alternative will also divide and disrupt neighborhoods with large elderly populations in Pasadena, displacing about 6% of the population. In Pasadena, community disruption will occur through somewhat stable neighborhoods in the southern portion of the city affecting about 5.5% of the affected subarea. In western Alhambra, community disruption will occur through very stable neighborhoods affecting about 5% of the affected subarea.

Mitigation (Indicated in the FEIS)

The project will provide overcrossing/undercrossing facilities to maintain vehicular and pedestrian circulation across the freeway. These provisions will have the ancillary effect of mitigating the division of neighborhoods by allowing for continued neighborhood interactions and communications after freeway construction. In particular, there will be a connecting link to El Sereno via Newtonia Avenue and Huntington Drive. The freeway will be constructed below the adjacent terrain through the entire city of South Pasadena and the entire city of Pasadena. The depressed freeways will lessen the perceived neighborhood disruption by placing the facility below the line of sight and is less visually intrusive. The cut-and-cover tunnel in the vicinity of the South Pasadena High School will completely cover the freeway and allow for the continuation of a realigned north-south local street and facilitate continued access between alternate sides of the freeway. In Pasadena, community disruption will be mitigated by freeway overcrossings at Glenarm Street, Arlington Drive, Bellefontaine Street, California Boulevard, Del Mar Boulevard and Green Street.

Additional Mitigation for the Selected Alternative

There will be at least six cut-and-cover tunnels (including the cut-and-cover tunnel in the vicinity of the South Pasadena High School proposed in the FEIS (1160 feet)), that will total about 6000 feet of the project. At least five additional cut-and-cover tunnels will be provided at these locations: 1) Templeton to Poplar in El Sereno (length: 980 feet); 2) Near Sierra Vista School and Short Line Villa Tract Historic District in El Sereno (length to be determined) 3) Prospect Circle District in South Pasadena (length: 1190 feet); 4) Pasadena Avenue District in Pasadena (length: 1260 feet); and, 5) Markham Place District in Pasadena (length: 610 feet).

The freeway will be depressed in the residential area of El Sereno (city of Los Angeles) and as it enters South Pasadena per the “Proposed Decision”. The depressed freeway will lessen the perceived neighborhood disruption by placing the facility below the line of sight and will be less visually intrusive.

Street closures will be mitigated during design to restore or even enhance current neighborhood conditions.

Relocation Impacts

The selected alternative will result in the removal of 976 dwelling units and the displacement of 2400 people from the communities along the freeway corridor. The freeway will divide and disrupt established neighborhoods and some affordable dwelling units will be lost.

Final residential displacement totals are:

- The city of Los Angeles (El Sereno) 509 total units (220 already acquired)
- The city of Alhambra 25 total units (25 already acquired)
- The city of South Pasadena 299 total units (112 already acquired)
- The city of Pasadena 143 total units (143 already acquired)

Approximately 110 of the already acquired units are now excess property. Twenty-two businesses employing about 354 people will be displaced by the selected alternative. Most of these businesses serve local residents and are located either along Alhambra Road and Huntington Drive in El Sereno or along Mission Street in South Pasadena.

Mitigation (Indicated in the FEIS)

In conformance with the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, Caltrans will implement two programs to assist eligible residential displacees within the SR 710 alignment.

1. A bilingual Relocation Assistance Advisory Services Program will be designed to aid all eligible displacees in locating replacement housing units that will be comparable in size, price, and location to the units they presently occupy; and,
2. A replacement housing program that will compensate eligible displaced persons for certain costs incurred in their relocation.

The FEIS noted that the low vacancy rate in El Sereno will make it difficult to find relocation housing within the community for El Sereno displacees. This low vacancy rate problem remains unchanged. The city of South Pasadena has a relatively high percentage of population over the age of 65 and special considerations will be given to this group through the relocation assistance program to minimize any hardships encountered. The displaced businesses will be provided with relocation advisory services and under certain circumstances,

monetary benefits as provided for by the above cited Uniform Relocation Assistance Act. Based on the 1992 market analysis, there appears to be enough vacant commercial property near the displacement properties to which most of these businesses could be relocated.

Additional Mitigation for the Selected Alternative

- Reducing the project footprint has produced a savings of approximately 379 residential units, one business, and 288 students from displacement.
- Including provisions for special relocation assistance for senior citizens.
- Providing a program whereby non-Relocation Assistance Program (RAP) eligible re-renters are given relocation benefits.
- Enhancing the ability for re-renters to become homeowners, including the development of easements or other incentives for properties on cut-and-cover tunnels.
- Relocating South Pasadena's "Corporate Yard."
- Adjusting city boundaries to rationalize the delivery of neighborhood services and to enhance neighborhood identity. Caltrans has agreed to assist where possible.
- Creating a job placement and apprenticeship program to help individuals including a program to retrain members of the affected community.
- Soundproofing school buildings where determined to be necessary. Soundproofing of school buildings will have to be concurred in by the school officials. (e.g. As a means of reducing construction impacts such as construction dust in food and noise during lunchtime, a lunchroom will be constructed for the Sierra Vista Elementary School as part of the SR 710 Project).

Caltrans fully acknowledges that existing State statutes governing severance aid to school districts for State Highway projects have been rendered obsolete in recent times. Therefore, Caltrans is committed to work with the school districts and the State Legislature to revise appropriate sections of the Education Code.

The alignment shift to avoid the Short Line Villa Tract Historic District produced an additional saving of 71 residential dwelling units and 37 students from displacement.

Environmental Justice

Pursuant to Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (Federal Register, February 16, 1994, page 7629) requires federal agencies to "make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations". The land use and socioeconomic analyses in Chapter III, Section B, of the FEIS provided discussions of social, economic, and relocation effects on various socioeconomic

groups, including minorities, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related issues. Health and environmental analyses in Chapter IV, Sections 8, 16, 18, 19 and 20 of the FEIS, provided discussions of air quality impacts, noise impacts, hazardous materials exposure, visual impacts, cultural resource impacts and the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation for each affected minority and low-income population.

The FEIS identified several subareas with large populations of minority and/or low income groups, or groups perceived to have special problems during a relocation period. According to the 1990 census, the El Sereno subarea in particular was identified as having a high percentage of persons of Hispanic origin (about 81%). Alhambra subarea is predominately 58% minority, one of the South Pasadena census tracts, 4807.02 is no longer predominantly White, as it is now over 50% minority. The greatest community disruptions are in El Sereno.

