



Environmental Justice (EJ)

An important element of the Final EIR/EIS is the evaluation of the potential effect of the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section on substantial minority and/or low-income communities (EJ communities) to examine if the project alternatives may result in disproportionate effects to any such communities.

The Authority, as part of the EJ evaluation, conducted an extensive outreach and engagement process. Since 2014, and throughout the preparation of the Draft EIR/EIS and Final EIR/EIS, the Authority held more than 45 meetings with stakeholders of potentially affected communities along the Palmdale to Burbank project section. These listening sessions focused on hearing from the communities regarding potential questions and concerns related to the project, including identifying community improvements that could help to avoid or offset any potential effects to EJ communities.

In 2023, the Authority prepared a list of potential measures and community improvements that could be implemented to reduce, avoid, or offset effects of the project on EJ communities. Authority representatives shared these concepts with EJ community stakeholders and gathered their feedback through a series of meetings in November and December 2023 and January 2024.

Incorporating feedback from these meetings, the Authority added new measures to the Final EIR/EIS to address potentially adverse effects on EJ communities. For example, the new measures require that the Authority create an EJ ombudsman position and that the Authority's Contractor(s) create an EJ Liaison position with responsibility to refine measures, before construction start, to address community concerns and responsibility to receive community input on implementation of these measures.

The measures require explicit coordination and review from affected environmental justice communities on proposed measures to reduce or avoid potential adverse air quality, noise, displacements and other construction-phase project effects on these communities. The measures also allow the Authority to stop work until such measures can adequately address EJ community input on the measures. The measures also propose certain community improvements (streetscape improvements, aesthetic treatments, safety improvements) to communities that may be affected by the project so as to offset the effects.

These measures are listed in their entirety in the Final EIR/EIS in Chapter 5, Sections 5.8.1, 5.8.2, and 5.8.4 of the Final EIR/EIS and are summarized below.



Impact Avoidance Mitigation Features

1. **EJ-IAMF#1: Creation of an Authority EJ Ombudsman and Contractor's EJ Liaison**

Prior to final design, the Authority shall create an ombudsman position to address the needs of adversely affected EJ communities and schools, including Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD) Broadus Elementary and Roscoe Elementary schools and, upon request, additional private and charter schools.

The Authority's final design plans and contract documents shall require the Contractor to establish a full-time EJ liaison to serve as a multilingual single point of contact for the EJ communities. Responsibilities will include implementing programs, holding community roundtables to obtain ideas for business spotlighting, developing appropriate aesthetic treatments, proposing potential intersection and/or safety improvements, and obtaining community-specific feedback on various construction-related plans.

The EJ ombudsman and Contractor's EJ liaison shall have stop-work authority in the event of safety concerns, and may also apply stop-work authority for project-related concerns regarding fugitive dust, construction noise, and traffic.

During construction, the Contractor's EJ liaison shall provide multilingual notices (e.g., online information, e-blasts, text messaging, voice messaging, or mailers) to inform EJ communities of the Authority's hotline for reporting community concerns or complaints regarding construction noise, and traffic effects and updates.

2. **EJ-IAMF#2: Business spotlighting**

The Authority shall provide assistance to businesses within adversely affected EJ communities to maintain visibility during construction, such as providing signage and targeted advertising and marketing campaigns, incentives for construction worker patronage (as applicable), and/or Authority-sponsored community events.

3. **EJ-IAMF#3: EJ Community-Inclusive Development of Aesthetic Treatments and Community Cohesion Enhancements**

The Contractor's EJ liaison shall work with the Authority EJ ombudsman to hold community roundtables to seek input on locally desired aesthetic treatment preferences from the adversely affected EJ communities, possibly developed by local artists. Treatment options may include streetscape, vegetation screening, consideration of a community mural, and/or beautification tree plantings or plant plantings.

When applicable, tree plantings shall involve the Pacoima Beautiful Street Tree Planting/Adopt-a-Tree Program collaboration with the Los Angeles Conservation Corps.

Reuse of properties purchased by the Authority that are in the EJ communities shall be considered for plant and/or tree plantings.

Approved, locally desired aesthetic treatments shall be included in the final design plans.

4. **EJ-IAMF#4: EJ Business Relocation/Displacement Assistance**

The Authority will develop a relocation mitigation plan with a subsection dedicated to addressing adverse effects to businesses in the EJ communities. The Authority shall hold community roundtable meetings to seek and consider input from affected EJ communities prior to finalizing the Authority's Relocation Mitigation Plan.

5. **EJ-IAMF#5: EJ Community Post-Construction Transition to Operation**

The EJ liaison shall ensure multilingual notices (e.g., online information, e-blasts, text messaging, voice messaging, or mailers) are distributed to EJ communities that provide an estimated operation commencement date, and include information regarding underground and aboveground facilities, boarding platforms, ticketing areas, passenger waiting areas, restrooms, pick-up/drop-off facilities for private automobiles, transit center for buses and shuttles, and surface parking areas.

