

APPENDIX O - PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND METRO'S RESPONSE

Project:	Central Mesa Light Rail Transit (LRT) Extension Draft Environmental Assessment, November 2010
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No.	Page No./ Reference	Comment	METRO Response to Comment	Change to the Draft EA Required
Community Comments				
Email Comments				
1	N/A	<p>Gentlemen: My comment is about the time frame for this public review. I think it is odd that it comes as everyone should be able to spend time with their family. I don't think it is the best idea to have the review time start the day before Thanksgiving and end on Christmas Eve. There will be very few people who will have the opportunity to provide any meaningful public comment as most people are preparing for more important things, BUT perhaps that is the intent- to simply comply with legal notifications requirements- not get much comment. I hope we are not surprised if comments come later in the process when people have an opportunity to study the report. Thank you for your consideration and I hope to be able to have time to review and give comments on the content at a later time. I hope you have a Happy Thanksgiving!</p> <p>Carol Walsh 11/24/10</p>	<p>METRO understands your concerns over the time frame for public review of the Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA). In light of the holidays, the comment period was extended to January 7, 2011. The extension of the comment period was re-advertised in the same media that the original notice of availability for public comment was advertised. The comment period extension was also posted at the two public meetings for the Draft EA held on December 10, 2010. In addition, the METRO project website also listed the extended comment period, and another email was sent to residents and businesses in close proximity of the project as well as to others who previously requested to be placed on the project's public notification list.</p> <p>This information has been added to a new section 4.7 of the Final EA.</p>	Yes
2	N/A	<p>Mr. Forrest, We cannot attend the open house on December 10th. How can we obtain the information presented at this meeting. Thank you.</p> <p>Esther and Irving Kozinets 11/28/10</p>	<p>METRO responded to Esther and Irving Kozinets through email the following:</p> <p>Five copies of the Draft EA along with the technical reports supporting the Draft EA are located at Mesa's main library at 64 East 1st Street. The Draft EA can also be downloaded from our website - metrolightrail.org/centralmesa for review. Once on METRO's website click on future extensions which will take you to all the extension projects. Click on Central Mesa and you will see on the right side of your screen "Downloads". Below "Downloads" click on EA documents and you will see the Central Mesa EA along with all the appendices (technical reports). There is also a comment form that you can print off and mail back with your comments, or if you do not wish to use the form, you can</p>	No

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			<p>email or mail METRO your comments to the attention of Robert Forrest at METRO at the address listed in the next sentence.</p> <p>Copies of the Draft EA are also located at METRO's office at 101 North 1st Avenue, Suite 1300 in Phoenix.</p>	
3	N/A	<p>Don't go cheapskate on rail plans</p> <p>There they go again. The Maricopa County transportation deciders are making plans to do another major project on the cheap, which is sure to be less effective in the future. The operation cost to the taxpayers over the years is never factored into their schemes. Light rail needs to be extended to areas of high ridership. To end it on Main Street and Mesa Drive, or even Gilbert Road, is just politics, a dead end that deprives us of an opportunity to solve our traffic problems. The goal should be to extend it south to help revive the Fiesta Mall area, then southeast through Gilbert, ending near Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport and ~ southwest through Phoenix paralleling Interstate 10 and Loop 101. Both are heavily populated, growing areas.</p> <p>Look have little the traffic has been on the big buses from superstition plaza to Sycamore.</p> <p>Regarding Commuter Trains not on a shared freight track. I would prefer a high-speed commuter train from Phoenix to Tucson with three stops. Later it could be extended from Black Canyon City to Phoenix with two stops. Both rights of way will never be cheaper and have the minimum road crossings now. Private investment would provide urban renewal and infill, increasing density. Public transportation would be less of a burden on the average family than ownership of multiple vehicles. We did not vote to extend to Mesa Drive/ Smith Chaired all the committees that approved it, including at the airport when the issue came up but Mesa no longer on a high traffic road, their time has passed. Tax money is all that keeps it going</p>	<p>In 2004 the voters in Maricopa County passed Proposition 400 establishing a sales tax to fund future highway projects and to fund 57 miles of high capacity transit within the valley. The 57 miles of high capacity transit corridors were adopted by the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) and is in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The Central Mesa corridor (3.1 miles in length) out to Mesa Drive is part of the 57 miles of high capacity transit approved by Maricopa County voters in 2004. This project is also included in the RTP.</p> <p>In 2007 METRO began the Alternatives Analysis process that evaluated several high capacity transit alignments and transit modes within the Central Mesa corridor. During this process METRO and the City of Mesa held public meetings and provided other community outreach (as discussed in Chapter 4 of the Draft and Final EA) to evaluate these alternatives. Based on these meetings METRO and the City of Mesa identified and recommended to the City of Mesa a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). The LPA is light rail on Main Street from Sycamore to Mesa Drive. The LPA was adopted by the City of Mesa (May 2009), METRO Board of Directors (June 2009), and MAG (July 2009). See also response to Comment 5. Additional information has been added to Section 2.2.4 of the Final EA to respond to additional alternatives that were proposed during the public comment period of the Draft EA, including your suggestion.</p> <p>Note also that the Alternative Analysis recommended extending light rail transit (LRT) out to Gilbert Road. However, new funding is required. Extending LRT out to Gilbert Road has been added to the RTP as an unfunded "illustrative corridor".</p> <p>As part of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Small Starts process and submittal package for this project METRO and the City of Mesa have factored in the operating costs for this</p>	Yes

