

# Red Line Extension Project Scoping Report

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# Section 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Overview

The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) is proposing to make transportation improvements by extending the Red Line from the 95<sup>th</sup> Street station to 130<sup>th</sup> Street. CTA and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will be preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that will evaluate the environmental effects of constructing and operating the proposed extension. FTA is the federal lead agency and CTA is the local lead agency.

The Red Line was put into operation in 1969. Plans to extend the Red Line to the southern city limits were made shortly thereafter but have not yet been implemented. Starting in 2002, community activists began an awareness campaign and a community petition drive which resulted in an advisory referendum being placed on the November 2004 ballot. The referendum was supported by 38,000 voters in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> wards. In 2006, the Chicago Transit Board initiated an Alternatives Analysis (AA) study for the proposed extension.

The study area is situated 11 miles south of the Chicago Central Area (commonly referred to as the Loop) and encompasses approximately 20 square miles. The boundaries of the study area are 95<sup>th</sup> Street on the north, Ashland Avenue on the west, Stony Island Avenue on the east, and the Calumet-Sag Channel/Little Calumet River and 134<sup>th</sup> Street on the south.

The I-57 Expressway and I-94 Bishop Ford Freeway traverse the western and eastern edges of the study area, respectively. Lake Calumet is located in the eastern portion of the study area.

The study area encompasses parts of nine community areas in the City of Chicago and the eastern section of the City of Calumet Park (area east of Ashland Avenue). Community areas include Washington Heights, Beverly, Morgan Park, Roseland, Pullman, West Pullman, South Deering, Hegewisch and Riverdale. The study area has significant residential (primarily single family) industrial (existing and vacant), transportation and commercial development. The study area boundaries are major, recognizable streets, used to clearly define where possible alternatives would be considered. However, travel patterns and analyses beyond the study area are integral components to the project study and included as necessary.

For the Red Line Extension project the CTA has completed an Alternatives Analysis (AA) and conducted early scoping on the potential range of alternatives. The results of that study may be found in the Locally Preferred Alternative Report (CTA 2009) and which is incorporated here by reference. The AA provides the reasoning for decisions regarding the identification and narrowing of the range of alternatives. The AA process identified an initial set of nine corridors and eleven transit modal technologies. The process screened these options into a set of eight conceptual alternatives that potentially met the project purpose. These alternatives were screened against criteria related to constructability, right-of-way constraints, impacts of configurations, and operational concerns. This screening step narrowed the range of alternatives to three build alternatives and a no build alternative and a transportation system management (TSM) alternative. These alternatives were screened against the goals, objectives, and evaluation criteria established for the project.

In addition, input from stakeholders, the public and agencies was solicited in the process of narrowing the range of alternatives. The AA process resulted in the identification of a locally preferred alternative (LPA) in addition to one other build alternative (the Halsted HRT Alternative), the No Build Alternative, and a TSM Alternative that will be carried forward into the DEIS. A Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) was identified through the AA process and designated by the Chicago Transit Board in August 2009.

The EIS will evaluate the LPA along with a No Build Alternative, a Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative, and the Halsted Alternative developed during the AA process. Subsequent to the completion of the AA process, FTA and CTA initiated the public and agency NEPA scoping to obtain input on the scope of the EIS. The Notice of Intent (NOI) identified the four alternatives carried forward from the AA for evaluation. This report summarizes the results of the NEPA scoping process.

The Draft EIS (DEIS) will build upon the AA studies and form the basis for performance of Preliminary Engineering and preparation of a subsequent Final EIS. One of the primary purposes of scoping is to identify possible environmental impacts of the project. Transit improvements in the Far South side could be financed with a mix of local, state, federal New Starts, and other federal funds. Accordingly, the project will be executed in compliance with current FTA Section 5309 New Starts guidelines, and all environmental documents will satisfy the requirements of NEPA and the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

## **1.2 Project Area**

The proposed project area is located 11 miles south of the Chicago Central Area (commonly referred to as the “Loop”). The limits of the project area are from 95<sup>th</sup> Street on the north to 130<sup>th</sup> Street on the south. The Calumet-Sag Channel/Little Calumet River extends along the southern edge of the project area and Lake Calumet is located to the east. The I-57 Expressway and I-94 Bishop Ford Freeway traverse the western and eastern edges of the project area, respectively.

The project area includes parts of eight community areas in the far south side of the City of Chicago. Community areas include Washington Heights, Morgan Park, Roseland, Pullman, West Pullman, South Deering, Hegewisch, and Riverdale. The project area encompasses significant residential (primarily single family), industrial (existing and vacant), transportation, and commercial developments.

## **1.3 Alternatives**

The Red Line Extension EIS will include an evaluation of a No Build Alternative, a Transportation System Management Alternative, the Locally Preferred Union Pacific Railroad Heavy Rail Transit (HRT) Alternative, and the Halsted Street HRT Alternative. These alternatives are briefly described below.

### **1.3.1 No Build Alternative**

The No Build Alternative is defined as the existing transportation system, plus any committed transportation improvements. Committed transportation improvements include projects that are already in the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) financially constrained

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The Red Line project area has five bridge reconstructions, and several road improvement projects included in the FY 2007 – 2012 TIP. These improvements are primarily on highway segments in the vicinity of the project area and generally do not lie adjacent to or intersect with the proposed TSM or HRT alternatives.

Bridge projects in the TIP include: Illinois 1 (Halsted Street) at the Little Calumet River; I-94 (Bishop Ford Expressway) at the Stony Island Avenue ramp and at Cottage Grove Road; I-57 at 103<sup>rd</sup> Street; and I-57 at Genoa Road. Road improvement projects include a variety of landscaping, safety fencing, and resurfacing projects, and coordination of signal timing on Stony Island Avenue from 95<sup>th</sup> Street north, and on 95<sup>th</sup> Street from Western Avenue east to Ewing Avenue. There is also a bicycle and pedestrian multi-use trail proposed to extend from the existing Centennial Trail in Lemont to the Burnham Greenway in Burnham.

Bus transit service under the No Build Alternative would be focused on the preservation of existing services and projects. No significant changes to bus service are anticipated in the project area. All elements of the No Build Alternative are included in each of the other alternatives.

Summary:

- Existing transportation system.
- Plus committed transportation improvements: bridge and road improvement projects.
- Bus transit service focused on the preservation of existing services and projects.

### **1.3.2 Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative**

The proposed TSM Alternative is a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) alternative that operates between the 95<sup>th</sup> Street Station and 130<sup>th</sup> Street via East 95<sup>th</sup> Street, Michigan Avenue, East 127<sup>th</sup> Street, South Indiana Avenue, and East 130<sup>th</sup> Street. Proposed BRT service would operate in mixed traffic with traffic signal priority along 95<sup>th</sup> Street, Michigan Avenue, and 130<sup>th</sup> Street.