The effects that this project has to the minority community have been an important issue that has helped to reshape the proposal and the accompanying mitigation since the FEIS. The extensive and extraordinary public involvement efforts in El Sereno were integral to the reshaping process. The selection of the Meridian Variation Alternative in the FEIS, and the rejecting of the Westerly Alternative was partially as a result of the more severe impacts of the Westerly Alternative on El Sereno. In selecting the Depressed Meridian Variation Alternative Reduced with Shift design variation, FHWA and Caltrans recognized that relocations in the El Sereno section of Los Angeles were going to be the highest of all municipalities. Several opportunities have occurred to remedy impacts to El Sereno. Initially the Mitigation and Enhancement Advisory Committee served as a mechanism for addressing mitigation in El Sereno. A subsequent set of negotiations with representatives of El Sereno has led to additional measures not identified during the Committee process. The specific mitigation and enhancements for El Sereno can be found in the "Route 710 Meridian Variation Enhancement and Mitigation Advisory Committee Final Report" and the November 14, 1997 "Proposed Decision".

The project record shows that impacts on minority and low-income communities have been considered and addressed. There has been extensive and extraordinary public involvement in each community. For example, a representative from each city along the project corridor had a seat on the Advisory Committee, and three open houses were held in January 1983 in each of the three communities of El Sereno, South Pasadena and Pasadena. In June 1983, three additional open houses were held in the same communities. Public hearings and open houses were held after the circulation of the second and third SDEIS. Workshops, public notices, press releases, information mailers and an on-site Public Outreach Office in El Sereno were types of outreach activities implemented for this project. These efforts will continue throughout construction of the project.

Since the FEIS in 1992, the efforts to lessen the impacts to El Sereno have been further refined. Although not specifically requested the following mitigation features for the entire corridor lessen impacts to El Sereno:

- Footprint reduction from 176' to 142' reducing relocation from 1426 units to 976 units in the corridor and 647 units to 509 units in El Sereno.
- Elimination of truck traffic on the selected alternative except for local deliveries.

- Caltrans will establish community DAG's with each of the impacted communities, including El Sereno, to consider the specific mitigation needs of their community.
- An Urban Design Plan.

There are those instances where specific mitigation measures were developed with El Sereno in mind that have been extended to the entire corridor. These are:

- Substantive training and job opportunities will be provided to qualified residents of the affected communities during all phases of the project (final design to post-construction). Such training and jobs shall be separate from and in addition to those efforts that encourage minority hiring and the participation of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises.
- Bilingual assistance during the relocation process.
- A Renter Mitigation Plan has been developed to make all renters eligible for moving cost payments and potentially eligible for replacement housing differential payments. This Renter Mitigation Plan will be a special benefit to renters in the corridor whose incomes are generally lower thereby limiting relocation opportunities. Renter benefits are a project specific enhancement not a statutory requirement.
- The appointment of a Caltrans representative to act as relocation advocate.

There is the third category of mitigation measures that responds to conditions that only apply to the El Sereno community and these are:

- Depressing the facility through 80% of El Sereno.
- Providing at least two cut-and-cover tunnels in El Sereno. Originally, cut-and-cover tunnels were provided for historic properties, but because of community cohesion concerns additional cut-and-cover tunnels have been added to El Sereno.
- Minimizing impacts to the Sierra Vista School. The Meridian Variation Alternative was 200 feet away from the school, whereas the selected alternative is over 500 feet away. A cut and cover section will be provided near the Sierra Vista Elementary School location. In addition, those mitigation measures proposed for Sierra Vista School including upgrades, soundproofing and air conditioning will be enhancements.

Housing in El Sereno has been a constant issue during the process. Unfortunately, replacement housing is not readily available in El Sereno. This is noted in the 1992 FEIS and remains unchanged. All displacees will be provided safe and sanitary housing as required by law. The FEIS addressed the relocation assistance advisory services guaranteed under the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act. A detailed relocation plan will be completed during final project design. This study, along with proposed phasing of the project construction, will identify housing availability at the time as well as the need for last resort housing.

With the reduced number of displacements, relocation phasing, the availability of reenter relocation benefits, and the provision for last resort housing as needed, replacement housing in the general area should be attainable for all displacees. Also, FHWA Region 9 Office of Civil Rights has completed an investigation on the issue of Caltrans' operation and maintenance of residences and structures. The Office of Civil Rights has found no evidence that El Sereno was treated differently than South Pasadena and Pasadena.

FHWA and Caltrans have further committed to further coordination with the communities as design development occurs.

Air Quality Impacts

The proposed Route 710 project is located in the South Coast nonattainment area. The FHWA and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) made a joint conformity determination on the SCAG 1996/97 to 2002/03 Regional Transportation Improvement Program and the 1994 Regional Mobility Element (RME) for the South Coast, South Central Coast, and Southeast Desert nonattainment air basins areas on June 26, 1996 for the TIP and April 14, 1995, for the RTP. The FHWA and FTA also made a conformity determination on SCAG's 1996/97 to 2002/03 TIP and the 1994 RME for Imperial County on May 12, 1995, and September 20, 1996, respectively. The 1994 RME is the most recent update of the SCAG Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) required by Federal and State laws.

In making the conformity determination, the FHWA and the FTA, in consultation with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), determined that SCAG's long range transportation plan (RME) and transportation improvement program (FTIP) are in conformance with the adopted State Implementation Plan (SIP), and that priority has been given to the timely implementation of transportation control measures (TCMs) contained in the SIP in accordance with 40 CFR Part 51. As part of their review, the FHWA and FTA specifically considered any significant comments related to the financial plans for the RME and FTIP required under 23 CFR Part 450.316(b)

The proposed Route 710 project is identified in the adopted and conforming 1994 RME and the 1996/97 to 2002/03 FTIP as an 8-lane freeway (6 mixed flow lanes and 2 high occupancy vehicle lanes) from I-10 to I-210. The design concept and scope of proposed Route 710 project is consistent with the air quality conformity analysis accepted by the Federal agencies. The FTA and the FHWA also found that the 1994 RME and 1996/97 to 2002/03 FTIP were developed based on a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 134 and section 49 U.S.C. 5303 of the Federal Transit Act.

As part of the Reevaluation of the Route 710 project, the project-level carbon monoxide analysis was updated using the most recent U.S. Environmental Protection Agency approved emissions model. The results of this project-level carbon monoxide analysis were coordinated with the FHWA, the FTA, the EPA, Caltrans, the California Air Resources Board, the LACMTA, and the South Coast Air Quality Management District. The results of the updated project-level carbon monoxide analysis show that the Route 710 project will not create any new carbon monoxide violations, or worsen the frequency and severity of any existing carbon monoxide violations.