Notices shall clearly describe various modes of access to the HSR system. If available, the notices shall also specify HSR system ticket costs.

6. **EJ-IAMF#6: Non-Regulatory Supplemental and Informational Air Quality Monitoring**

Prior to the start of construction, the Authority shall propose stationary outdoor air quality sensors and applicable monitoring locations in EJ communities. Data from these air quality sensors could be used for increasing environmental awareness and educating the communities about air quality.

Mitigation Measures

1. **EJ-MM#1: Pre-Construction EJ Community Review and Authority EJ Ombudsman Approval of final Construction-Phase Noise Mitigation and Monitoring Measures Program**

To ensure that the Authority's construction noise mitigation and monitoring measures are equitable and that historically underrepresented populations have adequate review and input opportunities, the Authority's contractor will be required to submit its proposed and draft construction Noise Monitoring Program to the Authority and the Authority's EJ ombudsman for approval prior to posting on the Authority's website.

The posted, draft Noise Monitoring Program shall include all the Contractor's proposed construction noise mitigations and its proposed noise monitoring program, and shall be provided for community review and input in advance of construction start for community comment.

The Authority's EJ ombudsman shall conduct direct outreach activities to solicit input from affected communities on their preferences related to (1) the advance periods for public posting of the Contractor's draft noise mitigations and monitoring program, (2) the noise monitoring locations, and (3) the outreach required by the Contractor for the draft Noise Monitoring Program.

Such outreach shall include, at minimum, affected neighborhoods in Pacoima, Sun Valley, and any other community that the Authority determines may be affected by potential disproportionately high and adverse construction noise, absent mitigation.

2. **EJ-MM#2: Pre-Construction Environmental Justice Air Quality Emissions Analysis and Mandatory Community Input on Potential Emissions Reductions and Reduction Exposure Measures**

To ensure that the Authority avoids disproportionate and adverse air quality effects on EJ communities, the Authority has committed to implement best available technology measures and best practices to reduce emissions from project construction.

The Authority has also committed to submitting an updated construction-phase air quality emissions estimate to the South Coast Air Quality Management District, after the Authority's receipt of funding for construction of this project section.

If the Authority's updated estimate submitted to the South Coast Air Quality Management District presents exceedances of California Ambient Air Quality Standards or National Ambient Air Quality Standards, then the Authority shall prepare and publicly circulate an environmental justice air quality analysis of those emissions exceedances. The analysis shall assess whether project section emissions exceedances may disproportionately and adversely affect minority and/or low-income communities, and shall also propose all feasible measures to reduce and mitigate any exceedances. The Contractor's EJ Liaison shall ensure that the draft environmental justice air quality analysis is distributed to potentially affected communities for review and comment.

The Contractor's EJ Liaison shall revise the draft environmental justice air quality analysis accordingly and submit the final environmental justice air quality analysis to the Authority's EJ ombudsman. The Authority's EJ ombudsman shall make the final determination regarding the adequacy of the Contractor's revisions, and the adequacy of the revised environmental justice air quality analysis and any additional measures proposed by the Contractor to reduce emissions.

Offsetting Mitigation Measures

1. **OMM#1: Construction Jobs and Opportunities, Training, and Workforce Development**

The Authority will solicit EJ community feedback to minimize adverse effects to jobs associated with business displacements, business access disruptions, and business relocations, and provide training and employment opportunities to disadvantaged workers through a Construction Pre-Apprentice Training Program, further supporting community workforce development and economic development.

2. **OMM#2: Community Connectivity Enhancements and Workshop**

The Authority will solicit EJ community feedback through the EJ ombudsman regarding locally desired pedestrian connectivity enhancements to minimize adverse effects pertaining to community cohesion from the implementation of the project alignment and ancillary facilities, which would present new physical and visual barriers.

3. **OMM#3: Safety and Montague Street Improvements**

The Authority will solicit EJ community feedback through the EJ ombudsman to provide feasible safety benefits for vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian travelers at the project alignment's intersection with Montague Street in proximity to the proposed tunnel portal in the EJ community of Pacoima.

4. **OMM#4: Intermediate Window (SR14-W2), Conveyor Belt Usage Requirements and School Coordination**

The Authority will solicit community feedback through an EJ ombudsman and the Contractor's EJ liaison with the Los Angeles Unified School District to minimize adverse traffic, noise, and safety effects from project construction and spoils hauling on Los Angeles Unified School District schools in the EJ communities of Pacoima and Sun Valley and will develop a Pacoima and Sun Valley Construction Safety Transportation Management Plan and obtain feedback. Among other requirements that plan will likely require crossing guards and flagging, restrict intersections for construction hauling and construction water trucks during school hours, and using a conveyor belt to move spoils directly for disposal at Boulevard Mine to avoid traffic impacts.

For more detailed information about the proposed measures, see [Chapter 5](#) of the Final EIR/EIS.