The TSM Alternative is 5.5 miles long and would include four intermediate stops at 103<sup>rd</sup>, 111<sup>th</sup>, 115<sup>th</sup>, and 130<sup>th</sup> Streets with park-and-ride facilities proposed at all of the new stops. The 95<sup>th</sup> Street terminal would be expanded to extend the existing bus bays along State and Lafayette Streets approximately 250-feet north to 94<sup>th</sup> Street to improve circulation and safety. The TSM alternative assumes that buses from the south would continue to serve the 95<sup>th</sup> Street Station.

Summary:

- Transportation improvements that are already in the CMAP Fiscal Year 2007-2012 TIP as described in the No Build Alternative.
- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) that operates between the 95<sup>th</sup> Street Station and 130<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 5.5 miles long with three intermediate stops at 103<sup>rd</sup>, 111<sup>th</sup>, and 115<sup>th</sup> Streets and a new terminal station at 130<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Park-and-ride facilities proposed at all new stops.
- Operates in mixed traffic with traffic signal priority along 95<sup>th</sup> Street, Michigan Avenue, and 130<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 95<sup>th</sup> Street terminal expanded to extend the existing bus bays along State and Lafayette Streets approximately 250-feet north to 94<sup>th</sup> Street to improve circulation and safety.
- Existing buses from the south continue to serve the 95<sup>th</sup> Street station.

### 1.3.3 Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA): Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Heavy Rail Transit (HRT) Alternative

The proposed LPA would extend the heavy rail transit line from the existing Red Line 95<sup>th</sup> Street Station to 130<sup>th</sup> Street. The line would be on an elevated structure from the 95<sup>th</sup> Street as it heads south along the I-57 Expressway for nearly one-half mile until reaching the UPRR corridor in the vicinity of Eggleston Avenue. It would then turn south along the UPRR corridor to approximately 111<sup>th</sup> Street where it would turn southeast. East of South Prairie Avenue, the alignment would cross over the Canadian National/Metra tracks near 119<sup>th</sup> Street where it would transition to an at-grade profile and then continue southeast along the former Michigan Central/Indiana Harbor Belt (IHB) railroad right-of-way to terminate in the vicinity of 130<sup>th</sup> Street.

The proposed LPA is 5.3 miles long and would include three new intermediate stations at 103<sup>rd</sup>, 111<sup>th</sup>, and 115<sup>th</sup> Streets and a new terminal station at 130<sup>th</sup> Street with new park-and-ride and bus terminal facilities at each station. This alternative assumes that buses from the south would be re-routed to serve the new intermediate and terminal stations to speed passenger travel toward downtown Chicago.

The new HRT tracks would be placed immediately adjacent to the UPRR right-of-way on either the west side (West Side Option) or the east side (East Side Option). Both options would require adjacent property acquisition to accommodate the CTA right-of-way and station facilities at 103<sup>rd</sup>, 111<sup>th</sup>, and 115<sup>th</sup> Streets. The West Side Option could impact Fernwood Parkway between 99<sup>th</sup> Street and 103<sup>rd</sup> Streets which could trigger a Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act evaluation in the EIS. The East Side Option could impact Wendell Smith Park adjacent to the I-57 Expressway which could also trigger a Section 4(f) evaluation in the EIS.

There are two options for the 130<sup>th</sup> Street terminal station. The Red Line extension would continue south along the IHB right-of-way to either a south or west terminal station location along the north side of 130<sup>th</sup> Street, just west of the I-94 Bishop Ford Freeway.

#### Summary:

- Transportation improvements that are already in the CMAP Fiscal Year 2007-2012 TIP as described in the No Build Alternative.
- Heavy rail transit line extension from 95<sup>th</sup> Street Station to 130<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 5.3 mile extension with three new intermediate stops at 103<sup>rd</sup>, 111<sup>th</sup> and 115<sup>th</sup> Streets and a new terminal station at 130<sup>th</sup> Street.
- New park-and-ride and bus terminal facilities at each station.
- Buses from the south would be rerouted to serve the new intermediate and terminal stations to speed passenger travel to downtown Chicago.
- Two alignment options will be studied in the EIS: Tracks could be placed immediately adjacent to the UPRR right of-way on either the west side (West Side Option) or the east side (East Side Option).
- Two options for the 130<sup>th</sup> Street terminal station will be studied in the EIS: The line would continue south along the IHB right-of-way to either a south or west terminal station location along the north side of 130<sup>th</sup> Street, just west of the I-94 Bishop Ford



Freeway.

### **1.3.4 Halsted Street Heavy Rail Transit Alternative**

The proposed Halsted Street HRT Alternative would be operated on an elevated structure between the existing Red Line 95<sup>th</sup> Street Station and the Halsted Street/Vermont Avenue intersection in the vicinity of 127<sup>th</sup> Street. The alignment would follow the median of I-57 Expressway until reaching Halsted Street. It would then turn south onto Halsted Street and continue in the median to Vermont Avenue.

The proposed Halsted Street HRT Alternative is 5.0 miles long and would include three new intermediate stations at 103<sup>rd</sup>, 111<sup>th</sup>, 119<sup>th</sup> Streets and a new terminal station at Vermont Avenue with new park-and-ride and bus terminal facilities at the intermediate and terminal stations. This alternative assumes that buses from the south would be re-routed to serve the new intermediate and terminal stations to speed passenger travel to downtown Chicago.

Near the proposed station areas, there may be additional impacts to adjacent land owners if land acquisition would be required for station facilities such as bus turnarounds or parking facilities. This would be most applicable at the proposed terminal station at 127<sup>th</sup>/Vermont since several properties are located close to Halsted Street in this segment and there may be higher off-street facility needs.

#### **Summary:**

- Transportation improvements that are already in the CMAP Fiscal Year 2007-2012 TIP as described in the No Build Alternative.
- Heavy rail transit line extension from 95<sup>th</sup> Street Station to Halsted Street/Vermont Avenue intersection.
- 5.0 mile extension with three new intermediate stops at 103<sup>rd</sup>, 111<sup>th</sup>, 119<sup>th</sup> Streets and a new terminal station at Vermont Avenue.
- New park-and-ride facilities at intermediate and terminal stations.
- Buses from the south would be rerouted to serve the new intermediate and terminal stations.

## **1.4 Summary of Purpose and Need**

The purpose of the Red Line Extension project is to reduce travel times to jobs for Far South Side and South Suburban residents and improve the performance of the existing Red Line 95<sup>th</sup> Street Station terminal. The project would also provide an opportunity to support economic development initiatives. The City of Chicago has designated several Tax Increment Finance (TIF) districts, Redevelopment Areas(RA), and Industrial Corridors in the study area. Major incentive zone areas in the study area include the 119<sup>th</sup>/Halsted RA, the Roseland/Michigan Avenue RA, the Pullman Industrial Corridor, and several smaller TIF districts.

The need for the project is based on the following considerations:

- Lack of park-and-ride and passenger drop off, and poor pedestrian facilities limit access to the existing 95<sup>th</sup> Street terminal of the Red Line.
- Customers accessing the existing terminal facility by bus experience measureable delays resulting from poor performance of surrounding arterial intersections, insufficient space

for bus loading and unloading, and insufficient space for bus layovers.