Therefore, the Route 710 project is in conformance with the state implementation plan, and meets the requirements of the EPA Transportation Conformity Rule.

Cultural Resources Impacts

There were no significant archaeological sites found within the project corridor. However, there were thirty historic properties, including nine districts listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Twenty-two historic properties are affected directly by the selected alternative and are discussed in detail in various HPSR's and specifically listed under the Section 4(f) section below.

Coordination with the ACHP was initiated late in 1973 during preparation of the DEIS. The ACHP opened the SR 7 (now known as SR 710) case on October 30, 1973. A meeting and field review with FHWA, ACHP, the Department of Interior and SHPO was held in January 1975.

Another field review with FHWA, ACHP and SHPO was held in May 1983. Subsequent to this meeting the ACHP declared a failure to agree under 36 CFR Section 800.6(b)(7). A Panel Meeting was convened and held in Pasadena on August 15, 1983. Following this meeting, ACHP recommended that additional alternatives be studied. Caltrans examined and completed the study of these alternatives in the "Conceptual Study of the ACHP Recommended Alternatives for Route 7 Freeway Completion" on September 1984.

On November 26, 1984, a full ACHP Council session was held in South Pasadena. Four alternatives which the ACHP recommended for further study were evaluated and dismissed as not being feasible and prudent alternatives.

In the fall of 1988, FHWA requested the comments of the SHPO and ACHP concerning the effects of the Meridian Variation. The SHPO responded with a determination that the Meridian Variation Alternative will adversely affect historic properties and that there was not sufficient consideration of other alternatives to reduce impacts, and that the adverse effects render the alternative unacceptable. In two subsequent letters, the SHPO reaffirmed that there would be no further 106 consultation regarding SR 710. In the second letter, the SHPO also determined that if the Meridian Variation Alternative was selected, the mitigation measures outlined did constitute a reasonable approach to minimizing harm to historic properties.

The ACHP similarly concluded that the Meridian Variation Alternative adversely affects historic properties, there was not sufficient consideration of alternatives, and the No Build Alternative was preferable to the Meridian Variation Alternative.

The FHWA and the SHPO have agreed on the effect of each of the three build alternatives in the area of potential impact. No adverse effects were identified as resulting from any of the build alternatives to sites not taken. Indirect effects, particularly noise and air, do change the existing setting, but do not substantially impair the historic value of the resources. Their architectural value will not be impaired and they will still be eligible for the National Register.

As per 36 CFR § 800.6(c)(2), the July 7, 1983 ACHP letter declared a failure to agree and subsequently, FHWA considered the ACHP's comments in reaching a final decision. Since termination of section 106 consultation has occurred, there will be no Memorandum of Agreement. The FHWA has notified the ACHP of the final project decision; thereby completing the compliance requirements of Section 106 and the ACHP regulations. Nevertheless, despite

the failure to agree, there has been extensive coordination with the SHPO and the ACHP since 1993 in response to the CEQ referral. This was an unprecedented effort which involved the preparation and submittal of numerous documents between the SHPO, ACHP and interested preservation groups and in response to identification of new historic properties. In addition, FHWA requested that the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places make final determinations of eligibility for properties included in the Third Supplemental Historic Architectural Survey Report and the Fourth Supplemental Historic Property Survey Report.

Historic Building Relocation

The FEIS guidelines for historic buildings have been modified to contain modifications and changes that were made through the Advisory Committee process. Caltrans and FHWA have agreed to the suggestions and modifications suggested by the Committee. The guidelines have called for cut-and-cover tunnels beneath all affected historic districts, unless proven to be otherwise infeasible. The general policy that will be followed is that all National Register-eligible properties and districts will be relocated to their original locations on top of or in proximity to the cut-and-cover tunnel, to the extent possible to minimize any long term serious effects on their economic and social stability. Air rights will be returned to the residents so that the neighborhood can return to normal after construction. National Register-eligible or contributive historic property relocation and rehabilitation will be conducted in accordance with guidelines to be developed using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and in consultation with the SHPO, and preservation groups. All individually eligible National Register or contributive historic properties which cannot be feasibly returned to their original sites on the cut-and-cover tunnels will be relocated to compatible sites, location still to be determined, within the reconstructed historic districts, based upon relocation criteria designed to maintain National Register eligibility.

All affected buildings will be fully documented both before and after freeway construction. A detailed preservation plan addressing staging and security will be developed during the design phase of this project. Prior to construction, baseline documentation will record existing conditions to provide a model for future reconstruction and rehabilitation. Post-construction recordation will allow the Keeper of the National Register to determine whether each district and individually eligible property has maintained its National Register eligibility, which is a goal of this effort. The few buildings which cannot feasibly be preserved will be documented according to Historic American Building Survey (HABS) standards before being offered for sale to private parties. Restrictive covenants will ensure that the historic qualities of these properties are properly respected by their new owners. If, after a reasonable period of time, the restrictive covenants are found to discourage re-sale, they will be removed. If still no buyers are found, the buildings will be demolished. Copies of the HABS documentation will be supplied to local libraries, and historical societies, as well as any other designees assigned. The Arroyo Seco Parkway will be documented according to standards of the Historic American Engineering Record.

All construction change orders involving historic properties will be examined by Caltrans Environmental Planning Branch and preservation consultants before implementation. If warranted, the SHPO will also be consulted. All work on historic buildings will be supervised by

qualified historic architects and architectural historians, and performed in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and the State Historic Building Code. All contractors will be experienced, licensed and bonded for work on historic structures.

The conceptual plan for historic property relocation is on a property-by-property basis. Specific procedures for recordation, preparation of structures and fixtures for relocation, moving, storage, maintenance, re-sitting and rehabilitation of historic residences will be established using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards in consultation with the SHPO, ACHP and interested preservation groups.

A detailed discussion of the historic properties, their effects and measures to minimize harm is included in the 1998 Final Revised Section 4(f) Evaluation.

SECTION 4(f)

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 prohibits the Secretary of Transportation from approving any program or project "requiring the use of publicly owned land of a public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge of national, State or local significance, or land of an historic site of national, State, or local significance, only if (1) there is no prudent and feasible alternative to using that land; and (2) the program or project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to park, recreation area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or historic site resulting from the use." (49 U.S.C. §303(c))

Section 4(f) Resources Used

The SR 710 project involves the use of 11 historic properties (although historic districts consist of many contributing and even individually eligible properties for purposes of clear presentation historic districts are considered as one property). These properties are:

Bellmar Court, South Pasadena

The selected alternative will use the entire property requiring its complete removal. This property was previously adversely affected and the project's change does not alter this effect. This complex composed of four freestanding apartment units and an 8-car garage arranged around a landscaped court. It is not a good candidate for relocation because the complex occupies a 0.6 acre hillside site with a 10 to 1 slope which will be very difficult to find or to duplicate in another location. Due to the size and siting of the complex, moving it will be complicated and costly. Therefore, FHWA will document the property according to Historic Architectural Building Survey (HABS) standards prior to demolition as the appropriate mitigation for this historic resource.