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		<p>investment private is south.</p> <p>Richard Tracy Sr., Mesa 12/8/10</p>	<p>project. A requirement of the FTA Small Starts process is to assure the FTA that the City of Mesa has the funds to operate this system in the future. This discussion has been added to Section 5.1 of the Final EA.</p> <p>The Arizona Department of Transportation, MAG, and other agencies are currently studying the feasibility of commuter rail in the Valley as well as throughout the state, and the Southwest Rail Coalition is looking at the potential for commuter rail throughout the southwest. Commuter rail is not a part of this project.</p>	
4	N/A	<p>It seems your report is non-navigable. At "welcome" there is no success at traveling to points of interest. At least that's the way it is at 5:45 p.m. Friday, December 10th 2010.</p> <p>Anonymous 12/10/10</p>	<p>Comment noted. The .pdf version of the Draft EA on METRO's website contains a function "find" that allows you to type in word(s) or heading(s) that you want to navigate to and it will take you to that point of interest.</p>	No
5		<p>Sir,</p> <p>As a concerned taxpayer and long-time resident of Maricopa County in Arizona it completely puzzles me as to why the proposed light rail extension is slated to go east down Main street in Mesa when there are a number of better alternatives available. It would seem to me that the extension should be established to serve the most people here in the east valley area and that would dictate a turn south to serve the areas of Chandler or Gilbert. The thought is that there is on-going development in these areas that far surpasses that of central Mesa.</p> <p>The central idea of the light rail concept is to be a people mover and to cut down on the excessive pollution that plagues the Phoenix Metro area. Personally I want to promote the use and success of the light rail concept but to do so it should serve the most people. And those people can be found south of the current terminal at Dobson and Main Street not east. Most of the development east of the current terminal is of a retirement nature and not an area working commuters. Therefore if we want to mitigate</p>	<p>Please refer to response to comment number 3 above regarding extending light rail into Chandler and Gilbert. Information on the findings of the Alternatives Analysis study is referenced in Comment 3's response. The purpose and need for this project is summarized in Chapters 1 and 2 of the Draft and Final EA.</p> <p>Note also that diverting the project to the south as suggested would miss the opportunity to serve the downtown area which is a major purpose and need for the project to enhance access and help spur business activity in the downtown area. In addition, the regional travel demand model was used to evaluate ridership in the area. The model predicted higher ridership for an alignment traveling east of Mesa Drive rather than south of Main Street. Additional information has been added to Section 2.2.4 of the Final EA to respond to additional alternatives that were proposed during the public comment period of the Draft EA, including your suggestion.</p>	Yes

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		<p>the valley pollution we should route this extension to where it will do the most good. And it would appear to me that more good would be found by serving areas south toward Chandler and Gilbert.</p> <p>Has a study been done to determine which route will serve the most people? If not, shouldn't one be done? I am just concerned that we, as taxpayers get the most bang for the buck.</p> <p>Ray Girdler 12/20/10</p>		
Phone Comments				
6		<p>How many people do you expect at the public meeting?</p> <p>Purpose of the meeting?</p> <p>How did you advertise the meeting?</p> <p>Anonymous 12/06/10</p>	<p>At the time of this phone call, METRO did not know how many people would attend the two public meetings held on December 10, 2010. However, approximately 70 people attended both meetings, but only 55 actually signed-in as attending.</p> <p>The Central Mesa LRT project is expected to receive funds through the federal New Starts program administered by the FTA. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires preparation of an environmental document for projects receiving federal funding. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the Draft EA and solicit input and comments from the public on the Draft EA.</p> <p>The public meetings were advertised in the Arizona Republic, East Valley Tribune, La Voz, and 9,000 door hangers were delivered from University to Broadway, Sycamore to Horne. In addition, the METRO project website and social media accounts advertised the meetings, and an email was sent to residents and businesses in close proximity of the project as well as to others who previously requested to be placed on the project's public notification list. The City of Mesa also advertised the meeting through their website and in the Neighborhood Services Department weekly email newsletter to residents. This information was added to the Final EA as a new Section 4.7.</p>	Yes