- Congested bus and passenger conditions at the existing terminal station and bus facility result in safety issues and diminish the attractiveness of transit as an alternative to other travel modes.
- Roadway performance in the study area is adversely impacted by narrow arterial streets and frequent at-grade freight rail crossings.
- Study area population is highly transit dependent, minority, and low-income. Presently, this population is underserved by rail transit compared to other areas in the region.

## **1.5 Project Participants**

The project participants include FTA, CTA, and CTA's consultants. CTA's consultants include the CWC Transit Group and CWC's subconsultants. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has been identified as a cooperating agency. Other project participants include federal, state, and local participating agencies identified in accordance with the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act - A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) 6002. Participating agencies have been identified and are listed in Appendix C.

## **1.6 Purpose of Report**

The following report summarizes the public participation process for, and the public comments resulting from, the Red Line Extension public scoping meetings and comment period. The process of determining the scope, focus, and content of an EIS is known as "scoping." Scoping meetings are a useful opportunity to obtain information from the public and governmental agencies. In particular, the scoping process asks agencies and interested parties to provide input on the proposed alternatives, the purpose and need for the project, the proposed topics of evaluation, and potential impacts and mitigation measures to be considered.

## Section 2

# Scoping Process

### 2.1 Early Scoping Activities

In 2006, CTA and FTA began the Alternatives Analysis (AA) process, for the proposed Red Line Extension. As part of a three step screening process, CTA held six public meetings between 2007 and 2009 in order to help define the purpose and need and identify a range of reasonable alternatives. This AA process is an early public scoping process and was conducted consistent with the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) guidelines.

Early scoping included a series of three screening evaluations and public outreach efforts. The first step, Screen 1, included meetings with elected officials and community groups in the study area, a meeting with stakeholders, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting, and two public meetings. The two public meetings were held on April 10 and 11, 2007. A total of 147 persons attended the two public meetings and 14 representatives of 11 community and governmental organizations attended the stakeholder session, held prior to the public meetings.

The second step, Screen 2, again included meetings with elected officials and community groups in the study area, a meeting with stakeholders, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting, and two public meetings. The two public meetings were held on December 3 and 4, 2008. A total of 84 persons attended the two public meetings, and 10 representatives of 10 organizations attended the stakeholder session, held prior to the public meetings.

The third step of the process, Screen 3, included two public meetings held on June 3 and 4, 2009. Prior to the public meetings, CTA conducted 11 briefings of elected officials and their staff and one stakeholder meeting. Fourteen representatives of 13 organizations attended the stakeholder briefing.

#### Screen 1

- April 10, 2007 - public meeting
- April 11, 2007 - public meetings

#### Screen 2

- December 3, 2008 - public meetings
- December 4, 2008 - public meetings

#### Screen 3

- June 3, 2009 - public meetings
- June 4, 2009 - public meetings

During early scoping, CTA evaluated nine alternatives, and in August 2009, the Chicago Transit Board designated the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Heavy Rail Transit (HRT) Alternative as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for further study in the EIS. The LPA was chosen, in part, due to agency participation and public participation through review and comments.

## **2.2 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) Scoping Activities**

In accordance with NEPA, CTA and FTA have initiated the environmental review process for the Red Line Extension. An EIS will be prepared to identify impacts related to project construction and operation. As part of the initial phase of the environmental process, public scoping meetings were hosted on September 22, 2009 and September 24, 2009, to receive public comments on the alternatives and issues that should be examined as part of the environmental analysis. The public meetings are also a requirement of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which requires project proponents to provide opportunities for public participation in transportation decision-making. The process of determining the scope, focus, and content of an EIS is known as “scoping.” Scoping meetings are a useful opportunity to obtain information from the public and governmental agencies. In particular, the scoping process asks agencies and interested parties to provide input on the proposed alternatives, the purpose and need for the project, the proposed topics of evaluation, and potential impacts and mitigation measures to be considered.

### **2.2.1 Public Participation Plan**

NEPA and SAFETEA-LU require project proponents to provide opportunities for public participation in transportation decision-making. In order to meet the requirements of these two Acts, a Public Participation Plan (Appendix A) was developed to guide CTA through a comprehensive public participation process for the Red Line Extension EIS scoping phase. The plan includes public participation goals, strategies to engage the public, key audiences to be addressed and the plan for notification and outreach for the scoping phase of the project. The Public Participation Plan that is included in Appendix A was developed specifically for the scoping process and will be updated to address outreach needs for the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

### **2.2.2 Coordination Plan**

Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) established an environmental review process for transit projects that has now been included in Section 139 of Title 23 of the U.S. Code. Section 139 directs agencies to prepare a plan for coordinating public and agency participation in and comments on the environmental review process for a project. The coordination plan describes how the lead agencies will provide opportunities for input from both the public and other agencies. The Coordination Plan includes the Public Participation Plan described above in Section 2.2.1.

## **2.3 Initiation of Scoping - Notice of Intent (NOI)**

FTA published the NOI in the Federal Register on September 1, 2009. The publication of the NOI is the official federal notification of the agency’s intent to prepare a DEIS. The NOI included notification of the dates and locations of the agency and public scoping meetings, the public comment period, as well as a description of the project purpose and need and alternatives. The NOI initiates the NEPA scoping process. A copy of the NOI is in Appendix B. Comments were accepted by CTA from the date of publication of the NOI in the Federal Register (September 1, 2009) through October 27, 2009. This provided a public comment period of 57 days.

## 2.4 Agency Scoping

### 2.4.1 Participating Agencies

Participating agencies can be Federal, State, tribal, regional, and local government agencies that may have an interest in the project. In accordance with SAFETEA-LU Section 6002 requirements, CTA, in coordination with the FTA, prepared and mailed participating agency invitation letters to 80 agencies with a potential interest in the project in September 2009. The identification of potential participating agencies built on the list of agencies identified through the AA process.

The responsibilities of these agencies include, but are not limited, to:

- Participating in the NEPA process starting at the earliest possible time, especially with regards to the development of the purpose and need statement, range of alternatives, methodologies, and the level of detail for the analysis of alternatives.
- Identify, as early as practicable, any issues of concern regarding potential environmental or socioeconomic impacts of the project.
- Participate in the issue resolution process, described in the Coordination Plan.
- Provide meaningful and timely input on unresolved issues.
- Participate in the scoping process.

Accepting the designation as a participating agency does not indicate project support and does not provide the agency with increased oversight or approval authority beyond its statutory limits.

Participating agencies for the project are listed in Appendix C and include federal, state and local agencies with an interest in the project because of an overlap in their area of jurisdiction or some specialized knowledge of potential project effects. Invited federal agencies automatically become a participating agency unless they decline the invitation in writing, while local and state agencies must accept the invitation. The final list of participating agencies then includes federal agencies that both accepted and did not decline as well as state and local agencies that accepted the invitations.

Agencies were given 30 days from the date of the letter to respond. Agencies may also request to be added at any time during the process. Appendix D contains two sample invitation letters; one that was sent to federal agencies and tribes and one that was sent to state, regional, and local agencies.