Wynyate House, South Pasadena

The selected alternative will use 3,000 square feet (including construction easements) of the northeastern edge of the property along the east edge of the driveway at the side of the house. The wrought iron entrance gate and front yard landscaping will be removed and reconstructed. The freeway will be below grade in a 1,160 foot long cut-and-cover tunnel that begins south of Bank Street and ends at Lyndon Street. Construction of the 10-14'

soundwalls will be located across Lyndon Street to the north, paralleling the freeway, where the cut-and-cover tunnel ends and depressed facility begins. Soundwalls will be constructed as a residential noise abatement design feature and dense landscaping will obscure the walls from view. The Wynyate House and the South of Mission District are both in close enough proximity to the project that a choice had to be made to minimize harm to one or the other. Wynyate House is considered the more valuable historic resource. Therefore, there is less project harm to the Wynyate House with greater project impacts on the South of Mission Historic District.

East Wynyate, South Pasadena

The selected alternative will use the entire property. East Wynyate will be removed and returned to its original site on top of the cut-and-cover tunnel near the South Pasadena High School. It will be fully rehabilitated according to the Secretary of Interior's Standards. The cut-and-cover tunnel will eliminate the project's noise and visual effects in this location.

South of Mission Historic District, South Pasadena

The southwest corner of this District will be clipped by the selected alternative. Only one contributing historic building (1131 Glendon Way) will be used and relocated to an alternate site in a similar residential neighborhood. If there are no similar sites available, the building will be documented according to HABS standards before being offered for sale to private parties with preservation covenants. If no buyers are found after withdrawing covenants, the building will be demolished. Eight other contributing historic properties (1021, 1027, 1101, 1105, 1111, 1115, 1119 and 1123 Glendon Way) will have their backyards truncated as follows: 100 square feet from 1021 Glendon Way; 300 square feet from 1027 Glendon Way; 550 square feet from 1101 Glendon Way; 875 square feet from 1105 Glendon Way; 1750 square feet from 1111 Glendon Way; 2500 square feet from 1115 Glendon Way; 3000 square feet from 1119 Glendon Way; and 750 square feet from 1123 Glendon Way.

Construction of the retaining walls necessary for this depression will cause the backyards to range in depth from 25 feet to 40 feet. Instead of building retaining walls, construction of a cantilever over the freeway was considered but rejected as exceptionally costly and not a prudent expenditure of public funds. The 14 feet rear soundwalls will be screened from visibility along Glendon Way by the historic homes lining the street. Trees, shrubs and vines will be planted against the walls to lessen their visual impacts from the rear of the affected homes.

This historic District will have more impacts from the freeway due to the proximity of Wynyate House and South Pasadena High School. Mitigating the project's effects on the Wynyate House and High School to the fullest extent possible requires the project to use more of the historic District. Although the District may be reduced in size by one contributing house and parcel clips from eight backyards, its National Register eligibility is likely to be retained as a result of the proposed mitigation.

Arroyo Seco Parkway, Pasadena Freeway

There are two major Section 4(f) uses of this Parkway: 1) the depression and reconstruction of approximately 0.3 miles of the Parkway adjacent to the Prospect Street overcrossing, where the 710 Freeway crosses the Parkway; and 2) the construction of a viaduct across the Parkway. Construction of another viaduct over the Parkway will add another bridge to the existing 22 bridges that currently span the Parkway. The viaduct will be 146 feet wide and will be topped by 10 -14 feet soundwalls. About 5% of the Parkway will be affected by the Freeway. The design of the bridge railings on the viaduct will be compatible with the Parkway's historic character and will be determined during the final design stage.

Prospect Circle District, South Pasadena

This District will be bisected from north to south in a curving alignment as the alignment will follow Prospect Circle and cut off the southeast corner of the District from the rest of the District. Eight contributing properties (909 Oliver Street, 303 Meridian Avenue, 401, 411, 425, 430, 431 Prospect Circle, and 910 Buena Vista Street) and three partial takes will be used by the project, impacting the core of the historic District. Additionally, five houses (two contributing and three non-contributing properties- 441, 451, 461, 471 and 481 Prospect Circle) will become inaccessible.

The freeway would require 20 percent of the District's land area but the District would be restored completely with a 1190 foot long cut-and-cover tunnel which will mitigate the freeway impacts to the Prospect Circle District. The cut-and-cover tunnel will begin around 511 Prospect Street and end just north of the intersection of Meridian Avenue and Oliver Street. The cut-and-cover tunnel will enable the five houses listed above to regain street access. The eight contributing properties to be removed will be returned to their original locations and rehabilitated using the Secretary of Interior's Standards.

The Prospect Circle District will need to be reevaluated to assess its continued National Register eligibility as a result of the mitigation.

Thomson House, South Pasadena

The selected alternative avoids all but the property's southeastern corner, where 1,000 square feet will be used from along the side and rear of the property. The freeway will be approximately 25-30 feet below grade at this location. Soundwalls will mitigate the increase in noise levels. Despite a slight reduction in property acreage due to the project, the property is likely to retain its National Register eligibility as a fine local example of Prairie School residential design.

Warren D. Clark House, South Pasadena

The selected alternative will use the entire House for the project. It is proposed for relocation to a comparable site and will be fully rehabilitated according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The exact disposition of this property will be determined in consultation with the SHPO and local preservationists.

Whitney Smith House, South Pasadena

The selected alternative will use this property for the project. It is proposed for relocation to a comparable site and will be fully rehabilitated, along with its contributing landscaping, according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The exact disposition of this property will be determined in consultation with the SHPO and local preservationists.

Pasadena Avenue Historic District, South Pasadena

The Pasadena Avenue District will be bisected from north to south by the selected alternative. Twenty-six contributing properties and six partial takes will be used. To restore as much of the District as possible, a 1260 feet long cut-and-cover tunnel will be constructed beneath the District. The cut-and-cover tunnel will begin behind 224, 232 and 240 State Street and extend north to approximately 953-966 South Pasadena Avenue. This will allow 13 of the displaced contributing properties to return to their original locations on a cut and cover tunnel after freeway construction.

