



## Board Report

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### PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE SEPTEMBER 17, 2025

**SUBJECT: K LINE NORTHERN EXTENSION PROJECT UPDATE**

**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE status update on the additional Mid-City technical analysis and community engagement for the K Line Northern Extension (KNE) Project.

#### **ISSUE**

This report provides an update on the KNE project. It highlights recent technical analysis and community engagement conducted in response to public comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The Draft EIR was released July 23, 2024, for a 60-day review under CEQA, which closed on September 20, 2024.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The K Line Northern Extension Project (Project), formerly known as the Crenshaw Northern Extension, is a proposed fully underground light rail project that would close a regional rail transit gap in the Metro system and transform how people travel in Los Angeles County. With the implementation of the Project, the K Line would become a regional north/south transit spine connecting to four major east/west rail lines (C, E, D and B). In addition to providing regional benefits, the Project would deliver local benefits to underserved communities in the study area plagued by congested roadways and long travel times, thus improving access to jobs, medical centers, and cultural destinations.

#### **Project History**

Transit feasibility studies for a north-south transit corridor connecting LAX to central Los Angeles County date back to the 1990s and have evolved over the years from the 2001 Crenshaw-Prairie Corridor Major Investment Study, followed by the 2009 Wilshire/La Brea Light Rail Study and more recent studies through 2020 of a northern extension of the K Line, summarized in [Appendix 2-A <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/rbg138djj0jcz9xky6opr/AMk6P7Xd9hoEXwOqiK6gNug/KNE\\_DraftEIR/KNE\\_DraftEIR\\_Appendices?dl=0&preview=KNE\\_DEIR\\_APPX2-A\\_AltConsidered.pdf&rlkey=4i6eunvvzyu8z5zled7laixaz&subfolder\\_nav\\_tracking=1>](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/rbg138djj0jcz9xky6opr/AMk6P7Xd9hoEXwOqiK6gNug/KNE_DraftEIR/KNE_DraftEIR_Appendices?dl=0&preview=KNE_DEIR_APPX2-A_AltConsidered.pdf&rlkey=4i6eunvvzyu8z5zled7laixaz&subfolder_nav_tracking=1) of the Draft EIR. Measure M allocated \$2.24 billion (in 2015 dollars) to the project and identified 2041 as the ground-breaking year when project funds would be available for construction and 2047 to 2049 as

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the window for projected opening. Local jurisdictions are implementing efforts to explore additional funding and financing strategies that could help accelerate project delivery through [Metro's Early Project Delivery Strategy <https://www.metro.net/about/early-project-delivery/>](https://www.metro.net/about/early-project-delivery/). Any acceleration of this timeline would require Metro Board approval.

### Environmental Review Process

In October 2020, the Board directed staff to begin work on the environmental clearance under the CEQA and prepare a Draft EIR. On April 15, 2021, Metro initiated public scoping for an environmental document. Following the scoping period, which ended on May 28, 2021, Metro prepared advanced conceptual engineering (ACE) drawings for project alignments and design options, with some project refinement decisions presented to the community while analyzing potential environmental impacts during construction and operations and identifying potential mitigation measures to minimize or avoid potential impacts under CEQA.

On July 23, 2024, Metro released the Draft EIR for public review, which evaluated three underground light rail alignments that range from six to ten miles long, an optional terminus station at the Hollywood Bowl, and expansion of Metro Division 16 to serve as the Maintenance and Storage Facility (MSF). The three alignments all share the same tunnel alignment in Mid-City between the K Line terminus at the E Line (Expo/Crenshaw Station) and the proposed Midtown Crossing Station. The project would be fully underground, constructed with tunnel boring machines (TBMs) in two to three phases (sections), depending on the alignment selected (Attachment A). Metro also published summaries of community outreach activities, project benefits, construction cost estimates, ridership projections, and responses to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

### Draft EIR Public Meetings

During the 60-day Draft EIR public comment period, Metro held three public hearings located in different parts of the project area and scheduled during different times of day and days of the week to maximize the public's participation. Metro solicited and received comments on the proposed corridor, but received a disproportionate number of comments from the Mid-City area. On September 4, 2024, therefore, Metro held an additional community meeting at the Nate Holden Performing Arts Center in Mid-City to answer questions and gather more feedback from residents in the area, although the meeting was open to all public members.