### 2.4.2 Cooperating Agencies

Cooperating agencies are, by definition in 40 CFR 1508.5, federal agencies with jurisdiction, by law or special expertise, with respect to any environmental impact involved in the proposed project. A state or local agency of similar qualifications may, by agreement with the lead agency, also become a cooperating agency. The cooperating agencies are by definition participating agencies as well, and while the roles and responsibilities of both are similar, the

cooperating agencies have a slightly greater degree of authority, responsibility, and involvement in the environmental review process.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has requested to become a cooperating agency for the Red Line Extension project because of their jurisdiction over the portion of the proposed alignment that would be located in the median of Interstates 94 and 57.

### **2.4.3 Agency Scoping Meeting**

One Agency Scoping meeting was held as follows:

Time: Thursday, September 24, 2009, 10:30 A.M.

Location: CTA Headquarters, Conference Room C  
567 W. Lake Street  
Chicago, IL 60661

Attendees: 19, representing the following agencies and jurisdictions (sign-in sheet included in Appendix E):

- Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)
- Metra
- Metropolitan Water Reclamation District
- City of Chicago, Department of Community Development
- Chicago Department of Transportation
- Pace
- City of Detroit, Department of Transportation
- Illinois Commerce Commission
- Chicago Police Department
- Illinois State Police, Chicago District
- Chicago Park District
- City of Chicago, Streets and Sanitation
- Chicago Department of Environment
- Illinois Secretary of State Office

CTA hosted and presented the meeting with FTA present to observe. The meeting included a PowerPoint presentation similar to the one shown at the public scoping meetings and described in Section 2.5.4.1 with some additional information on the AA process.

#### **2.4.3.1 Agency Scoping Meeting Comments**

The topics addressed in the question and answer session included:

- A discussion of the capital cost estimates for each alternative and proposed funding sources.
- Effects of land acquisition.
- Coordination with other service providers.
- Opportunities to connect CTA and Metra at 115<sup>th</sup> and 130<sup>th</sup>.
- Opportunities for an intermodal station at 130<sup>th</sup>.
- Effects on Pace bus routes, access, and connections.
- Need to analyze bus effects for both build alternatives.
- Effects on bike access.
- Locations of grade separations and potential effects on bus service and street access.
- Use of green technologies.
- Coordination with wastewater treatment operations.
- Design of terminal at 130<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Effects of odors from sludge processing operations at adjacent property owned by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicagoland (MWRDGC) at 130<sup>th</sup> Street station.
- Potential reconfiguration of 95<sup>th</sup> Street Station.
- Safety and Security.
- Maintenance of access to expressway on-ramp during construction.
- Need for coordination regarding ongoing patrolling of facility.
- Cost of providing security.
- Management of contaminated debris during construction.
- Effects to wetlands.
- Coordination with/potential benefits to new environmental center at 38<sup>th</sup> and Torrence.
- Discussion of potential schedule for EIS, PE, and construction, and the EIS decision process.

The agency scoping meeting minutes are included in Appendix E.

## **2.5 Public Scoping**

Public scoping is an important element in the process of determining the focus and content of an EIS. Scoping helps to identify the range of actions, alternatives, environmental effects, and mitigation measures to be analyzed in depth, and helps eliminate from detailed study those issues that are not pertinent to the final decision on the proposed project. Scoping is an effective way to bring together and address the concerns of the public, agencies, and other interested

parties.

Notification of the public scoping meetings was completed via several forms of media as described further in this section. This outreach was in addition to the official notice published in the Federal Register. Two public scoping meetings were held as described in Section 2.5.4.

### **2.5.1 Notification Database**

CTA maintained and updated the stakeholder database developed during the AA study to track interested individuals and groups. To the extent possible, CTA includes mailing addresses as well as e-mail contact information on the database. The database includes those who participated in the early scoping AA process by attending a meeting or providing comment during the process.

In addition to those identified through the AA process, the notification database was expanded to include residents and businesses adjacent to the proposed build alternative alignments. Addresses for businesses and residences on parcels either immediately adjacent to the proposed alignment or separated from the alignment by a street, park, vacant parcel, or one residence, were also added to the notification database. Parcels on both the east and west sides of the UPRR right-of-way were included. Parcels adjacent to both sides of the Halsted Alternative alignment were also included.

At the time of the scoping meetings, 4,265 entries were listed on the Red Line Extension project database. A list of the public agency database entries is provided in Appendix F.

### **2.5.2 Public Notification Activities**

In order to engage the public to participate in the environmental review process and attend a scoping meeting, some basic strategies were used including: 1) make it easy to participate, 2) provide easy-to-understand information that helps people provide informed scoping comments and 3) provide multiple ways to obtain information and provide comment and ensure stakeholders are aware of the planning process and are shown how public input will be used.

Invitations were mailed directly to people on the project mailing list and e-blast invitations were sent to the e-mail distribution list. Newspaper display ads were placed in a total of 9 publications, transit cards were placed on CTA vehicles and in transit stations, and flyers were placed at strategic locations in the project area. Additionally, a project web page was developed to provide all of the project information and pertinent scoping information.

Prior to developing notification materials, an evaluation was conducted of the languages spoken within census tracts within the project area with an emphasis on identifying populations with limited English proficiency. The proposed Red Line extension LPA crosses 12 census tracts. In two of those tracts the percentages of Spanish speakers who speak English “less than very well” were 15 percent and 22 percent. In the other tracts and for other languages, the percentages were all below 3 percent for people who speak English “less than very well”. Therefore, the notification and scoping materials were provided in English and Spanish for the Red Line extension project.



### **2.5.2.1 Direct Mail Notice**

Scoping meeting invitations were mailed on September 1, 2009 to a list of 4,265 entries that included elected officials, government agencies (including local agencies not described in Agency Scoping discussion in Section 2.4), tribes, general interested persons, businesses, organizations, neighborhood associations and property owners adjacent to both sides of the proposed build alternatives routes. The notice provided information on scoping, the alternatives, how to provide a comment, and the public scoping meeting information. The mailed invitation included information in English and Spanish. (Appendix G).

### **2.5.2.2 Transit Cards**

In order to reach a large audience of transit riders, “transit cards” or “car cards” with the public scoping meeting information were placed in various buses and stations in the project area. (Appendix G) Approximately 691 transit cards were distributed on September 4, 2009 for posting at all Red Line stations and on bus routes originating from the 103<sup>rd</sup> Street Garage.

### **2.5.2.3 E-mail Notification**

An invitation e-mail was created that included information on the public scoping meeting and how to provide comments. The e-mail was sent to approximately 323 addresses to people who had previously demonstrated an interest in the Red Line extension on September 5, 2009. A copy of the e-mail notification is included in Appendix G.

### **2.5.2.4 Newspaper Advertisements**

To invite the public to the scoping meeting and notify individuals about the comment period, display advertisements for the scoping meetings were placed in nine newspapers within the project area. Newspapers were selected based on their geographic focus, language needs, and audited circulation numbers. Display ads ran during the week of September 8, 2009 through the week of September 18, 2009. Ads were placed in different papers on different days of the week throughout the notification period. Ads were placed in the two papers with the largest circulation twice, running a week apart. In addition, a legal notice was placed in the Chicago Tribune on September 8, 2009. The display ads and legal notice are included in Appendix G.

