

3-12 RAILROAD OPERATIONS

Changes Since the Draft EIS/EIR

Subsequent to the release of the Draft EIS/EIR in April 2004, the Gold Line Phase II project has undergone several updates:

Name Change: To avoid confusion expressed about the terminology used in the Draft EIS/EIR (e.g., Phase I; Phase II, Segments 1 and 2), the proposed project is referred to in the Final EIS/EIR as the Gold Line Foothill Extension.

Selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative and Updated Project Definition: Following the release of the Draft EIS/EIR, the public comment period, and input from the cities along the alignment, the Construction Authority Board approved a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) in August 2004. This LPA included the Triple Track Alternative (2 LRT and 1 freight track) that was defined and evaluated in the Draft EIS/EIR, a station in each city, and the location of the Maintenance and Operations Facility. Segment 1 was changed to extend eastward to Azusa. A Project Definition Report (PDR) was prepared to define refined station and parking lot locations, grade crossings and two rail grade separations, and traction power substation locations. The Final EIS/EIR and engineering work that support the Final EIS/EIR are based on the project as identified in the Final PDR (March 2005), with the following modifications. Following the PDR, the Construction Authority Board approved a Revised LPA in June 2005. Between March and August 2005, station options in Arcadia and Claremont were added.

Changes in the Discussions: To make the Final EIS/EIR more reader-friendly, the following format and text changes have been made:

Discussion of a Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Alternative has been deleted since the LPA decision in August 2004 eliminated it as a potential preferred alternative.

Discussions of the LRT Alternatives have eliminated the breakout of the two track configurations used in the Draft EIS/EIR (Double Track and Triple Track). The Final EIS/EIR reports the impacts of a modified triple track configuration (2 LRT tracks and 1 freight track with two rail grade separations) but focuses on the phasing/geographic boundaries included in the LPA decisions.

Two LRT alternatives in the Final EIS/EIR are discussed under the general heading “Build Alternatives,” and are defined as:

1. Full Build (Pasadena to Montclair) Alternative: This alternative would extend LRT service from the existing Sierra Madre Villa Station in Pasadena through the cities of Arcadia, Monrovia, Duarte, Irwindale, Azusa, Glendora, San Dimas, La Verne, Pomona, and Claremont, terminating in Montclair. The cities from Pasadena to Azusa are also referred to in the Final EIS/EIR as Segment 1. The cities from Glendora to Montclair are also referred to in the Final EIS/EIR as Segment 2. Key changes from the Draft EIS/EIR are the inclusion of Azusa in Segment 1, the elimination of the Pacific Electric right-of-way option between Claremont and Montclair, the inclusion of a 24-acre Maintenance and Operations facility in Irwindale (the site is smaller than in the Draft EIS/EIR), and the addition of two rail grade separations. Note that the Maintenance and Operations Facility is located in Segment 1 but is part of the Full Build Alternative. In other words, it would not be constructed as an element of the Build LRT to Azusa Alternative (described below). The length of the alternative is approximately 24 miles. One station (and parking) would be located in each city, except for Azusa, which would have

- two. There are two options for the station locations in Arcadia and Claremont. Segment 1 would include 2 LRT tracks throughout and 1 freight track between the Miller Brewing Company in Irwindale and the eastern boundary of Azusa. The freight track that now exists west of Miller Brewing, which serves a single customer in Monrovia, would be removed from service following relocation of that customer by the City of Monrovia. Segment 2 would include two LRT tracks throughout and 1 freight track between the eastern boundary of Azusa and Claremont. In Claremont, the single freight track joins up with the double Metrolink tracks (which are also used for freight movement) and continues through to Montclair (and beyond). This alternative also includes two railroad grade separations (in Azusa and in Pomona) so that LRT tracks would pass above the at-grade freight track. These allow the LRT and freight services to operate independently (thus eliminating the time-constrained double track option discussed in the Draft EIS/EIR). Implementation of the alternative would include relocation of the existing freight track within the rail right-of-way, but there would be no changes in the service provided to customers. The alternative includes 8 new traction power substations in Segment 2, as well as the 8 in Segment 1.
2. Build LRT to Azusa Alternative: This alternative (also referred to as Segment 1) would extend LRT service from the existing Sierra Madre Villa Station in Pasadena through the cities of Arcadia, Monrovia, Duarte, Irwindale, and to the eastern boundary of Azusa. (The main change from the Draft EIS/EIR is the inclusion of the City of Azusa.) The length of the alternative is approximately 11 miles. One station (and parking facility) would be located in each city, except for Azusa, which would have two. There are two options for the station location in Arcadia. Segment 1 would include two LRT tracks throughout and 1 freight track between the Miller Brewing Company in Irwindale and the eastern boundary of Azusa. The freight track that now exists west of Miller Brewing, which serves a single customer in Monrovia, would be removed from service following relocation of that customer by the City of Monrovia. This alternative also includes the railroad grade separation in Azusa so that LRT tracks would pass above the at-grade freight track. This allows the LRT and freight services to operate independently (thus eliminating the time-constrained double track option discussed in the Draft EIS/EIR). Implementation of the alternative would include relocation of the existing freight track within the rail right-of-way, but there would be no changes in the service provided to customers. The alternative also includes 8 new traction power substations.