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7		<p>The commentator indicated that a park-and-ride would destroy Pioneer Park due to increased traffic and cars parking next to the park. In addition, it would result in the taking of several homes. She also indicated that the Mormon Church is dictating the project.</p> <p>Kathy Girdler 12/10/10</p>	<p>The park-and-ride area of interest studied in the Draft EA shows the potential for taking the maximum of two houses and not several. See Tables 3-2 and 3-3 of the Draft and Final EA. As discussed in the EA, the parking facility configuration has not yet been determined, so the facility may, or may not, require acquisition of all properties identified in the area of interest. Current studies of demand show the need for approximately 500 spaces at this location. The City of Mesa will require the proposed park-and-ride lot to be screened from Pioneer Park and the adjacent neighborhood. The screening is expected to enhance the visual setting of the area since the land closest to the park is now vacant and bare and contains no landscaping. The park-and-ride would also provide additional parking for park users, especially during those times of the day when commuters are not using the facility. A number of cities have found this to be useful since recreationists often use parks at times when transit is least used and vice versa. This information has been added to Section 3.11.2 of the Final EA.</p> <p>Comment noted regarding the Mormon Church.</p>	Yes
Written Comments				
8		<p>I feel this project should be postponed. Our economy is too weak right now. The federal government is broke and the state isn't any better. We need to solve our present problems.</p> <p>Why are we hiring outside people from other states rather than those from our state?</p> <p>This project will impact the local businesses and they are having a hard time as it is now.</p> <p>The METRO is not making money now and extending it is not going to make it any better. They have already shortened hours. The severity is not its best. People haven't always paid. This will be another losing proposition like Centennial Hall and Hotel project. This is our opinion.</p> <p>Brian and Donna Harman 12/10/10</p>	<p>The local share of the funds for this project is coming from the half cent sales tax (Proposition 400) voted on and approved by the voters of Maricopa County in 2004. Most of the federal share is expected to come from FTA's New Starts Program, specifically the Small Starts portion of the program. The federal funds for New Starts have already been set aside for eligible projects similar to the Central Mesa LRT extension. A small percentage of the Federal funds will also be sought through the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) which helps regional and local efforts to achieve compliance with national air quality standards set under the Clean Air Act. No funds from the State of Arizona will be used for this project. Chapter 5 of the Final EA has been revised as needed to reflect this response to the comment.</p> <p>The consulting firms leading the project and conducting the alternatives analysis, design, and environmental document are firms that have major offices in Arizona. Federal regulations for the art program procurement dictated that</p>	Yes

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			<p>the <i>Request For Qualifications</i> be posted nationally. The selection panelists were instructed to review artists' qualifications without consideration to the applicants' residency. Of the six artists selected for the project, three live in Arizona.</p> <p>The project will have temporary impacts to local businesses during construction. However, METRO and the City of Mesa will work closely with the businesses prior to and during construction to minimize the impacts. See Table 3-23, Community Disruption/Economic Activity, in Section 3.20 of the Final EA for additional discussion regarding coordination with businesses to minimize impacts due to construction.</p> <p>As part of the process to compete for federal funding under the New Starts program, FTA requires local sponsors to assure FTA that sufficient funds will be available to operate the system in the future, otherwise FTA will not approve federal funding for the project. This project, like all transportation projects, is subsidized through a variety of revenue sources. Light rail riders may pay fares in several different ways. Passengers may purchase one-way or round-trip tickets from ticket vending machines located at each LRT station. Employers may purchase monthly platinum cards for their staff. Riders must scan the cards each time they use light rail.. Riders may also purchase daily, weekly, or monthly passes. These types of passes do not need to be scanned when used. Many riders transfer from the bus to the rail and are not required to purchase a new pass. To help ensure that all fares are collected so that the appropriate revenue may be recovered to help pay for operating costs, fare inspectors randomly inspect to verify passengers possess a valid pass or ticket to ride the train. METRO continues to investigate and implement other strategies to improve fare compliance. This discussion has been added to Section 5.1 of the Final EA.</p>	
Oral Comments Submitted at Public Meetings				
9		We don't understand why they are keeping traffic, one lane of traffic, on Main Street. It should just become a pedestrian mall so that the shops get more exposure. They could have more outdoor restaurants, a walking mall, much like Boulder, Colorado, or Downtown Denver and their light rail, where they created walking	The City of Mesa and METRO have reached out to the business owners to solicit their input in the design of the project. The majority of the business owners indicated they would like auto traffic to be maintained on Main Street along with LRT to increase exposure to both transit passengers and auto drivers alike. Additional information has been added to	Yes