Approximately 588 people attended the August public hearings and the September meeting. During the comment period, Metro received over 1,300 public comments by email, mail, and phone and over 600 responses to an online survey prepared by the City of West Hollywood and shared with Metro.

### Community Feedback on Draft EIR

Public comments on the Draft EIR covered a variety of topics and represented an array of positions. Overall, feedback reflected support for the project in general, as well as support for individual alignments. Concerns were also raised regarding the demolition of historic structures near the Hollywood/Highland Station, project costs, over-engineering (related to crossovers), and the project schedule and early delivery. During the public comment period, Metro received a disproportionate number of comments from residents of historic Mid-City neighborhoods, including Wellington Square and Lafayette Square, regarding the single tunnel alignment proposed in the Mid-City area between the Crenshaw/Expo Station and the proposed Midtown Crossing Station that would travel below

homes. The comments from Mid-City residents centered on the following themes:

- Lack of notification and engagement during the development of alignments studied in Draft EIR.
- Opposition to the Draft EIR alignment in Mid-City, where tunnels are proposed to extend under homes in historic neighborhoods, and requests to further engage communities and explore alternate routes to minimize tunneling below historic neighborhoods.
- Tunnel safety concerns about potential damage to buildings above, particularly older homes built in the early 1900s.
- Property owner concerns about depreciation of home values and other consequences of underground easements and tunneling.

In response to community feedback, specifically from the Mid-City area, in October 2024, the Board authorized additional funding to support technical analysis, research, and community engagement to address Mid-City concerns. Since then, Metro has completed technical studies, including coordination with the Tunnel Advisory Panel, an independent group of tunnel engineering and construction experts, and summarized findings into three technical reports. These reports are available to the public and the project team has been providing updates to the Mid-City neighborhoods on the findings.

## **DISCUSSION**

The following section provides a summary of the findings from technical analyses to respond to concerns from residents of historic Mid-City neighborhoods, and Metro's recent engagement activities to share updates and findings. The three reports, available on the project [website <https://www.metro.net/projects/kline-northern-extension/#documents>](https://www.metro.net/projects/kline-northern-extension/#documents), provide information not included in the Draft EIR and findings are as follows for each report.

### **1) Mid-City Additional Alignment Analysis Summary [Report](#)**

[https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/nipvwgy8q6epoiivewbk0/ADdB0zZcrIMTHlbXH9gWVLQ/Reports/Additional%20Research%20%26%20Analysis%202025?dl=0&preview=KNE\\_2.30.1\\_MidCity\\_Alignment\\_Analysis\\_FINAL\\_August2025\\_rev1.pdf&rlkey=x26b27gwemc41p75788n144k0&subfolder\\_nav\\_tracking=1](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/nipvwgy8q6epoiivewbk0/ADdB0zZcrIMTHlbXH9gWVLQ/Reports/Additional%20Research%20%26%20Analysis%202025?dl=0&preview=KNE_2.30.1_MidCity_Alignment_Analysis_FINAL_August2025_rev1.pdf&rlkey=x26b27gwemc41p75788n144k0&subfolder_nav_tracking=1)

[2.30.1 MidCity Alignment Analysis FINAL August2025 rev1.pdf&rlkey=x26b27gwemc41p75788n144k0&subfolder\\_nav\\_tracking=1](#): Discusses the evaluation process and key findings from analyses conducted between fall 2024 and spring 2025. The study evaluates potential alternate tunnel routes (alignment options) in Mid-City, with the goal of reducing the number of subsurface (underground) easements needed for building and operating subway tunnels below historic residential neighborhoods without compromising transit service quality. The report evaluated 11 alignment options against three key criteria that are critical to meeting project objectives and constructability requirements. Five of the 11 alignments meet these three criteria:

- Connects to a D Line Station (existing station or under construction).
- Connects to B Line via northern alignments studied in Draft EIR.
- Has a viable construction and launch site for the Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) that avoids acquisition of residential properties and displacement of residents.