Table 2-1. Newspaper Display Advertisements

Newspaper	Ad Size	Geographic Coverage	Language	First Ad Date	Second Ad Date
Chicago Sun-Times	1/4 page	Region	English	Tues, 9/08/09	Tues, 9/15/09
Hoy	1/4 page	Citywide	Spanish	Fri, 9/11/09	--
RedEye	1/4 page	Citywide	English	Wed, 9/09/09	--
La Raza	1/4 page	Citywide	Spanish	Sun, 9/13/09	--
Chicago Tribune - City and SW Zone	1/4 page	City, SW suburbs	English	Fri, 9/11/09	Fri, 9/18/09
Southtown Star	1/4 page	S. Suburbs	English	Sun, 9/13/09	--
Chicago Crusader	1/4 page	South	English	Thu, 9/17/09	--
Chicago Defender	1/4 page	South	English	Wed, 9/16/09	--
Beverly Review	1/4 page	South	English	Tue, 9/15/09	--
Legal Notice: Tribune	N/A	Region	English	Tue, 9/08/09	

**Source: CWC Transit Group**

**2.5.2.5 Project Web Site**

A project web site, [www.transitchicago.com/redEIS/](http://www.transitchicago.com/redEIS/), was developed for the Red Line EIS. The site includes information about the project, the environmental review process, and the scoping information. The site also included information about how to submit scoping comments and who to contact for additional information. The web site prominently featured the dates and times of the public scoping meetings, as well as links to directions using public transit to access the meeting locations. Website content included the scoping booklets, presentations made at the public scoping meetings, and other information of interest to the public from the AA process. The website will continue to be updated at key milestones. Some materials posted to the website were translated into Spanish.

**2.5.2.6 Additional Outreach During Public Scoping Period**

In order to maximize the coverage of the outreach effort for the scoping meetings, a media release (Appendix G) was sent to local press outlets, meeting announcements were posted on local on-line community calendars, and flyers (Appendix G) were put in key locations around the area. The meeting announcement was distributed to the following village hall and library locations:

- City of Burnham
- City of Blue Island
- City of Calumet
- Village of Calumet Park
- Village of Dolton
- Village of Evergreen Park
- Village of Riverdale
- Altgeld Branch Public Library

- Blue Island Public Library
- Brainerd Branch Public Library
- Calumet City Public Library
- Hegewisch Library Branch
- James F. Vodak/East Side Branch Public Library
- Jeffrey Manor Branch Public Library
- Pullman Public Library
- Riverdale Public Library
- South Chicago Library Branch
- Tuley Park Library Branch
- Walker Branch Public Library
- West Pullman Library Branch

### **2.5.3 Elected Official and Stakeholder Briefings**

There were four briefings with elected officials or stakeholders held on the Red Line Extension project. Generally, briefings covered a description of the project and the scoping process. The briefings included the following:

- Office of Alderwoman Austin, 34<sup>th</sup> Ward, September 15, 2009.
- Office of Alderman Beale, 9<sup>th</sup> Ward, September 14, 2009.
- Office of U.S. Representative Jesse Jackson, Jr., September 22, 2009.
- Roseland Business Development Council, October 10, 2009.

### **2.5.4 Public Scoping Meeting**

CTA hosted two public scoping meetings to inform the public about the project and gather input on the scope of the environmental studies, draft purpose and need, and alternatives to be evaluated. Meetings were conducted in compliance with NEPA guidelines, and locations were selected to reflect equitable geographic coverage, proximity to public transportation, and to minimize overlap with other meetings scheduled in the project area. The locations were within the project area, accessible by public transit, and ADA compliant. The scoping meetings were set approximately five weeks in advance of the end of the public comment period on October 27, 2009.

For the convenience of all attendees, bus lines to and from the meeting sites were publicized on some notices and on the website. In order to provide the greatest opportunity for community participation, meetings were scheduled in the early evening on weekdays.

A total of 173 people signed in at the two meetings. There may have been a few additional attendees at each meeting who did not sign in. Approximately 35 people provided verbal

and/or written comments at the meetings. An additional 309 comments were received via letters, e-mail, and mailed comment cards throughout the public scoping period.

**Meeting 1:**

Time: Tuesday, September 22, 2009, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.  
Location: Historic Pullman Visitor Center  
11141 S. Cottage Grove Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60628  
Attendees: 87 people signed in  
Comments: 11 verbal, 2 written

**Meeting 2:**

Time: Thursday, September 24, 2009 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.  
Location: Woodson Regional Chicago Public Library  
9525 S. Halsted Street  
Chicago, IL 60628  
Attendees: 81 people signed in  
Comments: 17 verbal, 5 written

**2.5.4.1 Public Scoping Meeting Format**

The scoping meetings began with a 45-minute open house format. During the open house session, project team members were present at project display boards to answer questions related to the technical aspects of the project. The open house session provided attendees with an opportunity to review the project information and clarify their understanding of the project and environmental process prior to the start of the presentation and subsequent comment period. Spanish and sign language interpreters were made available at both meetings. Following the open house period, a PowerPoint presentation was made to provide attendees with information regarding the purpose of scoping and information on the project purpose and need, background, the recently completed AA process, and the alternatives being carried forward into the DEIS (Appendix I). Emphasis was placed on the importance of the community providing comments before the comment deadline, at the public meetings or via e-mail, fax, or postal mail.

Following the presentation, the meeting shifted into a formal public comment session, which was recorded by a court reporter. Members of the public provided verbal comments to CTA on the scope of the EIS and the project which were recorded in formal transcripts (Appendix K). Comments were also accepted by comment sheets at the meeting and by mail, fax, and e-mail after the meeting until the close of the comment period on October 27, 2009. The oral comment period was moderated, and speakers were asked to limit their comments to three minutes. Those requiring translation were provided with six minutes. After the public comment portion of the meeting, the project team was again available to answer technical questions at the informational display boards until the end of the meeting time.

**Agenda:**

6:00-6:45 pm Open House  
6:45-6:55 pm Presentation

6:55-7:55 pm Public Comments  
7:55-8:00 pm Next Steps/Adjournment

#### **2.5.4.2 Public Meeting Materials**

Each meeting attendee was offered the following materials: an EIS scoping information booklet, a comment sheet, and a speaker card (Appendix H). The scoping information booklet provided a project overview and included the following sections: purpose of the EIS and scoping, environmental issues to be considered in the EIS, project overview, project alternatives, project purpose and need, public participation, how to participate in the decision-making process, and next steps. This scoping information booklet was also available in Spanish and was posted on the project web site.

The comment sheet allowed attendees to submit written comments during or after the meeting. The comment sheet was designed as a self-mailer so that individuals could easily mail comments to CTA if they needed more time to develop them after the public scoping meeting (Appendix H). The speaker card was provided for attendees to fill out and turn in before or during the public comment session if they wanted to give verbal comments. The speaker cards were provided to the hearing facilitator and names were announced to allow people to approach the microphone to make a comment (Appendix H).

