



BRIEFING: JUNE 9, 2015 BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM #10

TO: Chairman Richard and Board Members

FROM: Michelle Boehm, Southern California Regional Director

DATE: June 9, 2015

RE: Update on the Supplemental Alternatives Analysis Report for the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section and Update on Progress in the Corridor

Purpose

This is not an action item; no decisions are being presented to or sought from the Board.

The purpose of this agenda item is to update the Board on work accomplished on the Palmdale to Burbank Section since the release of the May 2014 Palmdale to Los Angeles Supplemental Alternatives Analysis (SAA). This work is presented in the 2015 SAA that is included as an attachment to this board item. Consistent with the briefing provided in June 2014, proposed alternatives have been developed and refined based on additional data collection and field studies, feedback received from scoping, and outreach to communities, agencies, and stakeholders. This process, and the refinement of the alignments, are documented in the aforementioned 2015 SAA and presented here to inform the Board about the process and the current status of activities on the Palmdale to Burbank Section.

Background

In 2001, the Authority, in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), started a tiered environmental review process for the statewide high-speed rail system. The 2005 first-tier California High-Speed Rail Program Environmental Document described the program alignment, which included a corridor between Palmdale and Los Angeles. The timeline of activities since then includes the following:

- The 2007 release of public scoping notices and scoping meetings presented the proposed Palmdale to Los Angeles Project Section (P-LA) study area to receive agency and public comments on the issues that should be analyzed in the environmental document. The 2007 Scoping Report summarized the scoping process, documented the comments received during the process, and outlined the next steps in the development of the environmental document.
- The 2010 Preliminary Alternatives Analysis presented and evaluated the initial alignment alternatives systematically using established criteria. Two subsequent Supplemental

Alternatives Analyses (SAA), prepared in 2011 and 2012, further developed the alignment alternatives and station options based on stakeholder feedback.

- The 2014 SAA further refined alignment alternatives and station options and discussed the evaluation of Palmdale to Burbank and Burbank to Los Angeles as two separate Project Sections.
- The July 2014 scoping notices amended the 2007 P-LA scoping notices, providing for separate environmental documents for the Palmdale to Burbank and Burbank to Los Angeles project sections.
- The 2015 SAA included as an attachment to this board item presents the latest project refinements and alternatives under consideration.

Discussion

Since the May 2014 SAA was published, the Authority has engaged in a comprehensive public discussion and engagement program for the Palmdale to Burbank section. Over 165 individual and group meetings along the routes have been conducted over the course of the past year. This has included four rounds of broad community meetings, community working group meetings, briefings to community, business, and civic organizations, meetings with our agency partners, the September 2014 Board meeting, and this June 2015 Board meeting. The coordination effort has resulted in a tremendous amount of feedback for the Palmdale to Burbank project section and the different alignment proposals under consideration. This public engagement and input helped influence the refinement and development of the alternatives being considered in the SAA.

Highlights of the specific work conducted on the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section since the May 2014 SAA and incorporated in the 2015 SAA are presented in the table below.

2015 SAA Highlights	
Palmdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved connections to Metrolink • Improved connections to the planned interstate high-speed train system planned to operate from Palmdale to Las Vegas • Avoidance of existing freight railroad operations • Avoidance of Lake Palmdale • Reduced impacts to the northern Acton community
Acton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoidance of impacts to community resources and schools
Santa Clarita	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved track geometry • Avoidance of conflicts with existing and proposed facilities
San Fernando Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update alignment based on continued engagement with stakeholders, including Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) and Southern California Regional Rail Authority (Metrolink). • Update platform options for the proposed Burbank Airport Station based on site conditions, connectivity opportunities, and stakeholder and community feedback.
Increased Range of Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New, shorter alignments to connect Palmdale and Burbank

Based on the refinements and evaluations mentioned above, studies will continue on the range of alternatives for the Palmdale to Burbank project section presented in the SAA, and shown in the exhibit below.