As in the Draft EIS/EIR, impact forecasts use 2025 conditions, except for traffic impacts, which reflects a 2030 forecast based on the recently adopted 2004 SCAG Regional Transportation Plan.

Summary of Impacts

The proposed Build Alternatives would have no impacts on freight service that is currently provided by the BNSF Railway over the ~~LACMTA~~ Construction Authority-owned tracks because two exclusive LRT tracks would be built alongside the BNSF freight line, separated by a fence, along with two railroad grade separations, allowing the retention of all present freight service. For the Full Build (Pasadena to Montclair) Alternative, a 6,000-foot-long siding in Irwindale would need to be replaced at another location in the BNSF network.

3-12.1 Existing Conditions

In 1992 the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) purchased the tracks and right-of-way of the Pasadena Subdivision of the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe (AT&SF) Railway (now BNSF), which ran between Los Angeles and San Bernardino. The portion between Los Angeles

and the Sierra Madre Villa Station at the easterly end of Pasadena (Pasadena Gold Line Phase I) began operation exclusively as an LRT route in July 2003. The proposed Pasadena Gold Line ~~Phase II~~ Foothill Extension is a 24-mile extension of Phase I and would link the Sierra Madre Villa Station with the Montclair TransCenter, located just east of the Los Angeles County line. East of Santa Anita Avenue in Arcadia, the alignment is still an active BNSF freight line. East of Cambridge Avenue in Claremont, the proposed LRT would share the right-of-way with both Metrolink commuter rail services and BNSF freight service. Just east of Claremont Station, the LRT would diverge from the Metrolink/BNSF right-of-way and follow the abandoned Pacific Electric right-of-way, terminating at a proposed Montclair Station (North) that would lie along the northerly edge of the present Montclair TransCenter. An alternative alignment would continue east from Claremont on Metrolink/BNSF right-of-way to Montclair Station (South) and could share a platform with the Montclair Metrolink Station.

This section presents potential LRT operational scenarios for the ~~Phase II~~ Foothill Extension alignment and describes the issues and impacts for each. It should be noted that since LRT vehicles do not meet certain crashworthiness standards, they cannot occupy a track with a BNSF freight train at the same time, and any track sharing would have to be time separated.

3-12.1.1 Present Freight Service

a. Service Frequency

There is presently one weekly freight train between Monrovia (Magnolia Avenue) and Irwindale (Miller Brewery) and one train six days a week between Irwindale and Kaiser Yard in Fontana, the originating point. The train to Miller Brewery typically operates in the late morning hours, but can travel at other times. Two evening or Sunday extras to the brewery are typically run once a month. It should be noted that freight service can occur at any time in response to market demand or as needed by the railroad company to shift cars within their network

b. Freight Service By Municipality

The status of this service as it pertains to the individual municipalities is described below:

Arcadia

There is an unofficial “team track” (shared use) utilizing the old mainline between Santa Anita Avenue and First Street that is rarely used. Owners of private railroad cars currently store their equipment on a siding adjacent to A&A Building Materials, which has not seen rail freight deliveries in years.

Monrovia

There is a grain distribution center owned by Valley Grain between Magnolia and Myrtle Avenues that requires a weekly delivery of approximately five grain cars. While this is the only active siding in Monrovia there is an old section of track (still connected to the mainline) just east of Myrtle Avenue that at one time served a building now used by Advantage Distribution & Bodyworks Equipment.

Duarte

There are no existing sidings or freight deliveries of any kind in the city of Duarte. However, there is an annual Christmas Train operated by BNSF that stops at a small shelter at the City of Hope to give terminally ill children a chance to ride a “real train.”