Project exhibit boards were developed and used during the public open house part of the meeting. The boards included: No-Build Alternative, the Transportation System Management Alternative, the Locally Preferred Alternative, the Halsted Street Heavy Rail Transit (HRT) Alternative, Project Purpose and Need, How to Submit Comments, How to Stay Involved, Welcome to the Meeting, Environmental Review Process, Issues Potentially Considered in the Environmental Impact Statement, Meeting Agenda, and the Project Timeline (Appendix J). Exhibit boards were also posted on the website.

## **2.6 Comments Received**

The public scoping period was from September 1, 2009 to October 27, 2009 which was greater than the 45 calendar days required by FTA rules. People were provided opportunities to comment in writing or orally at the two public scoping meetings or they could comment in writing via e-mail, fax, or postal letter. The comment cards distributed at the public meetings were designed to facilitate return of written comments both at the public meeting and via postal mail later during the public comment period. E-mail comments could be sent to a project specific e-mail address found on the project website and included in all notice materials distributed. In total, approximately 344 comments were received by the close of the public comment period. All comments received are included in Appendices K, L, and M.

At the September 22<sup>nd</sup> public scoping meeting, 87 people signed-in, 11 people made formal public comments and 2 submitted written comments by the end of the meeting. At the September 24<sup>th</sup> public scoping meeting 81 people signed-in, 17 people made formal public comments and 5 submitted written comments by the end of the meeting. An additional 309 written comments were received on the Red Line Extension project by the close of the public comment period.

## Section 3

# Summary of Scoping Comments

### 3.1 Introduction

CTA accepted comments on the Red Line Extension project throughout the entire scoping period, from September 1, 2009 until October 27, 2009. Agencies, community groups, members of the public, elected officials, and other interested parties submitted 344 letters, e-mails, comment cards, and individuals' oral testimony during this period. The summary table (Table 3-1) provides a tally of the topics discussed in the comments.

It should be noted that the combined numbers of comments listed in the following subsections and the summary table will be greater than the total number of comment submissions because some people discussed multiple topics in their submission. Topics covered in the comments included the purpose and need, the alternatives to be analyzed in the DEIS, potential impacts and mitigation measures, and other substantive issues. This section contains a summary of comments received during the scoping period. The actual comments may be found in Appendices K, L and M.

### 3.2 Summary of Substantive Comments

All comments were reviewed and categorized in an electronic database. The database contains information documenting the name of the commenter, the agency or organization the commenter represented, the method by which the comment was received, the topic categories addressed in the comment. The full text of each comment is included in Appendices K, L, and M.

The comments were largely fit into three topic categories. The major categories of comments were the project purpose and need (approximately 7 comments), the alternatives to be studied in the DEIS (including alignment options, station location options, and potential design features; approximately 326 comments), and environmental impacts and mitigation measures (approximately 37 comments). The following sections contain summaries of the comments from each major category.

Table 3-1 provides a summary of the comments received during the scoping period. Transcripts of the spoken comments submitted at the public scoping meetings and full text of all written public comments are provided in Appendices K and L. Agency comments are provided in Appendix M.

<b>Table 3-1 Comment Summary</b>			
<b>Purpose and Need</b>	Ease congestion in the region Improve transit access to and from Far South side Reduce congestion at 95 <sup>th</sup> and Dan Ryan terminal Provide connections to transit disadvantaged communities		
<b>Proposed Alternatives</b>	<u>Support No-Build (0)</u>  <u>Support TSM (0)</u>	<u>LPA – UPRR HRT Alternative(318)</u> Support (317) Do Not Support (1)	<u>Halsted Street Alternative(3)</u> Support (3) Do Not Support (0)
<b>Design Comments</b>	<u>Stations (326)</u> Extension should connect to Altgeld Gardens at 130 <sup>th</sup> Provide bike access and parking Parking facilities should be larger Parking facilities should be smaller Parking should be at church lots Station design needs to accommodate bus access	<u>Design Features (12)</u> Recycling stations Use alternative energy Lighting design to reduce light pollution Natural stormwater management Native landscaping Green roofs Bike access and parking	<u>Design Features (cont)</u> Use permeable paving Incentives for alternate fuel vehicles Adequate bus bays for Pace, CTA, Paratransit Operator facilities Passenger information Signal priority for bus access
<b>Other Alternatives</b>	1. One way loop 2. Leave the UPRR right-of-way at 115th Street or Kensington Avenue, travel east to the Metra Electric line, cross over the electric line and turn south onto the IHB right-of-way	3. Use the alleys to the east of South State Street or South Michigan Avenue 4. Extend electric line routes to connect with an Indiana-Illinois border parking lot	5. Use I-94 and/or I-57 for the extension 6. Use of the Green Line from Stony Island to I-94 and South to 159th Street 7. A 9.5 mile one-way loop with seven stations
<b>Potential Impacts</b>	Transportation Impacts (21) Land Acquisitions, Displacement and Relocations(14) Community and Neighborhood Impacts (21) Visual and Aesthetic Impacts (6) Noise and Vibration (9)	Parklands (3) Economic and Fiscal Impacts (7) Safety and Security (8) Environmental Justice (284) Construction Impacts (8) Public Services (3)	

Note: Tallies are approximate

### 3.3 Comments Related to Purpose and Need

Most comments regarding the purpose and need for the project cited the benefits of the rail extension. In total, approximately 7 comments related to purpose and need were received. The general topics that these comments addressed were:

- Easing congestion in the region.

- Providing more transit options.
- Reducing bus congestion at the 95<sup>th</sup> and Dan Ryan Terminal.
- Providing connections to transit disadvantaged communities.

### **3.4 Comments Related to Alternatives**

An approximate total of 326 comments specifically discussed the alternatives. The majority of the comments, approximately 317, supported the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) - Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Heavy Rail Transit (HRT) Alternative. Most of the comments in support of the LPA also noted that the extension should reach the Altgeld Gardens/Calumet River area at 130<sup>th</sup> Street, which is already a feature of the Locally Preferred Alternative. Many comments simply indicated a preference for the Locally Preferred Alternative without indicating the reason for their choice. One comment opposed the extension citing relocation impacts, and potential effects related to property values, traffic, and noise. A few comments mentioned other alignments. There were no comments specific to the no build or the TSM alternative. Three comments expressed support for the Halsted Street HRT Alternative as an approach that would have less impact on existing residences. However, even these comments mentioned the need for the extension to reach the Altgeld Gardens area.

#### **3.4.1 Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)**

Approximately 317 comments were received expressing a preference for the LPA. Comments on this alternative included:

- Need for the extension to reach the Altgeld Gardens area.
- Potential to enhance neighborhoods by easing congestion and providing more transit options.
- Potential impact of land acquisitions, displacements and relocations due to the new extension and the park and ride facilities.
- Potential impacts related to construction.
- Potential noise and vibration impacts.
- Potential impacts to parking, bicycle and pedestrian circulation, bus access and routes.
- Potential to increase foot and vehicle traffic around the stations.
- Potential to increase litter and crime around the stations.
- Potential to provide options to transit disadvantaged population.
- Provides the greatest potential to mitigate traffic congestion feeding in from the south.
- Concerns about neighborhood compatibility.
- Potential impacts to parklands.
- Potential energy usage effects.
- Potential for brownfields redevelopment.