For technical reasons, the cut-and-cover tunnel cannot extend the full length of the District. Consequently, three properties on Columbia Street (231, 233, 269), four properties on Wigmore Drive (212, 215, 230 and 231), five properties on South Pasadena Avenue (866, 876, 888, 894 and 900) and one property, 177 Hurlbut Street, cannot be accommodated on the cut-and-cover tunnel. These 13 remaining contributing properties will be “homeless” since they cannot be returned to their original sites. Eleven contributing properties will be relocated nearby. Relocation will be feasible and the plan will be to reconstruct the historic District although it will be reduced in size. Possible relocation sites will continue to be under negotiation and will be decided in consultation with the SHPO and the local preservationists.

Markham Place Historic District, Pasadena

The eastern edge of this District which fronts Pasadena Avenue will be directly used by the project. Nine full and two partial takes of contributing properties will need to be used. Seven of the nine properties will be relocated. A 610-foot long cut-and-cover tunnel will be constructed at the District’s southeastern edge. The buildings at 763, 765, 779, and 801 S. Pasadena Avenue and 203 Bellfontaine Street will be returned to their original locations after the cut-and-cover tunnel is constructed. The buildings at 595 and 679 Pasadena Avenue will also be placed upon the cut-and-cover tunnel at sites to be determined in consultation with the SHPO and local preservationists.

Relocation possibilities for the properties at 202-204 and 206-216 California Boulevard are uncertain at this time. There will not be enough room on top of the cut-and-cover tunnel to accommodate these structures and there will not be any nearby vacant parcels to receive them. If it is determined that it is infeasible to relocate them, they will be documented according to HABS standards before demolition.

Although eight of the fifteen lots along Pasadena Avenue will be lost from the historic District, only two contributing structures will be removed. This will represent a loss of 3% of the District’s contributors and the District will retain its National Register eligibility. A soundwall along the rear of the exposed properties on St. John Avenue will mitigate noise impacts.

Historic Resources Not Used But Identified as Adversely Affected

Short Line Villa Tract Historic District, El Sereno.

The previous Meridian Variation Alternative Reduced clipped the northwest quadrant of the Short Line Villa Tract Historic District and resulted in the removal of 16 contributing and 10 non-contributing properties. Over one-third of the district would have been adversely impacted by the project and more minimizing strategies were needed. Consequently, the alignment was shifted slightly north and west to completely avoid the District. The Depressed Meridian Variation Alternative Reduced with Shift design variation will now be depressed and will be between 40 and 180 feet west of the District's westernmost boundary, thereby avoiding any use. The freeway will be screened by lush vegetation. Hence, the freeway and the proposed soundwalls will not adversely impact the District visually. And, the proximity impacts do not cumulatively or individually substantially impair the historic District.

The following four properties are within the Short Line Villa Tract Historic District:

Ezra Scattergood House, El Sereno neighborhood, Los Angeles

With the design shift around the Short Line Villa Tract, this historic property will be 530 feet (more than two blocks) away from the freeway. Because the setting is not the major aspect of the qualities which make this property eligible for the National Register, changes to the property's surroundings will not affect its National Register eligibility. Soundwalls will be constructed as a residential noise abatement design feature and dense landscaping will obscure the walls from view. Therefore, the proximity impacts do not substantially impair the characteristics for which the Scattergood House is eligible.

William Jacobson House, El Sereno neighborhood, Los Angeles

The property is located two blocks from the construction zone. Soundwalls will be constructed as a residential noise abatement design feature and dense landscaping will obscure the walls from view. Therefore, the proximity impacts do not substantially impair the characteristics for which the Jacobson House is eligible.

Louise and Ruth Smith House, El Sereno neighborhood, Los Angeles

This property is located two blocks from the construction zone. Soundwalls will be constructed as a residential noise abatement design feature and dense landscaping will obscure the walls from view. Therefore, the proximity impacts do not substantially impair the characteristics for which the Smith House is eligible.

Conaway-Penrose House, El Sereno neighborhood, Los Angeles

This property is located two blocks from the construction zone. The rolling topography and existing mature treescape between the freeway and the Conaway-Penrose house presently mitigate the presence of the freeway. Soundwalls will be constructed as a residential noise abatement design feature and dense landscaping will obscure the walls from view. Therefore, the proximity impacts do not substantially impair the characteristics for which the Conaway-Penrose House is eligible.

Mabel Packard House, South Pasadena

The proposed freeway will be shifted between a ½ block to one block west of the property's rear lot line. The house faces Berkshire Avenue and the new freeway will be located to the west between Alpha and Maycrest Avenues. Proposed sound walls will mitigate noise, while dense landscaping will obscure the sound wall from view. The terrain in this area is hilly, and the mature treescape reduces sight lines. The row of houses on the east side of Alpha Avenue, behind and to the west of the Packard House, will remain in place, further screening the depressed freeway from view.

The setting is not a major aspect of the qualities which make this property eligible for the National Register. Because of the hilly topography, distance involved, houses that remain behind this property and screening, the proposed project will not affect the Packard House nor diminish the historic integrity of the property.

Grokowsky House, South Pasadena

The alignment shift will move the proposed depressed freeway across the street and 140 feet to the west, entirely avoiding the Grokowsky House. Air and noise impacts are below State and Federal criteria and thus, will not substantially impair the eligible characteristics of this House.

Otake-Nambu House, South Pasadena

Like the Meridian Variation Alternative, the Selected Alternative would locate the freeway 10 feet away from the Otake-Nambu House and below grade in a 1,160-foot-long cut-and-cover tunnel that begins south of Bank Street and ends at Lyndon Street. The adjacent house will be removed. Much of the existing streetscape will be restored on top of the cut-and-cover tunnel. Extensive landscaping will also minimize visual impacts. Meridian Avenue will be replaced on top of the cut-and-cover. The Enhancement and Mitigation Advisory Committee recommendation to realign Meridian Avenue toward the west of its existing location to accommodate expansion of the South Pasadena High School playing fields on top of the cut-and-cover tunnel has been incorporated into the project design. Freeway generated noise would be negligible at this location as result of these design features. Because the setting is not a major aspect of the qualities which make the Otake-Nambu House eligible for the National Register, proximity impacts will not substantially impair the significance of the property. Nonetheless, a cut-and-cover tunnel constructed to minimize community disruption and to enhance school facilities, along with landscaping, will substantially reduce any proximity impacts. Therefore, the proximity impacts do not substantially impair the characteristics for which the District is eligible.

Pierce House, South Pasadena

Under the Selected Alternative, the depressed freeway will be constructed approximately 80 feet from the southwest corner of the Pierce House property. The freeway will be approximately 45 feet below grade and will have retaining walls supporting it. Adjacent houses between the Pierce House and the freeway will remain, screening the new facility from the Pierce House property. Proposed sound walls along the project's right-of-way will reduce noise levels.