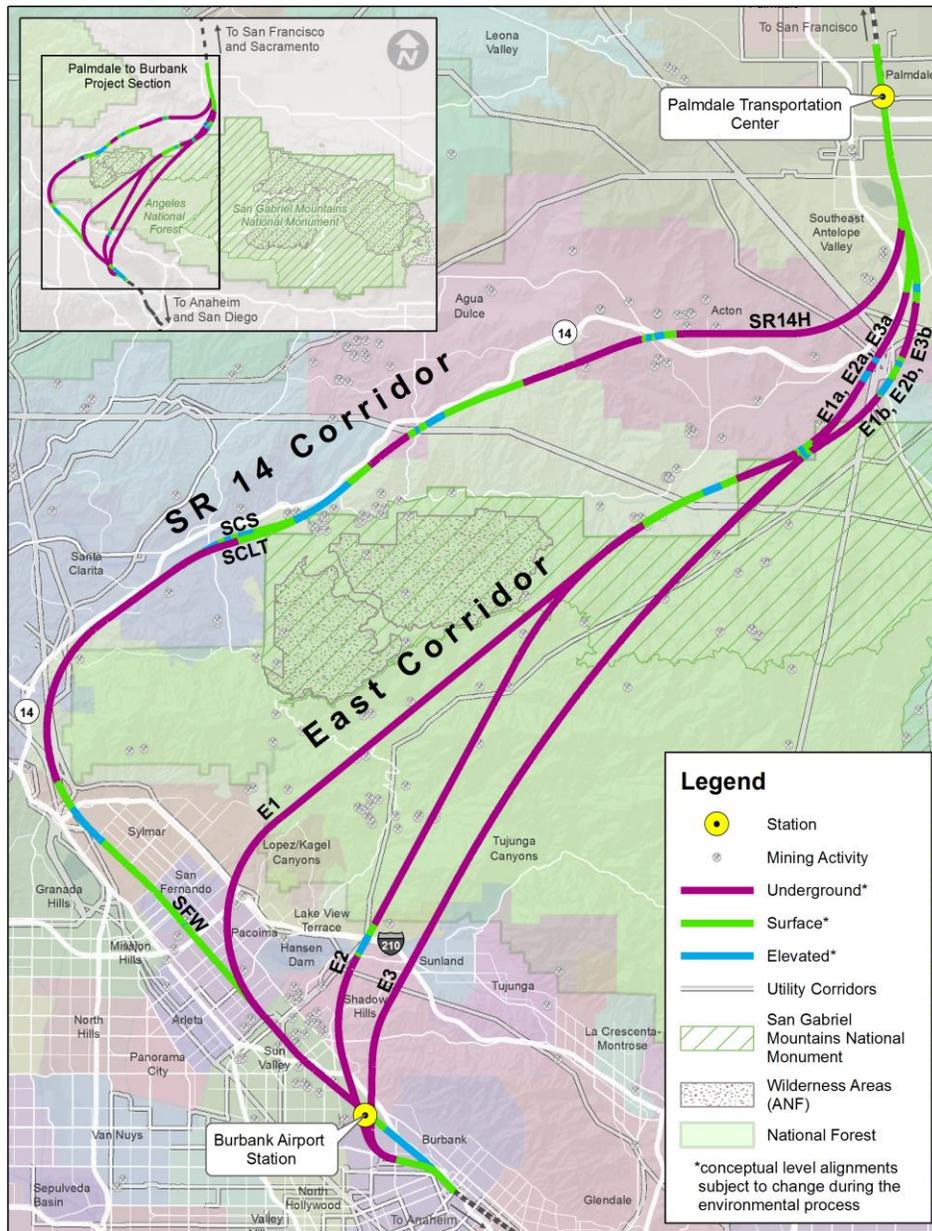


Exhibit 1. Proposed Palmdale to Burbank Range of Alternatives

The development of the environmental document for the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section will advance based on the information collected and presented in all of the documents described above. Currently, the draft of this document is anticipated for release in summer 2016. The release of the draft environmental document will be accompanied by public hearings as well as agency and public comment as required. Throughout this process comments from the public are

collected and used, in conjunction with resource agency comments and technical studies, to support the development of the alternatives and ultimately the selection of a preferred alternative.

Next Steps

- Continue planning and environmental evaluations to study the range of alternatives presented in the 2015 SAA.
- Conduct technical studies on the range of alternatives and prepare required environmental documentation.
- Engage regulatory agency partners, stakeholders, and the community during the preparation of the technical studies and environmental documentation to support work activities.

Attachments

– *Supplemental Alternatives Analysis Report: Palmdale to Burbank* (June 2015)