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		<p>areas and no-traffic areas.</p> <p>There's not enough parking on Main Street to satisfy the needs of the retailers to allow a retailer to survive. So they ought to have huge parking lots coming off 1st Avenue. They could have parking and turn this into a walking mall. That's the best thing.</p> <p>We don't understand, because one lane traffic going each way is going to be backed up. It's going to be noisy because it is not in the center, and now you have got light rail, and you've got people standing in a platform to traffic going by.</p> <p>Mrs. Donna Bleyle 12/10/10</p>	<p>Section 2.2.4 of the Final EA to respond to additional alternatives that were proposed during the public comment period of the Draft EA, including your suggestion.</p> <p>METRO conducted a traffic analysis that is included in the Transportation Technical Report appended to the Final EA in Appendix C. This analysis determined that having one lane of traffic in each direction from Country Club Drive to Horne would maintain operations at acceptable levels per City of Mesa traffic congestion criteria. This information is also presented in Section 3.6.1 of the Draft and Final EA.</p> <p>The primary parking for the downtown area businesses along Main Street is located in off-street surface lots located behind the businesses. Additional on-street parking is located on parallel streets and on north/south cross streets. Note that the project is anticipated to remove only about 7 or 8 spaces in the downtown. Sufficient parking to access the businesses is available. Section 3.6.2 of the Draft and Final EA addresses parking.</p> <p>The noise analysis in Section 3.8.1 that was conducted for this project indicates no adverse impact (Also see Appendix E-1 of the Draft and Final EA).</p>	
10		<p>It wouldn't have been so bad if it had been elevated, you know. Which would have been really cool, like Chicago. Then you can have some cars and stuff with enough traffic lights, like they have now. Yeah, it will all be blocked up all the time. And it lends nothing to the environment, and creates more fumes around what could be a really nice walking mall. So that's what we wanted to see.</p> <p>Mr. Karl Bleyle 12/10/10</p>	<p>See response to comment number 9 above. Because of the high additional costs associated with an elevated guideway, this was not considered. In addition, an elevated guideway is often considered to have higher adverse visual impact than the at-grade guideway being proposed. The traffic and air quality studies conducted for the Draft EA did not identify any adverse impacts. Additional information has been added to Section 2.2.4 of the Final EA to respond to additional alternatives that were proposed during the public comment period of the Draft EA, including your suggestion.</p>	Yes
11		<p>I believe that they should route traffic off Main Street and down to 1st Street and 1st Avenue and turn the central corridor here into a green area with trees so that we could have a cool space downtown.</p> <p>I don't come downtown because the noise is so bad when I sit outside. So if they could route the traffic around, I think we might be able to get the downtown</p>	<p>Comment noted. See response to Comment 9. Additional information has been added to Section 2.2.4 of the Final EA to respond to additional alternatives that were proposed during the public comment period of the Draft EA, including your suggestion.</p>	Yes

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		<p>to start to improve itself.</p> <p>Mr. Michael Ziegler 12/10/10</p>		
12		<p>One concern I have is relative to pedestrian comfort and the pedestrian environment and making sure that that's taken into consideration as it relates to the design of the stations, as well as taking into consideration as relating to the people walking to the station, whether it be from the parking lot side or from where they live, or have parked their car.</p> <p>One of the issues currently is that there is not enough shade, and going from the park-and-ride to the stations, there's not enough shade. It makes it very uncomfortable for pedestrians.</p> <p>Also, consideration should be given to the potential health impacts to determine what are some of the health issues in the area. And how might this project benefit or improve those issues, how those issues might be addressed through the project. So health issues could be obesity and related issues, such as diabetes. And safety issues, I think pedestrian safety concerns with the pedestrians and vehicles. So I think there may be a broader look at some of those that I think is an issue.</p> <p>Mr. Dean Brennan 12/10/10</p>	<p>METRO has developed a Design Criteria Manual that identifies landscaping requirements 350 feet on either end of the station platform to provide an enhanced streetscape and shade for pedestrians. The Design Criteria Manual also identified criteria for station design for pedestrian comfort.</p> <p>METRO has also developed urban design guidelines that apply to the entire METRO system and has recently completed, as a companion piece, additional guidelines that apply to the Central Mesa LRT extension. That document includes measures to enhance pedestrian comfort and safety to those walking in the vicinity of the stations from the surrounding community as well as from the park-and-ride facilities. Shading techniques are included in those guidelines as well. This information has been added to Section 3.6.3 of the Final EA.</p> <p>Note that the Draft EA evaluated the potential impacts to pedestrians and discussed the urban design guidelines mentioned. All sidewalks along the entire length of the project will be maintained and in some cases widened, especially at stations. The Draft EA also discussed addition of new signalized pedestrian crossings (Section 3.6.3). The safety of pedestrians and motorists will be a high priority as the design of the project moves forward.</p> <p>The Draft EA evaluates the potential impacts to the environment including human health (air quality, noise impacts, etc.), but it does not evaluate the health issues people currently have that live within the area and how the project may improve their health condition such as obesity and diabetes. It is likely that transit-oriented development (TOD) will occur and such development would enhance walkability. The additional exercise activity associated with a pedestrian-friendly environment, coupled with decreases in auto use through TOD, may tend to improve the health conditions mentioned. However, the extent of the improvement would be speculative.</p>	Yes

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13		<p>My concern is with the placement of a TPSS on the adjacent property to my property, which I believe will negatively impact any future sales potential of selling my property to somebody else, because it removes certain square footage from my property just to be circumnavigated and can't be utilized for potential whatever a future buyer may have.</p> <p>So I feel it places an undue negative financial impact on me and on my property. And I would like the system to discover an alternative locale for it. Presently my water supply line runs underneath the proposed TPSS station and would require relocation.</p> <p>Mr. Hans Rauschenbach 12/10/10</p>	<p>METRO currently is looking at seven different locations along the alignment for the three traction power substations (TPSS's) that will be required for the project. The final location of the TPSS's will be determined during final design. The TPSS shown on the conceptual engineering drawings at the public meeting inadvertently shows the TPSS site extending onto your property. However, that is not the case. The TPSS would be located within the parcel located to the north and east of your property. This TPSS would be completely contained within this parcel and would not affect your square footage. Note that METRO requires TPSSs to be designed with landscaping and, in many cases, public art to minimize visual impacts on nearby land uses. The buildings and surroundings will also be maintained throughout LRT operations.</p> <p>The water supply line does run underneath the proposed TPSS site and would require the relocation of your water supply line. It is anticipated that disruption of your water service would last no more than one hour. METRO or its contractors would provide you advance notice of the planned temporary shut-off of service. Table 3-23 of the Draft and Final EA includes advance notification as a standard construction practice that will be implemented for planned temporary utility shutoffs.</p>	No