Landscaping will further screen the freeway and reduce any visual impact. The setting is not a major aspect of the qualities which make this property eligible for the National Register. With the buffer of existing houses between the Pierce House and the freeway, the screening provided by dense landscaping, and construction of sound walls, the proximity impacts do not substantially impair the characteristics for which the Pierce House is eligible.

Riggins House, South Pasadena

The project will be adjacent to the property's southeastern corner, and is approximately 25-30 feet below grade. Proposed soundwalls will reduce noise levels. Because the setting is not a major aspect of the qualities which make the Riggins House eligible for the National Register, the addition of soundwalls will not substantially impair the significance of the property. Nonetheless, landscaping will screen them from the property's viewshed. Soundwalls will be constructed as a residential noise abatement design feature and dense landscaping will obscure the walls from view. Therefore, the proximity impacts do not substantially impair the characteristics for which the Riggins House is eligible.

Buena Vista Historic District, South Pasadena

As a result of the reduced freeway width and the addition of the Prospect Circle cut-and-cover Tunnel, the Meridian Variation Alternative Reduced and the Depressed Meridian Variation Alternative Reduced with Shift design variation moved the project 45 feet from the boundary of the District and will eliminate any use of the Buena Vista Historic District. The reduction in right of way width will result in complete avoidance of this tiny, turn-of-the-century district of architect-designed mansions. The District was described as adversely impacted in the FEIS as a result of the partial right-of-way take from one property. The freeway will be approximately 45 feet away from the District's western edge and in a cut-and-cover tunnel, 40-45 feet below grade. The proposed soundwalls will reduce noise levels in the surrounding community and will be located along the alignment, southwest and outside the District boundaries. Because the setting is not the major aspect of the qualities which make the District eligible for the National Register, the addition of soundwalls will not substantially impair the significance of the property. Nonetheless, landscaping will screen them from the District's viewshed. Soundwalls will be constructed as a residential noise abatement design feature and dense landscaping will obscure the walls from view. Therefore, the proximity impacts do not substantially impair the characteristics for which the District is eligible.

OTHER RESOURCES NOT USED

South Pasadena High School Playing Fields

The freeway will avoid the playing fields. The Meridian Variation Alternative presented in the FEIS will be depressed 30 feet below grade in the vicinity of the high school playing fields, and a 1,160 foot cut-and-cover tunnel would have been provided adjacent to the playing fields. Any appreciable freeway-generated noise or pollutants will be negligible at this location as a result of these design features. The Advisory Committee recommended realigning Meridian Avenue westerly to provide contiguous open space with the athletic field and thereby enabling its expansion. It is concluded that with the present design and enhancement measures the project will not substantially impair the use of the high school playing field.

Orange Grove Park

The freeway is designed to avoid the park. The Meridian Variation Alternative presented in the FEIS will be depressed 30 to 40 feet below ground in the vicinity of the Park. The edge of the freeway pavement will be about 140 feet east of the Park. The ambient noise level at Orange Grove Park is 61 dBA. Without noise mitigation, noise levels at the Park are expected to increase to 65 dBA by 2015. However, with the construction of a 10-foot high soundwall, noise levels are expected to be 59 dBA. Only the top of the soundwall will be visible from the park, located well below the level of the existing multi-story buildings that will be removed for the freeway. Air pollution studies predict that neither State nor Federal air quality standards will be exceeded at the Park. Soundwalls will be constructed as a noise abatement design feature and dense landscaping will obscure the walls from view. Therefore, the proximity impacts do not substantially impair the use of the Park.

Singer Park

Singer Park is a 2.89 acre neighborhood park located along California Boulevard; it is an element of the Markham Place District, which is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. At one time, the freeway design would have encroached on this park, requiring removal of all the historic homes across the street from the park, along the east side of St. John Avenue. Subsequent adjustments and refinements as reflected in the Meridian Variation Alternative presented in the FEIS have made this taking unnecessary, and the homes will remain to provide a buffer between the Park and the freeway, which will be depressed 30 feet below ground. Ambient noise levels at the park are 55 dBA. Without noise attenuation, noise levels at the Park are predicted to rise to 64 dBA after freeway construction. A 10-foot high noise wall will reduce noise levels at the park to 58 dBA. Air quality studies indicated that there would be no exceedance of State or Federal ambient air quality standards at the park. As an enhancement measure for Singer Park, the Advisory Committee recommended a low seat wall on the Park's perimeter along St. John Avenue, constructed of concrete block, faced with arroyo stone and clinker brick. To discourage graffiti, ficus vines will be planted adjacent to the wall. Traffic volumes on St. John are expected to decrease with the proposed freeway, but those on California Boulevard are expected to increase. With the incorporation of the foregoing design and enhancement measures, the proximity impacts do not substantially impair the use of Singer Park.

Section 4(f) Conclusion

Based upon the considerations outlined in the Final Revised Section 4(f) Evaluation, FHWA has determined that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of the eleven historic properties discussed above and the proposed action includes all possible planning to minimize harm resulting from such use. Furthermore, specific procedures for recordation, preparation of structures and fixtures for relocation, moving, storage, maintenance, re-siting and rehabilitation of the above historic buildings will be established using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation in consultation with the SHPO, ACHP and interested preservation groups.

CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

Freeway construction activities will result in several inconvenience causing impacts. These impacts can be categorized as follows:

- Airborne dust due to clearing, grubbing, hauling, and construction activities.
- The use of local and regional arterials to haul excess material to disposal sites.
- Increase in noise levels due to construction activities and equipment.
- Temporary traffic detours.
- Mud and water runoff due to rain and dust control.

Mitigation (Indicated in the FEIS)

Construction impacts are mitigated on two levels: (1) direct intervention methods; and, (2) construction procedures that have an ancillary effect of lessening construction impacts below the levels that will occur if these procedures were not employed.

Direct intervention methods are typically active measures contained in the Caltrans Standard Specifications or local ordinances pertaining to the mitigation of construction impacts. Contractors are required by the Standard Specifications to control dust. The impact of noisy construction equipment is controlled by restricting operating times to periods of normal human activity and compliance to the Standard Specifications and local ordinances.

Traffic impacts during construction will be addressed by implementation of a Traffic Management Plan (TMP). TMP's include the following:

- a. Staging of construction activities
- b. Providing detours around construction areas
- c. Limiting work on arterial streets to off-peak hours
- d. Confining haul routes to designated streets
- e. Providing a public relations and media campaign to inform residents and motorists of upcoming activities.

