Media Briefing

February 7, 2011
NEPA Process for an EIS

NOTICE OF INTENT
Start of Federal Process

SCOPING
• Define the Range of Alternatives

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (DEIS)
• Evaluate all reasonable alternatives

CIRCULATION (Public Review) of DEIS

FINAL EIS (FEIS)
• Identify Preferred Alternative
• Describe Mitigation Measures

RECORD OF DECISION (Approval)
Definition of “Scoping”

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); during the analysis and development of environmental issues . . .

“There shall be an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to the proposed action. This process shall be termed scoping.”

(40 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1501.7)
What is a “Scoping” Meeting?

- The purpose of the scoping process is to determine the scope of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to ensure that issues are identified early and properly studied.

- The end result of scoping is to ensure that the draft EIS produced for public review and comment is thorough and balanced.
Scoping Process Should Identify

- Agencies concerns
- Public concerns
- Environmental issues
- Alternatives to be examined in the EIS
What a “Scoping” Meeting is Not

• To eliminate alternatives
• To select an alternative
• To review the analysis of alternatives
Preliminary Alternatives
Potential Alternatives

- No Build Alternative
- Enhanced Bus Service / Transportation Systems Management (TSM)
Potential Alternatives

• Five Alternative Alignments

1. North of UPRR – Buffalo Lakes/W. Bellfort
2. North of UPRR – Fannin
3. UPRR ROW – Fannin
4. Between UPRR and US 90A – Buffalo Lakes/W. Bellfort
5. South of US 90A – Buffalo Lakes/W. Bellfort

• Others?
Vehicle Technologies

- Rail Transit
  - Electric – powered by overhead wires
  - Diesel/Electric – self-powered vehicle, no overhead wires
  - Conventional diesel locomotive with passenger cars
- Others?
Preliminary Corridor Issues

- Lack of transit connections between US 90A/Southwest Corridor residential areas and major activity centers along the corridor and throughout the region
  - Downtown Houston
  - Texas Medical Center
  - US 90A/Southwest Corridor residential areas
  - Other employment and activity centers in US 90A/Southwest Corridor and in the region
Preliminary Corridor Issues

• Traffic congestion
• Slow bus speeds
• Economic development
• Others?
Potential Issues of Concern

- Land acquisition
- Displacement and relocation of residences and businesses
- Impacts to the neighborhoods and communities
  - Business / residential access
  - Parking for businesses / stations
  - Removal of trees / streetscape / aesthetics
  - Community character / cohesion
  - Development / redevelopment pressures
- Air quality
- Flooding
- Construction impacts
- Business impacts
- Environmental justice
- Cultural resources
- Parklands and recreation areas
- Transit noise and vibration
- Traffic congestion / management
- Bus operations
- Safety
- Others?
Schedule
Proposed Schedule & Public Input Opportunities

- **2011**
  - Conceptual Engineering & Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)
  - Public input on alignments & environmental concerns such as traffic, access, property, noise, drainage & aesthetics. Public hearing at end.

- **2012 - 2014**
  - Preliminary Engineering & Final EIS/Record of Decision (ROD)
  - Public input on station locations, mitigation measures, station area development, property access & aesthetics.

- **2015 - 2017**
  - Final Design
  - Public input on station art & landscaping. Public input on construction staging & management.

- **2018**
  - Construction
  - Public coordination on construction.

US90A/SOUTHWEST RAIL CORRIDOR
Input Process
Public Scoping Meetings

February 15, 2011
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Waterside Café
TMC Commons Area
6550 Bertner STE: 1
Houston, TX 77030

February 16, 2011
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
The Power Center
Southeast Ballroom
12401 S. Post Oak Road
Houston, TX 77045

February 15, 2011
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Missouri City Community Center
Community Center
1522 Texas Parkway
Missouri City, TX 77489

February 22, 2011
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Westbury High School
Atrium
11911 Chimney Rock
Houston, TX 77035
Comments

• How to Comment?
  – Written Comment Form
  – Court Reporter
  – Website (ridemetro.org)

• Comments must be postmarked by March 11, 2011 to:
  – Edmund Petry
    METRO
    P.O. Box 61429
    Houston, Texas  77208-1429