Agency Comments

Phone comments from Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) comments—Kevin Wallace 01/07/11				
14	Page 1-2, Chapter 1	Section 1.1 refers to "accommodating travel needs of a growing population." This should be expanded on or it should reference the study showing the growing travel needs.	<p>This information comes from the separate Purpose and Need statement that discusses this issue. The Final EA references this study in a footnote to Section 1.2.</p> <p>The draft of the Purpose and Need statement was distributed to all participating agencies for review on October 10, 2007 as part of the SAFETEA-LU environmental streamlining process (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users).</p>	Yes
15	Page 1-6, Chapter 1, Table 1.1	Travel Time (Minutes) for Select Destinations from Mesa. The report should explain the methodology used to develop the information presented in the table. Without a full understanding of the methodology, it is unclear why the transit times between Mesa and the airport are longer than for Mesa to downtown Phoenix. MAG staff prepared a	Transit travel to the airport for both the Build and No-Build Alternatives will require at least one transfer to complete the trip. However, the trip to downtown Phoenix requires one less transfer than the trip to the airport; thus waiting time for transfer between modes is reduced. In addition, the average speed for LRT between Mesa and downtown Phoenix is 20-22 miles per hour which is faster than LRT's	Yes

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		<p>table to confirm the information presented, and has noted several discrepancies. Please contact me if you would like a copy of this analysis. Also, since the information presented in this table was not prepared by MAG staff, it would be appropriate to reference the source as METRO.</p>	<p>average speed between Mesa and the airport which is 17-18 miles per hour. Both of these factors result in faster travel times to downtown Phoenix than to the airport.</p> <p>To determine travel times by mode by alternative the travel time information that is input into the Mode choice model was used. Using the same travel time information that is used by the mode choice model to determine mode of travel is also consistent with the information the FTA summit program used to determine user benefits. The unit of analysis for this travel time comparison and zone to zone travel times and includes all components of travel times including walk, wait, transfer and in-vehicle times.</p> <p>In the Mesa project a single origin location and four destination locations were chosen for the travel time comparisons. The origin location is:</p> <p>Zone: Location: 1335 Alma School Road and Main Street in Mesa</p> <p>The destination locations are:</p> <p>Zone: Location: 1167 Tempe CBD 933 Sky Harbor Airport 842 Phoenix CBD 769 Central and Camelback Road"</p> <p>Additional information explaining the assumptions used has been added to Table 1-1 of the Final EA. In addition, the table also references METRO as the source of this information.</p>	

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16	Page 1-6, Chapter 1, Figure 1-9 2015 PM peak period LOS for Major Streets in Mesa	The MAG 2015 travel forecast does not show the same levels of service and congestion presented in this map. MAG staff prepared a map depicting the correct level of service information for the study area. Please contact me if you would like a copy. Also, since this information was not prepared by MAG staff, it would be appropriate to reference the source as METRO.	At the time of preparation of the Draft EA, the map shown in the document was the most recent available from the regional model. The model data is consistent with what was included in the federal Small Starts submittal (November 30, 2009) and reviewed and approved by FTA (August 12, 2010). Subsequent to that time, the MAG model was updated to implement revised volume delay functions and so the level of service (LOS) information changed. In any case, the map appearing in the Draft EA (Figure 1-9) used the color red to represent both LOS E and LOS F, so the reader cannot discern between those two LOSs. This figure has been removed from the Final EA since it is not essential to the findings in the Purpose and Need.	Yes
17	Page 1-7, Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1	Will the Mesa LINK service levels be adjusted to match the proposed LRT Central Mesa extension level of service? Will the LINK be adjusted to operate on the weekends as well (currently the LINK only operates on weekdays)? Regarding both build alternatives, will existing bus stops or bus bays be impacted? Will bus stops be kept in the same location?	<p>The Mesa LINK will remain at a 15 minute morning and evening peak headway. The non-peak headways will be 30 minutes. In addition, Route 40 on Main Street also has a 30 minute headway. The LINK is not scheduled to operate on the weekends. The level of service for the LINK was coordinated with the City of Mesa. This is discussed in Section 1.3.1 and Table 1-5 of the Final EA.</p> <p>The LINK stops also serve Route 40 on Main Street and stops between Sycamore and Country Club Drive will be maintained and adjusted within the right-of-way with this project. The LINK will stop at Centennial Way. The LINK stops between Country Club Drive and Centennial Way will be relocated to Centennial Way for a new LINK stop. LINK stops east of Centennial Way will remain and adjusted within the right-of-way with this project. The local bus stops for Route 40 on Main Street will remain. This information has been added to Section 1.3.1 of the Final EA.</p>	Yes
18	Page 1-8, Chapter 1, Table 1-2	Will additional rail cars be needed to operate the Central Mesa LRT Extension?	The Central Mesa LRT Extension Project will not require additional rail cars to operate the additional 3.1-miles. Section 1.3.1 of the Final EA has been revised to clarify this.	Yes
19	Page 1-12, Chapter 1, Section 1.3.3	<p>In the second paragraph, the "headway increase from 30 to 15 minutes" should read "headway decrease from 30 to 15" and the "headway decrease from 15 to 30 minutes" should read "headway increase from 15 to 30."</p> <p>It is unclear why the level of service on Route 61-Southern, which is one of the most productive routes in</p>	<p>The wording in this paragraph has been revised to make it clear. The <i>frequency</i> of service during the peak on the following bus routes will <i>increase</i> from 30 minutes to 15 minutes: 30-University; 104-Alma School; 112-Country Club; 120-Mesa Drive; 128-Stapley, and 136-Gilbert.</p> <p>Route 61 was incorrectly stated as having a reduced operational frequency. This is not the case. Other than</p>	Yes