Noise related activities will be confined to normal daylight hours when feasible.

Additional Mitigation for the Selected Alternative

Reduction of the selected freeway cross-section from 176 feet to 142 together with the elimination of the SR 710/110 interchange will reduce the duration of construction assuming consistent funding. Encouraging the use of fast-track construction techniques to speed construction completion times will be in effect throughout the project.

Measures identified in the FEIS to mitigate construction impacts on air, noise, traffic, and water runoff have been enhanced for implementation. DAG's will be involved in determining the specific measures to be utilized.

Construction Air Quality Impacts

Impacts to ambient air quality will occur as a result of construction activities. Fugitive dust and particulate matter, including those less than ten microns in size (PM₁₀), emissions will be generated during project excavation and filling. Construction equipment and off-site vehicles used for hauling debris and supplies will also produce emissions during the construction. The pollutants of primary concern include fugitive dust, PM₁₀, reactive organic gases, oxides of nitrogen, CO and, to a lesser extent, sulfur dioxides. Because the variables affecting construction emissions (e.g. type of construction vehicles, timing and phasing of construction activities, haul routes, etc.) cannot be determined until the project is ready for construction, no estimate of construction emissions can be undertaken. However, project construction will be conducted in accordance with all Federal, State and local regulations that govern construction activities and emissions from these vehicles. Specific mitigation measures that can be utilized will be identified in a dust control plan prepared and submitted to the South Coast Air Quality Management District prior to project construction. These mitigation measures comprise the following:

1. Stabilize construction roads and dirt piles with water and/or chemicals.
2. Limit speeds on unpaved construction roads.
3. Remove dirt spilled onto paved roads daily.
4. Cease grading and excavation activities when wind speeds exceed 25 miles per hour and during extreme air pollution episodes.
5. Require covering of all haul trucks.
6. Phase grading to minimize the area of disturbed soils.
7. Phase construction to minimize daily emissions.
8. Ensure proper maintenance of construction vehicles to maximize efficiency and minimize emissions.
9. Re-vegetate road medians and slopes, promptly.

While emissions from construction activities and equipment are an unavoidable consequence of project construction, an aggressive mitigation plan will serve to minimize impacts to ambient air quality and the nuisance impacts to the public in proximity to the project corridor. Other mitigation measures will include temporary drainage facilities and the use of erosion control strategies.

ADDITIONAL MITIGATION ENHANCEMENTS FOR EACH CITY

Additional measures will be implemented to visually enhance the SR 710 corridor. These enhancement measures differ from city to city, based on the desires of the community (as identified in the Urban Design Mitigation Report for the SR 710 Meridian Variation Enhancement and Mitigation Advisory Committee). The following is the mitigation suggested by the SR 710 Enhancement and Mitigation Advisory Committee accepted by Caltrans and contained in the "Proposed Decision" for the communities in the proposed 710 corridor:

(Note: The same mitigation item may be shown in more than one city as the streets with suggested mitigation pass through multiple cities.)

ALHAMBRA

- ! Institute streetscape design elements on Alhambra Road, for one block east and west of the 710 corridor, including landscaping, ornamental street lighting, paving, benches, tree grates, trash receptacles, signing, and other design features.
- ! Plant street trees in the median of Huntington Drive to replace those lost during freeway construction. Trees will be replaced to match existing trees.
- ! Institute streetscape design elements on Valley Boulevard (for one block east and west of the 710 corridor - that are compatible with the Valley Boulevard Streetscape Design Plan), including landscaping, ornamental street lighting, paving, benches, tree grates, trash receptacles, signing, and other design features.
- ! Institute streetscape design elements on Commonwealth Avenue, for one block east and west of the 710 corridor, including landscaping, ornamental street lighting, paving, benches, tree grates, trash receptacles, signing, and other design features.
- ! Institute streetscape design elements on Huntington Boulevard, for one block east and west of the 710 corridor, including landscaping, ornamental street lighting, paving, benches, tree grates, trash receptacles, signing, and other design features.

EL SERENO (city of Los Angeles)

- ! Plant freeway corridor (in the Valley Boulevard area) with a rich landscaped environment to discourage vandalism and graffiti. Include recommendations that shrubs and clinging vines be planted on both sides of the sound walls.
- ! Institute streetscape design elements on Commonwealth Avenue, for one block east and west of the 710 corridor, including landscaping, ornamental street lighting, paving, benches, tree grates, trash receptacles, signing, and other design features.
- ! Provide special architectural treatment for Valley Boulevard and Huntington Drive bridges.
- ! Institute streetscape design elements on Huntington Drive, for one block east and west of the 710 corridor, including landscaping, ornamental street lighting, paving, benches, tree grates, trash receptacles, signing, and other design features.
- ! Construct a cut-and-cover tunnel (length 980 feet), between Templeton and Poplar. Use of the top of the cut-and-cover tunnel will be decided according to community priorities. The three proposed alternatives for the top of the Templeton Area cut-and-cover tunnel, include: (1) additional residences to visually match the existing community, (2) a new visually aesthetic 9 acre park for the community (much needed since the area only has one other park), or (3) a mix of the visually attractive park and community-matching residential structures. Caltrans will consider extending the cut-and-cover tunnel to enhance opportunities for additional residential structures or community facilities.

- ! Provide landscape improvements in the Templeton Street area consisting of street trees and park landscaping. During design, consideration will be given to providing pocket parks utilizing remnant right-of-way parcels.
- ! Ensure that the bridge at Huntington Drive (near Sierra Vista School), is constructed so that it exhibits architectural treatment similar to other bridges in the local community.
- ! Institute streetscape design elements on Alhambra Road, for one block east and west of the 710 corridor, including landscaping, ornamental street lighting, paving, benches, tree grates, trash receptacles, signing, and other design features.
- ! Plant street trees in the median of Huntington Drive to replace those lost during freeway construction. Trees will be replaced to match existing trees.
- ! Develop a beautiful 5 acre park adjacent to Maycrest Road.
- ! Depress the freeway from a point between Alhambra Avenue and Templeton Street, in El Sereno, to the south end of the cut-and-cover tunnel under Bank Street in South Pasadena, as described in the "Proposed Decision".
- ! Construct a cut-and-cover tunnel (length to be determined) as described in the "Proposed Decision" north of Huntington Drive in the vicinity of the Sierra Vista School and the Short Line Villa Tract Historic District.

