Southeast Corridor
Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement
Public Hearing

May 28, 2008
Texas Southern University Science & Technology Building
6:30 PM
Purpose of Today’s Hearing

• Provide a status of the Southeast Corridor project & changes since January 2007 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)

• Present the Revised Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)

• Provide opportunity to comment on the Revised LPA
To meet the goals of the NEPA process & comply with laws, regulations & policies, projects need to be carried out in such a way that they:

• **Avoid** adverse (negative) impacts.

• Where adverse impacts cannot be avoided, they should be **minimized**.

• Unavoidable adverse impacts should be **mitigated**.

• Environmental **enhancements** should be developed as appropriate.

• Mitigation & enhancement measures are eligible for Federal funding.

“Avoid, Minimize, Mitigate, Enhance”
What is an SFEIS?

- Evaluates and documents social, economic, & environmental impacts & mitigation measures for the Light Rail LPA now being considered for the Southeast Corridor.
- Facilitates review of the project by Federal, state, & local agencies & the public.
- The SFEIS is being circulated for a 30-day review & comment period.
- Following circulation & public review, responses will be prepared to address comments offered during the review period & included in the Record of Decision (ROD).
Alternative Analysis, 2001 – 2004. Evaluated a range of modes (light rail transit (LRT), bus rapid transit (BRT), People Mover, commuter rail) and various alignment alternatives to address transportation needs in the Southeast Corridor.

Recommendation of the Locally Preferred Investment Strategy (LPIS), Nov. 2003. The METRO Board of Directors recommended and approved a LRT alignment as the LPIS. The Board adopted a Minimum Operable Segment (MOS) extending from downtown Houston southeast to Scott Street and along Scott Street and Griggs Roads to the vicinity of IH-610.

Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS), Nov. 2003 to July 2006. The DEIS analyzed the No Build, LRT, BRT, and BRT Convertible alternatives. A public hearing was held on Aug., 29, 2006.


Final Environmental Impact Study (FEIS), Aug. 2006 to Jan. 2007. A FEIS was prepared to respond to the DEIS comments and document the previous LPA. A Record of Decision (ROD) was issued by Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in Feb. 2007.

Recommendation of a modified LPA, Oct. 2007. The METRO Board of Directors revised the previous LPA from BRT Convertible to LRT. The alignment option remained the same.

SFEIS, Oct 2007 to May 2008. A Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Study (SFEIS) was prepared to document the impacts and mitigation measures and to solicit comments on the revised LPA.
LRT Technology
10 Stations
Cost: $680.6 Million (in year of expenditure)

Note: The LPA Alignment has not changed
Project Changes Since January 2007 FEIS

- **Construction of LRT instead of BRT-Convertible** - The change to LRT for the entire alignment followed further analysis of forecasted ridership and costs. The alignment is the same.

- Typical section reduced to minimize right-of-way impacts

- The **new western terminus** of the LRT services that would operate on Capitol/Rusk in downtown Houston was changed from Bagby to IH 45.

- The alignment between US 59 and Nagel has been shifted from Capitol to **operate on Texas**. A new soccer stadium is proposed to be built on a land parcel, bounded by Texas to the north, Rusk to the south, Dowling to the east, and Hutchins to the west. Capitol would be closed along this segment. The LRT station for the alignment on Texas is proposed at Bastrop.

- **Traction Power Substations** - Five TPSSs will be required at approximately one-mile intervals along the alignment to supply electrical power to the traction networks.

- **New Storage and Inspection Facility** will be located on Griggs Road.
Acquisition & Relocation

  - Comply with Uniform Act
  - Conduct independent appraisals for fair market value
  - Acquire properties
  - Assist in relocating impacted property owners & tenants
**Southeast Corridor**

## Summary of Impacts & Mitigation Measures

There are no Adverse Effects to Socio-economic Conditions, Land Use, Air Quality, Neighborhoods, Geology, Soils, Historic Properties, Vibration, and Transit Conditions.