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		<p>the transit system, is being reduced. Route 61 crosses multiple jurisdictions and services minority and low income populations.</p> <p>It would be beneficial to provide an implementation schedule for the planned bus service for the area (e.g., Arizona Avenue LINK, Fiesta Mall Circulator, etc.).</p>	<p>Sunday service, the frequency of headways will remain the same during the peak (15 minutes). Table 1-5 has been revised to show 15 minute headways during the peak.</p>	
20	<p>Page 1-18, Chapter 1, Table 1-5: Central Mesa – Transit Network-Build (2015)</p>	<p>This table indicates that the MAG Regional Transportation Plan calls for weekday headways of 10 minutes all day. It should be noted that the Regional Transportation Plan does not include this level of detail for planned high capacity transit projects. When developing the air quality conformity determination for the RTP, however, assumptions are made for future transit headways in the travel demand model. For the Regional Transportation Plan 2010 Update (May 2010), the 2015 LRT headways assumed in the travel forecast model were 12 minutes.</p>	<p>The source for the data provided in Table 1-5 is the RTP as well as METRO. A clarification has been made to the Final EA that the headways for LRT are METRO and not the RTP.</p> <p>When the Central Phoenix/East Valley LRT opened in December 2008 the peak headways were 10 minutes. The revenue shortfall resulted in the need to temporarily change the peak headways for light rail to 12 minutes. METRO intends to return to 10-minute headways by 2016, when the Central Mesa LRT Extension opens. Therefore, the Draft EA shows the peak headway for the opening year build project as 10 minute headways. In addition, the 10 minute peak headways were included in the Finance Plan submitted as part of the Small Starts Submittal Package to the FTA and approved in August 2010.</p>	Yes
21	<p>Page 1-18, Chapter 1, Figure 1-15: Build Alternative Transit Service (2015)</p>	<p>The figure needs to be updated: for example, Route 40 travels further west than shown, and Route 112 travels further north.</p>	<p>Route 40 is assumed to be truncated in the build alternative. Route 40 was shown to be duplicative with rail service. These service modifications were the result of discussions with the City of Mesa transit staff at the time travel forecasts were produced. These service changes were also coordinated with the FTA and followed the Best Practices for preparing FTA sponsored Alternative Analyses.</p> <p>Figure 1-15 has been modified to show Route 112 extending further to the north.</p>	Yes
22	<p>Page 2-1, Table 2-1: Freeway/Highway and Roadway Projects by 2015 – Central Mesa (No-Build)</p>	<p>Several of the projects noted in this table have been delayed in the 2010 RTP Update. For example, the US-60 interchange improvements at Lindsay Road have been delayed to Phase 5 (FY 2026-FY 2031).</p>	<p>Table 2-1 has been updated to reflect the 2010 RTP Update and included in the Final EA. The major changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delete US 60 interchange improvements at Lindsay - Greenfield Road-Capacity improvements only from Southern Ave. to Baseline Rd. - Add roadway capacity improvements on Val Vista Dr. from Southern Ave. to Baseline Rd. - Add intersection improvements at the following locations: 	Yes