The report shares more detailed analysis for the five alignment options that meet the key criteria, including a comparison of tunnel route lengths, travel speeds, numbers of subsurface easements, changes to station areas and construction footprints, and high-level cost estimates. All five alignment options would:

- Use the proposed station at Midtown Crossing as a TBM launch site, which would avoid residential acquisitions, demolition of homes, and displacement of residents.
- Reduce the number of underground tunnel easements in historic neighborhoods (including Wellington Square & Lafayette Square), but would not completely eliminate underground easements while meeting project objectives and agency goals (e.g., safe and efficient train operations and connectivity to stations).
- Increase the tunnel length, which would increase travel time, tunnel costs, fleet size, and long-term operational and maintenance costs.
- Require further design and environmental analysis.

The report does not make a recommendation but shares findings for community feedback to inform future project studies and design.

### **Tunnel Safety Report**

[https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/nipvwgy8q6epoiivewbk0/ADdB0zZcrIMTHibXH9gWVLQ/Reports/Additional%20Research%20%26%20Analysis%202025?dl=0&preview=KNE\\_2.30.12\\_Tunnel+Summary+Report\\_FINAL\\_August2025.pdf&rlkey=x26b27gwemc41p75788n144k0&subfolder\\_nav\\_tracking=1](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/nipvwgy8q6epoiivewbk0/ADdB0zZcrIMTHibXH9gWVLQ/Reports/Additional%20Research%20%26%20Analysis%202025?dl=0&preview=KNE_2.30.12_Tunnel+Summary+Report_FINAL_August2025.pdf&rlkey=x26b27gwemc41p75788n144k0&subfolder_nav_tracking=1)

[The report documents Metro's tunneling experience, best practices with tunnel safety, and performance in avoiding damage to structures. As part of this report, Metro collected data on recent construction projects to evaluate tunneling results, conducted a survey of the age of homes in Mid-City historic neighborhoods, and researched case studies of tunnel projects below historic neighborhoods, older homes, and sensitive structures. The report addresses geotechnical \(soil\) conditions, noise, vibration, ground settlement, groundwater, etc. The Draft EIR identifies proposed tunnel depths 40 to 120 feet below the surface. The proposed tunnel depths are greater \(80 to 120 feet below surface\) in the area between Wellington Square and Lafayette Square. Based on Metro's experience tunneling in similar ground conditions in Los Angeles County, the project's proposed tunnel depth and design, the Draft EIR findings, and Metro's additional tunnel safety analysis, the report concludes that Metro could safely construct and operate tunnels in the project area without damage to properties above, including older homes and sensitive structures.](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/nipvwgy8q6epoiivewbk0/ADdB0zZcrIMTHibXH9gWVLQ/Reports/Additional%20Research%20%26%20Analysis%202025?dl=0&preview=KNE_2.30.12_Tunnel+Summary+Report_FINAL_August2025.pdf&rlkey=x26b27gwemc41p75788n144k0&subfolder_nav_tracking=1)

### **Property Considerations Report**

[https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/nipvwgy8q6epoiivewbk0/ADdB0zZcrIMTHibXH9gWVLQ/Reports/Additional%20Research%20%26%20Analysis%202025?dl=0&preview=KNE\\_2.30.5\\_Property\\_Considerations\\_Report\\_FINAL\\_August2025\\_v4.pdf&rlkey=x26b27gwemc41p75788n144k0&subfolder\\_nav\\_tracking=1](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/nipvwgy8q6epoiivewbk0/ADdB0zZcrIMTHibXH9gWVLQ/Reports/Additional%20Research%20%26%20Analysis%202025?dl=0&preview=KNE_2.30.5_Property_Considerations_Report_FINAL_August2025_v4.pdf&rlkey=x26b27gwemc41p75788n144k0&subfolder_nav_tracking=1)

[This memo discusses real estate rights and property values, including findings from a literature review and a local case study of home sale prices near and above Metro tunnels. The literature review found that property values are higher for homes within a half-mile radius of transit stations than those farther away. Additionally, the case study of homes in Westwood found no significant difference in home sale prices \(per square foot\) between homes \*with\* and \*without\* subsurface tunnel easements for the Metro D Line Extension. The memo also responds to questions about property rights and concludes that a tunnel easement would](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/nipvwgy8q6epoiivewbk0/ADdB0zZcrIMTHibXH9gWVLQ/Reports/Additional%20Research%20%26%20Analysis%202025?dl=0&preview=KNE_2.30.5_Property_Considerations_Report_FINAL_August2025_v4.pdf&rlkey=x26b27gwemc41p75788n144k0&subfolder_nav_tracking=1)

not change the property's zoning and historic designation status, nor would it affect an owner's ability to construct or remodel their property. A tunnel easement also would not impact underground oil or mineral rights, which are thousands of feet below the surface, compared to proposed subway tunnels, which would be 80 to 120 feet or eight to 12 stories below the surface in Mid-City.

