Purpose of Today’s Meeting

To seek community input on:

• Purpose and need for transit improvements
• Potential alignments & vehicle technologies
• Potential evaluation/analysis categories
• Potential resources that could be affected
• Community issues & concerns
• Environmental issues & concerns
University Corridor

Proposed Study Area
Known Major Issues of Concern
(Based on Previous Public Meetings)

- Land acquisition
- Displacement & relocation of residences & businesses
- Air Quality
- Impacts to the neighborhoods & communities
  - Business / residential access
  - Parking for businesses / stations
  - Removal of trees / streetscape / aesthetics
  - Community character/cohesion
  - Development/redevelopment pressures
  - Gentrification
- Flooding
- Construction impacts
- Business impacts
- Environmental justice
- Historical & archeological resources
- Parklands & recreation areas
- Transit noise & vibration
- Traffic congestion / management
- Bus operations
- Safety
- Other
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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)

NEPA Process for an EIS
Definition of “Scoping”

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

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

(40 Code of Federal Regulation, 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 & properly studied.

• The end result of scoping is to ensure that the draft EIS produced for public review & comment is thorough & balanced.

• The scoping process should identify:
  – Agencies concerns
  – Public concerns
  – Environmental issues
  – Alternatives to be examined in the EIS.
What is a “Scoping” Meeting

• The scoping meeting is the time for the public to raise:
  – Important environmental or social impacts that the community wants considered
  – The additional alternatives that the community wants considered
  – Concepts for minimizing environmental harm that the community would like to see evaluated

• In this way, the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) can be structured to better address public and agency concerns & help lead to better decisions in the end
What a “Scoping” Meeting is Not

• To eliminate alternatives
• To select an alternative
• To review the analysis of alternatives
Room Layout

• Need to include room layout map
Purpose & Need
Preliminary Corridor Issues

• Lack of transit connections to major activity centers along the corridor
  – Downtown Houston
  – Uptown/Galleria
  – Greenway Plaza
  – Four universities

• Traffic congestion
• Slow bus speeds / high ridership
• Economic development
• Other
Alternatives to be Considered
Vehicle Technologies

• Guided Rapid Transit (GRT)
  – Light Rail Transit (LRT)
    ▪ Electric – powered by overhead wires
    ▪ Hybrid – self-powered vehicle, no overhead wires
  – Upgraded Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) - Bus operating in a fixed guideway with the same level of service as LRT, convertible to LRT in the future

• Enhanced Bus Service / Transportation Systems Management (TSM)

• Other
Potential Alternatives

- No Build Alternative
- West of Spur 527
  - LRT on Westpark Drive
  - LRT on Richmond Avenue
  - Combination of Westpark Drive & Richmond Avenue
- East of Spur 527
  - Elgin Street
  - Alabama Street
  - Wheeler Street
- Others
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Potential EIS Analysis Categories
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Potential EIS Analysis Categories

- Transportation impacts
- Land use
- Farm land
- Social
- Relocations
- Economic
- Joint development
- Pedestrians & bicyclists
- Air quality
- Noise
- Vibration
- Water quality
- Permits
- Wetlands
- Water body modification
- Wildlife habitat
- Floodplain

- Threatened & endangered species
- Historic & archeological preservation
- Hazardous material sites
- Visual
- Safety
- Energy
- Construction impacts
- Relationship of local short-term uses vs. long-term productivity
- Irreversible & irretrievable commitment of resources
- Secondary & cumulative impacts
University Corridor

Schedule

June 2006
University Corridor

Project Schedule & Public Input Opportunities

2006
- May
- June
- Oct.
- Dec.
- Mar/Apr
- July
- Nov.
- Jan.
- June
- Aug.

2007
- May
- June
- Oct.
- Dec.
- Mar/Apr
- July
- Nov.
- Jan.
- June
- Aug.

2008
- May
- June
- Oct.
- Dec.
- Mar/Apr
- July
- Nov.
- Jan.
- June
- Aug.

- Public Input Intervals

- June 2006

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.

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

Final Design
Public input on station art & landscaping. Public input on construction staging & management.

Construction
Public coordination on construction.
Public Input Process
Comments

• How to Comment?
  – Written Comment Form
  – Court Reporter
  – E-mail (METROsolutions-University@ridemetro.org)
  – Website (metrosolutions.org/go/inquiry/1068/)

• Please send comments to:
  – Rhonda Boyer
    METRO
    P.O. Box 61429
    Houston, Texas 77208-1429
Thank You for Your Interest & Attendance!!
Acronyms

- BRT = Bus Rapid Transit
- DEIS = Draft Environmental Impact Statement
- EIS = Environmental Impact Statement
- FEIS = Final Environmental Impact Statement
- GRT = Guided Rapid Transit
- LRT = Light Rail Transit
- NEPA = National Environmental Policy Act
- ROD = Record of Decision
- TSM = Transportation Systems Management