No.	Page No./ Reference	Comment	METRO Response to Comment	Change to the Draft EA Required
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - University Dr./Country Club Dr. - University Dr./Stapley Rd. - Southern Avenue—improvements at Stapley, Lindsay, and Higley - Stapley/University Drive 	
23	Page 2-3, Chapter 2, Table 2-2	It would seem to be appropriate to update the data presented in this table to reflect the current level of service being operated. Also, in the no-build alternative, it is unclear why the service on Route 61-Southern is being reduced (See Comment #6).	Table 2-2 has been updated to reflect the current level of service and included in the Final EA. See previous response to MAG comment regarding route 61.	Yes
24	Page 3-58, Chapter 3, Table 3-23	Construction Phase Impacts/Mitigation Options. Are there opportunities to also mitigate bus service travel time impacts during the construction phase?	The construction contract will contain specifications from METRO's Master Specifications (CDRL 01 55 25) that will require the contractor to develop and implement a traffic control plan as well as a maintenance of traffic and access plan to minimize impacts on all traffic, including buses, during construction. The master specifications require the contractor to address how bus operations will be maintained during construction. Examples of mitigation strategies include: installing alternative bus stop locations where necessary; limiting work in highly congested areas; avoiding construction during peak transit travel times; and implementing community outreach to notify the transit providers and passengers of upcoming changes to bus stop locations or detours. The traffic control and maintenance of traffic and access plans will be coordinated with the City of Mesa Transportation Department. This discussion has been added to Table 3-23 of the Final EA.	Yes
25	Page 5-1, Chapter 5, Section 5.1	The estimated capital cost identified in the first sentence of this section (\$227.1 million) does not match the cost total presented in table 5-1 (\$198.49). The second sentence states, "slightly more than half of the funds for capital costs are anticipated to come from local sources and the remaining would be derived from federal sources, while Table 5-1 indicates that 39.7% of the funding would come from local sources. It is unclear if the estimated annual operating cost presented in table 5-2 is for 12 or 10 minutes headways.	<p>You are correct. The cost estimate of \$227.1 million was a preliminary capital cost estimate development during the Tier 2 Evaluation of Alternatives. The Final EA has been revised to be consistent with the information presented in Table 5-1 of the Draft EA. Capital costs are \$198.5 million and approximately 40% of the funds would be derived from local sources while the remaining would be derived from federal sources.</p> <p>The estimated annual operating cost presented in Table 5-2 is for 10 minute headways. A footnote indicating the headways has been added to Table 5-2 of the Final EA. See response to comment number 20.</p>	Yes

No.	Page No./ Reference	Comment	METRO Response to Comment	Change to the Draft EA Required
26	Appendix N-Central Mesa LRT Extension-Environmental Justice technical Memorandum	Under transportation it states, "region-wide transit service will not be reduced as a result of the proposed project, but there will be some changes to local bus service to provide optimal service and connectivity between local bus and the selected high capacity transit project." It is unclear how this statement corresponds to potential service reduction identified for Route 61, which is considered a regional "supergrid" bus route (See Comment #6).	See response to comment 19 regarding route 61.	No
Written Comments from the Environmental Protection Agency – Clifton Meeks 01/07/11				
27	Air Quality – Construction Emissions	<p>EPA commends METRO for commitments in Appendix D of the Draft EA to mitigate air quality impacts from construction, as required by Maricopa County Air Quality Department Rule 310. As the project is located in a non-attainment area for ozone and particulate matter smaller than 10 microns in diameter (PM₁₀), we recommend that the Final EA provide commitments for the following additional mitigation measures to ensure air quality impacts from construction are mitigated to the greatest extent possible.</p> <p>Mobile and Stationary Source Controls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce use, trips, and unnecessary idling of heavy equipment. • Employ periodic, unscheduled inspections to limit unnecessary idling and to ensure that construction equipment is properly maintained and tuned. • Prohibit any tampering with engines and require continuing adherence to manufacturer's recommendations. • Whenever possible, use alternative fuels such as natural gas and electric. <p>Administrative Controls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify where implementation of mitigation measures is rejected based on economic infeasibility • Prepare an inventory of all equipment prior to construction and identify the suitability of add-on emissions control device for each piece of equipment before groundbreaking. (Suitability 	Table 3-23 of the Final EA has been updated to recommend the measures listed. Note that the construction contract for this project will require compliance with METRO's Master Specifications for Dust Control, Section 01.56.15 which requires the contractor to develop and implement specific measures to minimize dust control such as those mentioned in the Draft EA and in EPA's comments. In addition to Rule 310, the contractor must conform with MAG's Uniform Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction, Section 225 as well as with applicable City of Mesa construction specifications and the approved Erosion and Sediment Control Plan or Program as applicable.	Yes

No.	Page No./ Reference	Comment	METRO Response to Comment	Change to the Draft EA Required
		<p>of control devices is based on: whether there is reduced normal availability of the construction equipment due to increased downtime and/or power output, whether there may be significant damage caused to the construction equipment engine, or whether there may be a significant risk to nearby workers or the public.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify sensitive receptors in the project area, such as daycare centers, senior housing, and hospitals, and specify the means by which you will minimize impacts to these populations. For example, locate construction equipment and staging zones away from sensitive receptors and fresh air intakes to buildings and air conditioners. 		
28	Smart Growth	<p>While the project has great potential to enhance livability in the City of Mesa, we believe it could be integrated with additional smart growth and sustainability principles, including many of those recommended as part of the HUD/DOT/EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities (http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/partnership/). For additional information on smart as it relates to transportation infrastructure, see <i>Pedestrian and Transit-Friendly Design: A Primer for Smart Growth</i> (http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/pdf/ptfd_primer.pdf).</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Final EA should include discussion of actions that can be taken to foster the implementation of smart growth strategies in the project area including coordination of different transit options to ensure multi-modal opportunities are available at station locations and ensuring the ability to easily transfer between transit options. The Final EA should include a more robust discussion of how bicycle lanes and pedestrian facilities will be improved and integrated with transit along the Central Mesa Light Rail transit 	<p>The Central Mesa LRT extension will promote many of the livability principles embodied in the partnership agreement. It provides an additional transportation choice that is safe, reliable, and economical for transit riders. The project would also enhance economic competitiveness through reliable access to employment centers, educational institutions, and goods and services in the study area as well as throughout the region. The LRT extension would support the existing community since it would entice developers to consider projects in the vicinity of an alignment that has convenient and reliable transit access rather than other areas without this premium service. The transit-oriented development (TOD) that is anticipated to occur would provide ample opportunities to promote healthy, safe, and walkable areas since this is a major focus of TOD. Additional information about this subject has been added to Section 3.3 of the Final EA.</p> <p>Note that transit service in the study area was specifically developed to provide riders with convenient connections between buses and the proposed LRT extension with the goal to enhance overall transit access to not only those living and working within the study area but to others throughout the region. Each of the proposed LRT stations was planned with a multimodal emphasis. The downtown bus interface is being designed concurrently with the LRT extension to</p>	Yes