In addition to these technical reports, Metro prepared community-facing materials to distill technical information, including FAQs, a [Storymap](https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/74d39323fb764be38ab0a0a0f3093276) <<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/74d39323fb764be38ab0a0a0f3093276>> website, and presentation materials to share findings.

### Engagement with Community

This spring and summer, Metro has engaged with Mid-City communities through small groups to listen and understand their concerns and jointly identify the most effective ways to reach out to the Mid-City communities going forward to ensure transparency and participation. These engagement activities included:

- March 5th, coffee conversation with Mid-City leaders to hear concerns and share an update on technical efforts and engagement approach.
- July 23rd, coffee conversation with Mid-City leaders to solicit feedback on community notifications and engagement strategies to share technical findings.
- August 5<sup>th</sup>, coffee conversation with Mid-City leaders to share a preview of technical findings and solicit feedback on upcoming engagement.

Based on feedback from Mid-City leaders, Metro prepared FAQs and executive summaries to distill findings from technical reports, shared reports in advance of meetings so the community could review and prepare questions, and used multiple methods to notify community members of upcoming meetings, including:

- Mailed notices and distributed flyers to Mid-City neighborhoods.
- E-blasts to Mid-City residents.
- Invitations to Mid-City leaders and neighborhood associations.
- Social media toolkits to share with elected offices and neighborhood groups.
- Advertising on social media.

In August, Metro held two community meetings with Mid-City residents to share findings, answer questions, and gather input on the additional analyses conducted.

- Saturday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, community open house at Johnnie L. Cochran Jr. Middle School from 10 am to noon.
- Tuesday, August 26<sup>th</sup>, virtual community open house via Zoom from noon to 1:30 pm.

### Feedback from August Mid-City Community Meetings

The first Mid City Community Update Meeting was held on August 23, 2025, at Johnnie L. Cochran Jr. Middle School, drawing more than 85 participants, including Metro Board Director Jacquelyn

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Dupont-Walker, and staff from Director Horvath and Mitchell's offices, as well as staff from Los Angeles City Council District 10 (Heather Hutt), and presidents of Mid-City neighborhood associations including Lafayette Square and Wellington Square. The meeting commenced with an open house and a presentation on the Mid-City Additional Alignment Analysis and Property Considerations studies. Presentation of findings from the Tunnel Safety Report will occur at October meetings.

At the virtual meeting on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 49 participants joined the meeting, covering the same materials as the August 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. In addition to Metro Board staff who attended the August 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting, staff from Director Yaroslavsky's office (LA City Council District 5) and West Hollywood Mayor Chelsea Byers and Councilmember John Erickson joined the call. Common themes from both August meetings included:

### **Tunneling and Safety**

- Concerns about safety and structural risks of tunneling under 100+ year-old homes and historic neighborhoods, with fears of lawsuits, costs, and architectural damage.
- Questions on whether Metro has previously tunneled under residential properties and what the impacts were.
- Calls for pre-construction surveys, clear settlement/claims processes, earthquake safety assurances, and CEQA compliance.

### **Property Impacts, Equity and Displacement**

- Questions about impacts to private property: displacement, eminent domain, easements, compensation, and property values.
- Equity concerns, including avoiding repeat harms like Sugar Hill displacement and the loss of Black generational wealth.

### **Historic and Cultural Resources**

- Some residents expressed that comparing Mid-City homes to Westwood homes was insufficient. Mid-City homes are older, more vulnerable, and culturally significant.
- Requests for historic recognition of neighborhoods.

### **Alignment Options and Decision-Making Process**

- Comments on Mid-City Additional Alignment Analysis, including opposition to Options 1 and 4 (including 4a/4b) and preference for Options 2, 3, 5, and 6.
- Questions about the process for selection of the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA), how to learn about future meetings, and whether additional environmental analysis will be required to update the DEIR for alternative alignments.
- Additional questions about federal funding for the project.