Irwindale

There is a daily 20- to 30-car train serving the Miller Brewery. Another spur extending about a mile south of the brewery has periodic deliveries of one or two tank cars. Also, there is a long 6,000-foot siding between the San Gabriel River and the bridge over the Route 210 Freeway that is used by BNSF for storage.

Azusa

Between the bridge over the Interstate Route 210 Freeway and Virginia Avenue there is a 1,500-foot siding with a short spur track angling to the north. At one time this was known as the Ogle spur, but its current status is unknown. Just east of the bridge over Foothill Boulevard there is a spur track serving Totten Tubes with a one car per week delivery. The spur uses the east leg of a former wye. (Totten Tubes could potentially be served by a currently unused Union Pacific Railroad spur track that at one time served Heppner Hardwoods but abuts the north end of the Totten Tubes property). At the old Santa Fe Azusa station there is a long siding that is designated as a team track.

Glendora

At the site of the old Santa Fe Glendora station there is a long siding that is designated as a team track.

San Dimas

Across from the old Santa Fe San Dimas station (now a museum) there is a short siding that is designated as a team track which typically sees several tank cars delivered on a weekly basis to Orange Line Oil Company (a Pomona distributor of Castrol lube oil). A stub-end siding just east of Monte Vista Avenue is used by Metrolink for maintenance purposes.

La Verne

At Wheeler Road there is a three quarter mile spur to the F. E. Weymouth Filtration Plant owned by MWD that takes chemical deliveries once or twice a year. Otherwise, there are no existing sidings or freight deliveries of any kind in the city of La Verne.

Pomona

Just west of Garey Avenue there are spur tracks serving a warehouse distributor who requires about 10 freight cars each day. The siding tracks in this area also serve as a marshalling yard that is used to make up trains for service to the west.

Claremont

There are no existing sidings or freight deliveries in the city of Claremont.

Montclair

There are no existing sidings or freight deliveries west of Central Avenue in the City of Montclair.

3-12.1.2 Construction Authority-owned Right-of-Way Purchase Agreement

a. Governing Document

The governing document for the operational relationship between LACMTA and the BNSF (former AT&SF Railway) is the Purchase and Sale Agreement, dated October 30, 1992. While the supplement documents of Agreements for Shared Use for the various properties purchased (Harbor Subdivision, San Jacinto Subdivision, Redlands Subdivision, San Bernardino Subdivision, etc.) all have impacting contractual clauses, the primary legal vehicle that sets the terms and conditions for joint operation on the Pasadena Subdivision is the Term Sheet of the Purchase and Sale Agreement, Section 5.B.4, pages 32 through 34.

b. Summary of BNSF Operating Rights

The Purchase and Sale Agreement contains several key points. They all pertain to the active track between Arcadia (MP 124.2) and Claremont (CP Cambridge) (MP 105.4) and are described as follows:

- Freight service (with no restriction on the number of trains) may be run on this trackage except during the Pasadena Commuter Periods of 5 AM to 8 AM and 4:30 PM to 7:30 PM.
- BNSF pays only agreed upon improvements for freight and passenger service. [The passenger service was Amtrak, which no longer uses the line].
- BNSF is not obligated to participate in grade separation projects beyond the \$500,000 annual contribution cap covering all the subdivisions involved in the Purchase and Sale Agreement.
- A minimum vertical clearance of 26 feet from top of rail must be maintained where new construction is involved to permit future electrification. [It is highly unlikely this line will ever be electrified, so a 24-foot clearance would probably be agreeable to BNSF].
- BNSF maintains industry tracks. [The remainder of trackage is maintained by SCRRA].
- BNSF owns a Freight Service Easement of 10 feet on either side of the centerline of all tracks up to a height of 26 feet from top of rail and within 3 feet of any freight loading facilities now or in the future.
- The LACMTA (or governing agency) shall be responsible for the entire cost of upgrading the Pasadena Subdivision as necessary to commence LRT operations.
- All disputes between LACMTA (or governing agency) and BNSF must follow a specified arbitration process.

3-12.2 Operational Scenarios and Impacts

There would be no impacts to freight operations, because of the addition of two railroad grade separations to the LRT Build Alternatives.

3-12.2.1 Impacts Addressed Through Regulatory Compliance

There are no specific federal or state regulations that apply to impacts to freight service.

3-12.3 Mitigation

With the addition of two rail grade separations, so that freight can operate independently of the LRT service, there is no need for mitigation.

3-12.4 Impact Results With Mitigation

With the addition of two rail grade separations, so that freight can operate independently of the LRT service, there is no need for mitigation.