SOUTH PASADENA

- ! Construct historic architectural ornamentation treatment for Columbia Street and Monterey Road bridges.
- ! Institute streetscape design elements on Monterey Road, for one block east and west of the 710 corridor, including landscaping, ornamental street lighting, paving, benches, tree grates, trash receptacles, signing, and other design features.
- ! Use "historic-style" light standards to match existing community styles. Similar fixtures will be considered for the bridge designs.
- ! Plant street trees in the median of Huntington Drive to replace those lost during freeway construction. Trees will be replaced to match existing trees.
- ! Include slope treatments in the Pine Street Neighborhoods that include the use of contour grading to create a more natural appearance, generous landscaping to blend the slope with its surroundings, and the use of retaining walls to minimize slope height.
- ! Institute streetscape design elements on Columbia Street, for one block east and west of the 710 corridor, including landscaping, ornamental street lighting, paving, benches, tree grates, trash receptacles, signing, and other design features.

- ! Construct a cut-and-cover tunnel (length 1160 feet) in the South Pasadena High School area that provides the opportunity for four acres of additional open space and recreational activity areas. Included in this proposal is a westerly alignment of Meridian Avenue that will provide for expansion of the girls' soccer field, more usable land, increased safety, better area access, and more contiguous open space in conjunction with the existing athletic field.
- ! Develop streetscape and urban design elements such as landscaping, ornamental street lighting and other design features. The urban design proposals will be determined by the Mission Street Specific Plan. The city of South Pasadena and Caltrans will coordinate the urban design improvements from Orange Grove Boulevard to Diamond Street.
- ! Construct a cut-and-cover tunnel (length 1190 feet) in the Buena Vista and Prospect Circle neighborhoods, as identified in the Historic Mitigation plans, that will allow for the relocation of historic structures including streetscape elements that reflect the existing neighborhood.
- ! Depress the freeway from a point between Alhambra Avenue and Templeton Street, in El Sereno, to the south end of the cut-and-cover tunnel under Bank Street in South Pasadena, as described in the "Proposed Decision".

PASADENA

- ! Provide special architectural treatment for Colorado Boulevard bridge.
- ! Use "historic-style" light standards to match existing community styles. Similar fixtures will be considered for the bridge designs.
- ! Institute streetscape design elements on Columbia Street, for one block east and west of the 710 corridor, including landscaping, ornamental street lighting, paving, benches, tree grates, trash receptacles, signing, and other design features.
- ! Provide historic architectural treatment for Columbia Street bridge.
- ! Institute streetscape design elements on Colorado Boulevard (for one block east and west of the 710 corridor), including landscaping, ornamental street lighting, paving, benches, tree grates, trash receptacles, signing, and other design features, that are compatible with the Old Town Master Plan and Downtown Urban Design Plan.
- ! Construct a cut-and-cover tunnel (length 1260 feet) in the Pasadena Avenue Historic District that will allow for expansion of the Westridge School athletic field by either relocating the tennis courts to the existing Caltrans maintenance station, or relocating the Westridge faculty parking lot to the existing Caltrans maintenance station. Additionally, the cut-and-cover tunnel will allow for more area to relocate historic structures and a "Historic park" with an interpretive center and gazebo.

- ! Institute streetscape design elements on Del Mar Avenue (for one block east and west of the 710 corridor), including landscaping, ornamental street lighting, paving, benches, tree grates, trash receptacles, signing, and other design features, that are compatible with the Downtown Urban Design Plan.
- ! Construct a cut-and-cover tunnel (length 610 feet) in the Markham Place Historic District, which will restore the existing traffic circulation and enable the replacement of significant historic structures to the area.
- ! Preserve and protect the existing Canary Island Palms on Pasadena Avenue. Provide an eight-foot minimum parkway to provide adequate planting area for the palms.
- ! Institute streetscape design elements on California Boulevard, for one block east and west of the 710 corridor, including landscaping, ornamental street lighting, paving, benches, tree grates, trash receptacles, signing, and other design features.
- ! Provide a low seat wall for Singer Park which will provide a separation from the surrounding area, without creating a visual barrier. Selected openings will be constructed in the wall to allow access and area circulation. Walls will be constructed of concrete blocks, faced with arroyo stone and clinker brick. Ficus vines, or possibly a hedge row, will be planted adjacent to the seat wall to discourage graffiti.

MONITORING OR ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

Construction and mitigation commitments will be assured by the implementation of a SR 710 Mitigation Monitoring and Enforcement Plan. Compliance to the Plan will be monitored by the use of an independent oversight Mitigation Monitoring Team. The team will consist of Caltrans experts and local advisory members. A representative from the Caltrans Office of Environmental Planning will be on the team, which may also involve consultant specialists. A Mitigation Monitoring and Enforcement Plan will provide equal opportunity for further involvement in mitigation commitments to all affected communities.

Mitigation monitoring will be in accordance with the Caltrans Standard Program contained in Article 1-2.4 of the Environmental Handbook, Volume 1. The FHWA will continue to be involved in further review of project development and construction.

COMMENTS RECEIVED ON THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

As part of the Record of Decision, five volumes of comments have been compiled and organized to reflect the type of issues and concerns which have been received on this project since the approval of the FEIS. Each volume has a summary matrix which has been incorporated as part of this ROD. Copies of the comment letters are on file and are available for review upon request. The volumes are separated as follows:

Volume I: Record of Comments Received on the Route 710 Final Environmental Impact Statement; approximately 210 comment letters were received.

Volume II: Record of Comments Received on the Route 710 Meridian Variation Enhancement and Mitigation Advisory Committee Final Report (June 1993); approximately 110 comment letters were received.

Volume III: Record of Comments Received on the Evaluation of Multi-Mode (Low Build) Plans; approximately 45 comment letters were received.

Volume IV: Record of Comments Received on the Short Line Villa Tract Historic District Alignment Shift; approximately 270 comment letters were received.

Volume V: Record of Comments Received on Environmental Justice, Historic Preservation and Other Comments Received on the October 3, 1997 meeting; approximately 285 comment letters were received.

All these letters and comments have been considered as part of the decision making process for this project.

CONCLUSION

Based upon a careful consideration of all the social, economic, and environmental evaluations contained in the FEIS, the Environmental Reevaluation and the Final Revised Section 4(f) Evaluation, the input received from other agencies, organizations, and the public; and the factors and project commitments outlined above, it is the decision of the FHWA to approve the selection of the Depressed Meridian Variation Alternative Reduced with Shift design variation with special conditions as stipulated above. This ROD will permit Caltrans to proceed with the design of the project and directs the preparation of a Supplemental EIS before construction will be authorized.

RECORD OF DECISION APPROVAL

Date

**Deputy Regional Administrator
Region Nine
Federal Highway Administration**