- Potential lighting and shadow effects.
- Potential for economic development.

### **3.4.2 Halsted Street Heavy Rail Transit (HRT) Alternative**

Three comments were received supporting the Halsted Street Heavy Rail Transit (HRT) Alternative. Two of those comments included the refinement that the alternative should still reach the Altgeld Gardens area.

### **3.4.3 Station Locations and Connections**

Approximately eight comments suggested station locations and connections that the Red Line Extension could make. The comments pertaining to station locations and connections included:

- Extension should connect to the Altgeld Gardens/Calumet River area at 130<sup>th</sup> Street.
- A station at 115<sup>th</sup> or Kensington to provide an easier connection to Metra and the South Shore.
- Concerns about providing bicycle access and parking.
- A suggestion to increase the proposed parking at the large park-and-ride facilities.
- Reduce the number of large park-and-ride stations and place more reliance on PACE bus services to get to the train.
- Use church parking lots instead of constructing new park-and-rides in the vicinity of the four station stops of the extension.

### **3.4.4 Other Alignments**

CTA received approximately eight comments suggesting alignments for the Red Line Extension other than the LPA Alternative. These suggested alignments included:

- A one-way loop alternative.
- An alignment that leaves the UPRR right-of-way at either 115<sup>th</sup> Street or Kensington Avenue traveling east to the Metra Electric line, crossing over the electric line and turning south onto the IHB right-of-way.
- An alignment that uses the alleys to the east of South State Street or South Michigan Avenue.
- Extension of the electric line routes to connect with an Indiana-Illinois border parking lot.
- Use of I-94 and I-57 for the extension.
- Use of the Green Line from Stony Island Avenue to I-94 and South to 159<sup>th</sup> Street.
- A 9.5 mile one-way loop with seven stations.

### **3.4.5 Design Features**

Approximately twelve comments were submitted suggesting additional design features to be taken into consideration. Suggestions regarding design features were primarily related to

issues of sustainability. These features include the following:

- Recycling opportunities at stations and parking areas.
- Alternative energy options including solar, solar thermal, wind and more to provide electricity and heating/cooling.
- Solar arrays (on rooftops and large expanses) to return energy to the grid.
- Downward facing lighting to reduce light pollution.
- Bioswales and rain barrels.
- Native landscapes with little to no irrigation.
- Green roofs.
- Bicycle access and parking.
- Permeable paving for the park-and-ride areas.
- Charging stations for electric vehicles.
- Include sufficient bus bays at the stations to accommodate both Pace fixed/express routes, Regional ADA Paratransit services, and CTA bus routes.
- Include bus operator facilities and passenger information as well as bus priority access such as transit signal priority or bus-activated signals to allow buses to enter/exit the terminal with minimal congestion.

### **3.5 Comments Related to Potential Impacts**

Approximately 37 comments received pertained to specific potential impacts of the project. Commenters discussed a wide range of potential impacts, though the majority touched upon relocations and displacements, safety, community compatibility, and transportation related issues such as traffic, parking, and bike and bus access to park and rides. The comments on each type of impact are summarized in the following subsections.

#### **3.5.1 Transportation Impacts**

Approximately 21 comments touched on potential transportation impacts including potential impacts to traffic circulation, parking, and access to park and rides by bikes, buses, and pedestrians. Comments included the following issues:

- Need for immediate relief of congestion at the 95th/Dan Ryan Terminal.
- Need for easy access for first responders such as police, fire and medical response during an emergency.
- Potential impacts related to increased foot and vehicle traffic.
- Arterial roadway access to/from the proposed station(s) served by connecting bus services need review for issues such as railroad grade crossings, street parking, and intersection improvements to accommodate bus movements.
- Suggestions for location and sizing of park and rides (both larger and smaller), and an

alternative to use church parking lots for commuter parking rather than new construction.

- Potential impacts to neighborhood parking if park and ride fills up.
- Extension will increase transit options for users.
- Need to increase bus service including night owl service.
- Reductions in travel times for bus riders.
- Use of bus services to access rail line.
- Potential effects on traffic patterns and congestion in a larger regional context.

### **3.5.2 Land Acquisition, Displacement, and Relocations**

Fourteen comments about land acquisition, displacement, and relocations were received. The issues addressed in these comments include concern from the potential impacts to houses around the stations and extension. Comments included the following issues:

- Potential for property loss due to the construction of the stations, park and ride lots, and the extension line.
- Potential to impact homes on Eggelston Street.
- Potential to impact homes on the east side of the tracks.
- Potential to impact industry and businesses on the west side of the tracks.
- Reluctance of senior residents to relocate.

### **3.5.3 Community and Neighborhood Impacts**

Twenty-one comments about neighborhood compatibility and potential community impacts were received. The comments focus on the potential impacts to the neighborhoods due to construction and operation of the Red Line Extension. Comments included the following issues:

- Potential to enhance neighborhoods.
- Potential for transit-oriented development.
- Issues of compatibility between commuter rail and residential neighborhoods.
- Operational impacts on residential character. Concerned that the construction and operation of the project will cause adverse impacts to the residential character of the community.
- Potential increased safety issues for residents near the extension.
- Disruption to senior citizens in the project area.
- Potential loss of residential homes.
- Potential effects of lighting around the stations and tracks.
- Potential loss of residential street parking due to transit riders parking in the

neighborhoods.

- Potential impact to residences on Egelston Street including relocation, property values changes and increased traffic.
- Potential effects related to redevelopment of brownfield sites, such as environmental or human health risks.
- Effect of increasing transit access to transit disadvantaged communities.
- Potential to support and revitalize underserved communities.

### **3.5.4 Visual and Aesthetic Impacts**

Six comments about visual and aesthetic impacts were received. Comments were primarily related to the potential for light impacts. One comment noted the potential for the trestle on Halsted Street to cause dark shadows and blight the area. Another comment mentioned the potential for an elevated track in back of homes to create dark areas and a visual impact.

### **3.5.5 Noise and Vibration**

Approximately nine comments about noise and vibration were received. The issues addressed in these comments included noise and vibration from the trains moving along the tracks and potential damage to surrounding buildings due to vibration. One comment requested that the CTA do a full-scale investigation of the "best available" and "best practicable" noise mitigation technologies.

### **3.5.6 Parklands**

Three comments about parkland and recreational facilities were received. Comments noted potential impacts to both Wendell Smith Park and Fernwood Parkway Park. In addition, one comment noted the potential opportunity to provide better access to the Ford Calumet Environmental Center.