No.	Page No./ Reference	Comment	METRO Response to Comment	Change to the Draft EA Required
		<p>Corridor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We urge FTA and METRO to coordinate with local municipalities in the pursuit of zoning ordinances that encourage smart growth in the project area, thereby increasing the project's potential to enhance livability in the City of Mesa. Such ordinances should particularly allow for increased development densities near LRT stations. A dense development pattern can better support a comprehensive local transit system, bike and pedestrian paths, and related amenities that can serve the local communities as well as provide access to LRT stations. 	<p>enhance bus interconnectivity to rail. Three types of bus service will be offered at the LRT stations to cater to various users: 1) local bus to serve local and intercity fixed route riders; 2) LINK to provide limited stop bus rapid transit service; and 3) BUZZ, to provide a free downtown circulator service. See Section 1.3.3 of the Final EA for additional information.</p> <p>Section 3.6 of the Draft EA provides a short discussion of the potential impacts to pedestrians and bicycles and mitigation measures to minimize potential impacts. Note that the bicycle lanes on Main Street west of Country Club will be maintained. East of Country Club, the design allows for a 16-foot shared bicycle and auto lane. The existing mid-block pedestrian crossings will be maintained, and new ones will be added to serve all the stations. The project will be required to conform with the measures laid out in several sections of METRO's Design Criteria Manual and also the Urban Design Guidelines that were developed for both the entire LRT system as well as its companion piece that applies specifically to the Central Mesa LRT Extension project. Bicycle lanes and pedestrian facilities were also extensively discussed with the City of Mesa staff and the Study Advisory Committee. More discussion of how bicycle lanes and pedestrian facilities will be improved has been added to Section 3.6 of the Final EA.</p> <p>The City of Mesa is currently developing a Bicycle Master Plan that promotes access and amenities for bicyclists in the downtown area. Identified facilities include a downtown bike facility with bicycle valet service at a rail station, restrooms, and shower facilities. The design of the LRT project's traction power substation downtown will include bicycle and pedestrian amenities such as racks, lockers, seats, benches, water, and public art. Discussion has been added to Section 3.6 of the Final EA.</p> <p>The City of Mesa is developing a Form-Based Code (as part of the Zoning Code Update) to increase the density and intensity of development around the three downtown stations. The Form Based Code emphasizes pedestrian use, mixed use development, outdoor living spaces (or rooms), and activated public spaces. Note that, while METRO</p>	

No.	Page No./ Reference	Comment	METRO Response to Comment	Change to the Draft EA Required
			encourages the cities it works with to develop zoning ordinances that encourage smart growth, METRO does not have the jurisdiction or authority to develop such ordinances. As such, it is outside the scope of this METRO/FTA NEPA document. However, additional discussion of smart growth plans and policies being prepared and implemented by the City of Mesa has been added to Section 3.3 of the Final EA for informational purposes.	
29	Community Involvement	<p>EPA commends FTA and METRO on their extensive involvement with communities in the vicinity of the project area, it appears from the Draft EA that coordination between government agencies, the Mesa community, business owners, and other individuals has been ongoing throughout the project planning process. EPA encourages FTA and METRO to continue to consider the long-term needs of, and potential benefits to, the community in determining future project actions.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Final EA should evaluate all suggestions provided by the community during the Draft EA comment period to determine their effectiveness and feasibility. • We encourage FTA and METRO to work with the City of Mesa and local business owners to determine the practicability of including additional bicycle facilities, similar to the Bicycle Cellar in Tempe, along Central Mesa Light Rail Transit Corridor. We believe that such facilities will play a large role in helping to transform the way people commute in the greater Phoenix metropolitan area. 	<p>METRO and FTA have considered and evaluated the comments received during the public comment period of the Draft EA. The responses provided in this matrix summarize the results of the evaluation and have been included in the Final EA.</p> <p>While METRO encourages all of the cities that METRO works with to provide additional enhancements beyond transit service improvements to augment access to a proposed project, it is up to the city(s) that a project would serve to plan for and provide other access improvements such as the bicycle facilities mentioned in your comment. See response to previous comment. Additional discussion regarding Mesa's plans for bicycle improvements has been added to Section 3.6.4 of the Final EA.</p>	Yes