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### Other Project Engagement

In addition to targeted engagement with Mid-City residents, since January, Metro staff has continued to hold coordination meetings with project stakeholders along the full corridor, has participated in local community events to raise project awareness, and has briefed elected offices (listed below).

- 1/15/2025, Metro Westside/Central Service Council Briefing
- 2/5/2025, Metro Technical Advisory Committee Briefing
- 2/21/2025, Cedars-Sinai Briefing
- 2/23/2025, CicLAvia: West Adams meets University Park
- 4/5/2025, CicLAvia: Koreatown meets Hollywood
- 4/10/2025, LA County Sheriff (West Hollywood Sheriff's Station) Briefing
- 5/26/2025, Original Farmer's Market
- 5/31-6/1/2025, West Hollywood Pride 2025
- 6/21/2025, Markets at Leimert Park Grand Opening
- 6/28/2025, Mid-City Arts and Music Festival
- 7/28/2025, Office of Councilmember Heather Hutt (District 10) Briefing
- 8/10/2025, Wellington Square Farmer's Market
- 8/17/2025, Wellington Square Farmer's Market.

As part of these efforts, Metro was able to engage with 1,498 people and add over 193 people to the project email contact list. Metro will continue to review and summarize stakeholder input on the project to inform project development and next steps.

### **EQUITY PLATFORM**

The Project would close a gap in the regional rail network, providing a rapid north/south rail connection from South Bay to Hollywood, increasing access to employment, education, housing, and regional centers. It would also serve many people living in Equity Focus Communities (EFCs) in areas such as West Adams, Mid-City, West Hollywood and Hollywood along the K Line Northern Extension and connect to the D and B Lines. Ridership data shows that the project will attract regional riders coming from the neighborhoods south of the project area, expanding access for people living in the South Bay, Inglewood, and South LA who want to access jobs in the central part of Los Angeles via the project.

Metro circulated materials and notices in English and Spanish and held pop-up events at community events (e.g., CicLAvia, Pride, farmers markets) and transit rider intercepts at bus stops in the project area to increase awareness of the Project and engage groups who do not typically participate in community meetings. In the last six months, Metro has focused on additional engagement with Mid-City communities to address concerns about historic inequities. As part of future stages of project

development, Metro will expand partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs) to help disseminate project information, advise on outreach methods, and engage a diverse set of project stakeholders as Metro advances the Project. Furthermore, Metro is committed to expanding community outreach to include additional languages spoken in EFCs and beyond, and to ensuring meaningful connections with riders of all ages and abilities, including seniors, people with disabilities, and those with mobility challenges.

### **VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED OUTCOME**

VMT and VMT per capita in Los Angeles County are lower than national averages, the lowest in the SCAG region, and on the lower end of VMT per capita statewide, with these declining VMT trends due in part to Metro's significant investment in rail and bus transit.\* Metro's Board-adopted VMT reduction targets align with California's statewide climate goals, including achieving carbon neutrality by 2045. To ensure continued progress, all Board items are assessed for their potential impact on VMT.

As part of these ongoing efforts, this item is expected to contribute to further reductions in VMT.

This project supports Metro's systemwide strategy to reduce VMT through planning activities that will improve and further encourage transit ridership, ridesharing, and active transportation. Metro's Board-adopted VMT reduction targets were designed to build on the success of existing investments, and this item aligns with those objectives.

Metro conducted a preliminary analysis to show that the net effect of this project is to decrease VMT. The Draft EIR identifies that the project would help reduce auto use by approximately 128,000 to 136,000 VMT daily. This would help the region meet climate change goals by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and regional energy use.

*\*Based on population estimates from the United States Census and VMT estimates from Caltrans' Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) data between 2001-2019.*

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

The Project supports the following strategic plan goals identified in Vision 2028:

- Goal 1: Provide high-quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling,
- Goal 3: Enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity, and
- Goal 5: Provide responsive, accountable, and trustworthy governance within the Metro organization.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Metro will continue to receive and review community feedback on the project. Based on community input, the findings of the Draft EIR and technical studies, project objectives, cost estimates, and funding, staff will prepare a recommendation for the Board to consider the potential selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative.

**ATTACHMENT**

Attachment A - KNE Project Map

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## ATTACHMENT A: KNE Project Map