### **3.5.7 Economic and Fiscal Impacts**

Approximately seven comments received concerned the economic and fiscal impacts of the project. These comments included the following issues:

- Potential to increase labor productivity as a result of mitigating car congestion and reducing travel times to work for residents of the far south side of Chicago and south suburbs.
- Concerns about the project costs compared to other projects across the country.
- Potential impact to property values of the homes near the extension.
- Potential to disrupt businesses during construction.
- Potential beneficial impact of transit investment on job creation and increasing employment opportunities.
- Employment model should demonstrate benefits to working populations in project area. Concern that the project will not provide jobs to the people in project area.

- Several suggested design variations were mentioned as potentially being lower cost options.
- Opportunities for transit oriented development and/or commercial and retail services near proposed stations and park and rides.
- Concerns about funding sources and maintenance and operation costs.

### **3.5.8 Safety and Security**

Eight comments about safety and security were received. Comments included the following issues:

- Ability of first responders to access construction areas.
- Concerns that lighting around stations and along the rail line be adequate to discourage crime. Potential for the trestle on Halsted Street to create shadows.
- Potential impact for increased crime at stations and surrounding neighborhoods.

### **3.5.9 Environmental Justice**

Approximately 284 comments were received that focused on the benefits of the proposed project to transit disadvantaged communities (communities underserved proportionally by transit investment). One comment referred to potential air quality benefits that might accrue to the low income community at Altgeld Gardens. Several comments specifically mentioned environmental justice as a potential goal or benefit of the project. Approximately five of the comments referred to a potential for or concern about brownfields development to mitigate the effects of contamination within the project area and effects of hazardous materials on disadvantaged communities. Some specific comments included:

- EIS needs to demonstrate compliance with environmental justice principals.
- Employment model should demonstrate benefits to working populations in project area.
- Potential for environmental justice issues related to job creation and increased employment opportunities.
- Effect of increasing transit access to transit disadvantaged communities.
- Potential to support and revitalize underserved communities.
- Reluctance of senior residents to relocate.

### **3.5.10 Construction Impacts**

Eight comments about construction effects were received. Comments included the following concerns:

- Potential for an increase in termites and rodents in neighboring homes and structures during demolition.
- First responders need access to and through construction zones.
- Potential for construction vibration to damage nearby homes.

- Potential impacts of construction noise.
- Potential disruption of neighborhood traffic patterns and parking
- Construction duration.

### **3.6 Comments Submitted by Federal, State, and Other Agencies**

Seven agencies submitted comments during the scoping period. Most of the topics mentioned were also covered in the comments discussed in the previous sections. However, some of the agency comments presented new issues, including requests to ensure compliance with government-mandated policies and regulations, coordination among transit providers, and safety concerns. The agency comments are summarized in the following sections, and full text of the agency comments is provided in Appendix M. The concerns of all the agencies will be addressed both through the DEIS analysis and through on-going coordination with CTA.

There were no comments from federal agencies. Comment letters were received from two state agencies, one regional transit provider, and four City of Chicago agencies.

#### **3.6.1 Comments Submitted by State Agencies**

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency did not have any objections to the proposed project and highlighted the future need to obtain construction permits for construction stormwater management and the potential need to obtain permits from the US Army Corps of Engineers if there would be any in-water work. The Illinois State Police highlighted concerns for first responders including access to construction zones and access to elevated tracks.

#### **3.6.2 Comments Submitted by Other Agencies**

The Pace suburban bus service, the City of Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation, Chicago Department of Environment, Chicago Housing Authority, Chicago Police Bureau of Patrol, and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) submitted comments covering some of the topics mentioned in previous sections, as well as:

- Evaluate opportunities for sustainability actions such as recycling stations, use of solar energy, sustainable management of stormwater, incentives for use of fuel efficient or alternative fuel vehicles, and/or reuse and recycling of construction debris.
- Consider connections to the new Ford Calumet Environmental Center.
- Consider intermodal connections and providing connections between transit systems at proposed station stops at 115<sup>th</sup> and at 130<sup>th</sup> Streets.
- Evaluate potential impacts of construction and operation on the need for services from other City departments including staffing levels and specialized rail training.
- Evaluate impacts on street lights, street lighting levels, and street trees.
- Extension to Altgeld Gardens will improve city wide accessibility for transit dependent populations.
- Ensure safety of transit users by evaluating potential security risks from less used and isolated access points to train lines.

- Arterial road access to proposed stations should be evaluated for adequate grade crossings, street parking, and intersection configurations to accommodate connecting bus movements.
- Station design should include consideration of access requirements for both Pace and CTA bus routes and Regional ADA Paratransit, operator facilities, passenger information, and bus priority access.
- Evaluation of connecting bus service to new stations should consider likely route restructuring that would occur to reduce service overlap.
- Design will need to maintain access to MWRD facilities, evaluate potential impacts to operations, and coordinate with utility locations.
- Potential use of MWRD property for proposed stations and park and ride facilities at 130<sup>th</sup> Street would require agreements with MWRD.
- Evaluate impacts to wetlands potentially located in the vicinity of the proposed 130<sup>th</sup> Street station.
- Evaluate potential effects of odors from MWRD facilities on proposed transit facilities.

## **Section 4**

### **Responses to Comments**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The purpose of scoping is to provide an opportunity for agencies and the public to comment on the purpose and need, the range of alternatives proposed for analysis, and to help the project proponent identify issues that should be evaluated in the DEIS analysis. Therefore, all comments that fall within the scope of the NEPA process will be addressed in the DEIS. CTA will also continue to work closely with agencies and stakeholder groups to address issues identified through scoping.

#### **4.2 Comments Related to Purpose and Need**

There were no comments directly related to the stated purpose of the project. A number of comments did affirm many of the previously identified needs for the project. In addition, some commenters identified additional conditions or benefits that support the need for the project. The DEIS will expand and clarify the purpose and need statement in response to these comments.

#### **4.3 Comments Related to Alternatives**

Many commenters expressed a preference for the LPA because it would enhance neighborhoods, ease congestions and provide better transit options for users. Comments that included reasons for a stated preference also provide insight into potential impacts or benefits of all of the alternatives. These insights into potential impacts are helpful in guiding the impact analysis of the DEIS. Comments that provide this insight are also counted as a comment on a particular resource discipline and will be included in the analysis of potential impacts.

A few comments expressed a preference for an alternative that is not currently proposed for consideration in the DEIS. The DEIS will summarize alternatives previously considered and eliminated and the process used to do so. Alternatives that do not meet the project purpose and need will not be evaluated further.

#### **4.4 Comments Related to Potential Impacts**

Potential impacts or benefits of alternatives identified by commenters will be analyzed in the DEIS. Insights into how a particular alternative may affect traffic, neighborhoods and communities, safety, or accessibility in the project area and the region are a valuable result of the scoping process. Many comments reflected an awareness of the transit dependency of the communities in the project area and hope for potential benefits to disadvantaged populations that may result from the project. Specific comments on each potential impact will be used to guide the analysis of the alternatives.

Specific comments on potential impacts were related to traffic circulation and congestion, parking issues, property acquisitions and relocations, safety, community and neighborhood compatibility, economic development opportunities, visual and aesthetic concerns, noise and vibration, and construction activities.