



Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Report and an Environmental Assessment and Notice of Virtual Public Meeting

DATE: Friday, October 18, 2024
TO: Interested Agencies, Organizations, and Members of the Public
PROJECT: Ontario International Airport Connector Project

The San Bernardino County Transportation Authority (SBCTA) has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for the proposed Ontario International Airport Connector Project (proposed Project). The lead agency for CEQA is SBCTA and the lead agency for NEPA is the FTA. Responsible and trustee agencies include Ontario International Airport Authority (OIAA), Omnitrans, and the cities of Ontario and Rancho Cucamonga.

The Draft EIR and EA have evaluated the potential for environmental adverse impacts resulting from the proposed Project and provide mitigation measures where required. The public is invited to attend a public meeting being held on November 13, 2024, as shown below, to provide comments on the content of the Draft EIR and EA.

Project Location: The proposed Project evaluated in the Draft EIR and EA involves the construction of a 4.2-mile tunnel (24-foot-inner-diameter bi-directional tunnel) between the Cucamonga Metrolink Station and Ontario International Airport (ONT) via Milliken Avenue and Airport Drive as shown in Figure 1.

Project Background: SBCTA and other agencies have assessed several transit concepts that could connect to ONT since 2008. In a 2014 study, the then-San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG), now SBCTA, identified the need for a direct rail-to-airport connection to ONT to support its projected growth. In 2018, two studies identified a connecting shuttle-style rail service with a transfer to the Cucamonga Metrolink Station that would result in the fastest travel times and support the project objectives.

Project Purpose and Need:

The purpose of the proposed Project is as follows:

- Expand access options to ONT by providing a convenient and direct transit connection between ONT and the Cucamonga Metrolink Station;
- Reduce roadway congestion by encouraging a mode shift to transit from single-occupancy vehicles and provide reliable trips to and from ONT; and
- Support the use of clean emerging technology opportunities between the Cucamonga Metrolink Station and ONT.

The need of the proposed Project is as follows:

- Lack of direct transit connection coinciding with Metrolink trains and peak airport arrival and departure schedules.
- Roadway congestion affecting trip reliability and causing traffic delays.
- High number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) resulting from ONT travelers and lack of a direct transit connection.
- Increasing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions within the communities surrounding ONT from vehicle travel to and from ONT.

Project Description: SBCTA has proposed to construct a 4.2-mile tunnel (24-foot-inner-diameter bi-directional tunnel), to connect passengers between the Cucamonga Metrolink Station and ONT via proposed on-demand electric shuttles. The proposed tunnel alignment would begin at the Cucamonga Metrolink Station, travel south underneath Milliken Avenue, and cross beneath 6th Street, 4th Street, I-10, and the Union Pacific Railroad, before traveling west beneath East Airport Drive to connect to Terminals 2 and 4 at ONT. The tunnel depth would be approximately 70 feet below the ground surface.

The proposed Project would include three passenger stations. One station would be located in the northwest corner of the existing Cucamonga Metrolink Station parking lot, which is owned by SBCTA and the City of Rancho Cucamonga and maintained by the City of Rancho Cucamonga. The proposed station would be an at-grade station plaza that would be constructed and integrated with an adjacent maintenance and storage facility with enclosed bays to store, clean, and maintain vehicles. The other two proposed stations would be located at-grade within two existing parking lots at ONT Terminals 2 and 4. A vent shaft would be constructed to provide a means of emergency passenger egress and first responder access to and from the tunnel. Two vent shaft locations are being considered west of Milliken Avenue on the north and south sides of I-10 (Figure 1).

Potential Environmental Impacts: The Draft EIR and EA identified impacts/effects associated with the proposed Project for the following environmental topics: Air Quality Cumulative (CEQA only); Biological Resources (CEQA only), Cultural Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources (CEQA only); Geology, Soils, Seismicity, and Paleontological Resources (CEQA and NEPA); Hazards and Hazardous Materials (CEQA and NEPA); Land Use and Planning (CEQA only); Transportation and Traffic (CEQA and NEPA) and Hydrology, Water Quality, Water Resources, and Floodplain (CEQA and NEPA). Mitigation measures are identified where applicable. As described in the Draft EIR and EA, the proposed Project would result in less than significant impacts/no adverse effect with the implementation of mitigation measures, except for Air Quality cumulative and Paleontological Resources during construction (CEQA only). For Air Quality cumulative and Paleontological Resources, avoidance is not feasible during construction even with mitigation measures and the impact would remain significant and unavoidable.

Virtual Public Meeting: SBCTA and FTA invite all interested members of the public to attend a virtual public meeting and provide oral and written comments on issues related to potential environmental impacts. A court reporter will be present to capture all comments made, and Spanish translation services will also be available. The virtual public meeting will be held on November 13, 2024, starting at 6 pm and ending at 8 pm. The link for this meeting is: bit.ly/ONTPublicHearing (please note link is case sensitive)

The Draft EIR and EA will be available for review at the following locations:

- Law Library for San Bernardino County, 8409 Utica Ave, Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730
- Rancho Cucamonga Public Library, 12505 Cultural Center Dr, Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91739
- Ovitt Family Community Library, 215 E C St, Ontario, CA 91764
- San Bernardino County Transportation Authority, 1170 W. 3rd Street, 2nd Floor, San Bernardino, CA 92410-1715
- Project Website: www.GoSBCTA.com/ONTconnector

Public Comments: A 46-day public comment period will commence on Friday, October 18, 2024, and will conclude at 5 p.m. on Monday, December 2, 2024. Written comments should be addressed to:

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All comments received during the public comment period will be considered by SBCTA and FTA, and compiled in the Final EIR and Final EA.

For additional information or to request the document in alternative formats, please contact Tim Watkins as listed above.

Figure 1. Proposed Project