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<th>Impact Area</th>
<th>LPA</th>
<th>Mitigation Measures for LPA</th>
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| Acquisitions and Relocations | • Acquisition of 55 whole parcels consisting of 27 residential, 23 commercial, and 5 other properties.  
• Acquisition of 85 partial parcels consisting of 7 residential, 70 commercial, and 11 other properties.  
• Total of 85 relocations consisting of 46 residential units and 39 businesses. | • Property Acquisition & Relocation will be guided by the Uniform Relocation Assistance & Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (49 CFR Part 24), as amended. |
| Noise                        | • Noise impacts may result from the crossing bells and whistles near the University of Houston residence hall. | • The light rail vehicle bell noise will be redirected so that it minimizes exposure to the residences. |
| Visual/Aesthetics            | • Introduction of a vehicle that is currently not commonly observed within the local view shed.  
• Introduction of a fixed guideway in areas where this infrastructure is not currently part of the local streetscape. | • Landscaping and screening, where feasible and consistent with safety requirements. |
| Ecosystems                   | • Removal of trees in Martin Luther King Blvd. median.               | • Minimize clearing and cutting trees where possible. |
| Water Resources              | • Surface waters of Brays Bayou could potentially be affected by the new bridge across Brays Bayou.  
• Storage and Inspection facility extends across Kuhlman Gully embankment.  
• Bridge over Brays Bayou would require piers that would encroach into the floodway. | • Detailed analysis of the affected storm sewers would be conducted during the design phase.  
• A grassy swale would be constructed adjacent to the concrete pad for the rail tracks to act as a temporary detention facility and conveyance system.  
• Design the proposed bridge to comply with FEMA, the City of Houston, and Harris County Flood Control District floodplain development criteria. |
| Parklands and Other Section 4(F) Properties | • Small amounts of park property would be used in the median of MLK Boulevard and the park access road.  No impairment of park functions or activities.  
• A small strip of land would be required from the parking lots west of the Dahlgren Building, near West Street and Polk Street.  
• A small strip of land would be required. | • Installation of a traffic signal at the park entrance road, a transit station at Old Spanish Trail for access to the park, and replacement of any trees removed or damaged.  
• Amended MOA documents adverse effects and identifies measures to resolve those effects. |
| Hazardous / Regulated Materials | • 11 sites proposed for right-of-way acquisition may be affected by contamination. | • Determine extent of contamination (Phase II ESA) and remediate. |
Community and School Safety Education Program (CSSEP)

METRO has an overall safety campaign designed to educate school children and the general public in order to promote construction safety and rail safety in and around the fixed guideways.

In spring 2008, METRO started a Community & Schools Safety Education Pilot (CSSEP) program.

- Lora B. Peck Elementary participated in a three (3) week pilot program.
- A METRO Solutions School Safety classroom was set up on campus to allow students to engage in three, one-hour lessons on train awareness, construction, and rail safety.
- Bilingual lessons integrate academic subject areas such as science, math, language arts, social studies, health and safety, and music and movement, all aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills testing objectives (TEKS).
- The program culminated with a train ride field trip on the Main Street rail line on March 28, 2008.
- Students received a certificate of participation.

Beginning in fall 2008, the safety program will be implemented in K-12 schools within the Houston Independent School District (HISD) surrounding the Southeast Corridor alignment.

Construction and rail safety awareness training is also being provided to parent organizations and as part of presentations to community and civic groups.
Submission of Comments

• On-line at
  http://www.ridemetro.org/contact/comment.asp

• During the public hearing

• Submit comment form or letter to:
  Ms. Rhonda Boyer
  Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County
  P.O. Box 61429
  Houston, Texas 77208-1429

Comments must be postmarked by
June 11, 2008
Comment Process at the Public Hearing

• Elected officials present will have an opportunity to provide comments
• Speakers will be called based on returned speaker cards
• Following registered speakers, unregistered speakers will be allowed an opportunity to comment
• Verbal comments will be limited to two (2) minutes per person
• All comments will be transcribed and become part of the formal record of the hearing
• Written comments will be accepted for the record