

# 1. Introduction

This document is a Recirculated Draft Environmental Impact Report (Recirculated Draft EIR) for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 Project (Project). The Project would extend the existing Metro L (Gold) Line light rail transit (LRT) line from its current terminus at Atlantic Station in the unincorporated area of East Los Angeles to eastern Los Angeles County, a distance of approximately 3.2 to 9.0 miles, depending on the Build Alternative. Three Build Alternatives with up to two design options and two Maintenance and Storage Facility (MSF) site options (one of which has one design option), are being considered for the Project and are described in Chapter 2.0, Project Description. This Recirculated Draft EIR has been prepared in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA) (California Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq., as amended) and its implementing guidelines (California Code of Regulations., Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.). Metro is the lead agency for the Project under CEQA.

## 1.1 Purpose of this Recirculated Draft Environmental Impact Report

The Project requires the discretionary approval of the Metro Board of Directors (Metro Board). Therefore, the Project is subject to the environmental review requirements of CEQA. The purpose of this Recirculated Draft EIR is:

- To satisfy the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000, et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR], Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15000, et seq.).
- To inform public agency decision-makers and the public of the significant environmental effects of the Project and possible ways to minimize those significant effects.
- To enable Metro to consider environmental consequences when deciding whether to approve the Project. Metro serves as the Lead Agency for the Project in accordance with Sections 15051 and 15367 of the CEQA Guidelines, which define the Lead Agency as the public agency that has the principal responsibility for executing or approving a project.

As described in CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, lead agencies are charged with the duty to avoid or substantially lessen significant environmental impacts of a project, where feasible. In discharging its duties under CEQA, a lead agency has an obligation to balance the economic, social, technological, legal, and other benefits of a project against its significant unavoidable impacts on the environment. This Recirculated Draft EIR is an informational document designed to identify the potentially significant impacts of the Project on the environment; to indicate the manner in which those significant impacts can be minimized; to identify reasonable and potentially feasible alternatives to the Project that would avoid or reduce the significant impacts; and to identify any significant and unavoidable adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated.

This Recirculated Draft EIR was prepared in accordance with Section 15151 of the CEQA Guidelines, which defines the standards for EIR adequacy as follows:

*An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in the light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure.*

## 1.2 Environmental Impact Report Background

As described in Chapter 2.0 of this Recirculated Draft EIR, Metro initiated plans for a high-capacity transit connection for the second phase of the Eastside Transit Corridor, resulting in publication of the Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 Alternatives Analysis (AA) Report in 2007. In October 2009, the Metro Board authorized staff to advance two Build Alternatives for further environmental analysis.

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/EIR was released for public review in August 2014. After evaluating the public comments on the 2014 Draft EIS/EIR, the Metro Board directed staff to conduct additional technical studies to identify a new north-south connection from the existing Metro L (Gold Line) to the Washington Boulevard Light Rail Transit (LRT) Alternative.

In May 2019, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) published a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register to initiate the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Supplemental EIS process, and Metro issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to initiate the CEQA Recirculated EIR process.

In 2020, following the Metro Board's action to no longer pursue federal funds for the Project, the FTA rescinded the NOI, rendering NEPA inapplicable.

## 1.3 Scope and Content

In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines, this Recirculated Draft EIR includes detailed analyses of the following environmental topics:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology, Seismicity, Soils, and Paleontological Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise and Vibration
- Population and Housing
- Public Services and Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Growth-Inducing Impacts
- Cumulative Impacts

This Recirculated Draft EIR was prepared under the direction and supervision of Metro and reflects the independent judgment of Metro. During the public review and comment period, public agencies, organizations and individuals may submit written comments concerning the adequacy of the document by email or mail to:

Jenny Cristales-Cevallos, Project Manager  
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
One Gateway Plaza  
Los Angeles, California 90012  
Email: eastsidephase2@metro.net

Depending on Covid-19 State Health Regulations, Metro will conduct a virtual and/or in-person public hearing to receive testimony on the Recirculated Draft EIR during the public review and comment period. After the end of the public review and comment period, written responses to all written comments and oral testimony pertaining to environmental issues received during the comment period will be prepared as part of the Recirculated Final EIR. As required by CEQA, responses to comments submitted by commenting agencies will be distributed to those agencies for review prior to consideration of the Recirculated Final EIR by the Metro Board. Upon the completion of the Recirculated Final EIR and other required documentation, if warranted, the Metro Board will adopt findings relative to the Project's environmental effects, and prepare a statement of overriding considerations, in conjunction with the certification of the Recirculated Final EIR and approval of the Project.

## 1.4 Environmental Impact Report Organization

This Recirculated Draft EIR is comprised of the following:

- **ES Executive Summary.** This chapter provides a summary of the Project, public outreach information, project background, environmental impacts, and mitigation measures. This summary also presents areas of controversy, including issues raised by members of the public and agencies.
- **Chapter 1. Introduction.** This chapter briefly discusses the purpose of the Recirculated Draft EIR, identifies the environmental topics evaluated in the document, describes the environmental review process and organization, and discusses the intended use of this Recirculated Draft EIR.
- **Chapter 2. Project Description.** This chapter provides a detailed description of the Project, including location and surrounding uses, history, objectives, operating characteristics, and construction schedule and phasing.
- **Chapter 3. Environmental Impacts Analysis.** This chapter is divided into sub-sections corresponding with the environmental topics listed under **Section 1.3** above and provides the environmental setting (regulatory framework and existing conditions), methodology, impact analyses, project measures and/or mitigation measures if applicable, and conclusions regarding the level of significance after mitigation for each environmental topic.
- **Chapter 4. Other CEQA Required Topics.** This chapter includes possible effects of the Project that were determined not to be significant; a discussion of significant unavoidable impacts that would result from the Project; and an analysis of the significant irreversible changes in the environment.
- **Chapter 5. Comparison of Project Alternatives.** This chapter provides an evaluation of the No Project Alternative and a comparison of the alternatives evaluated in Chapter 3.0, as well as the No Project Alternative. This chapter also provides the identification of the environmentally superior alternative, as required by CEQA. It identifies alternatives that were considered, but not carried forward for detailed review.
- **Chapter 6. Public Outreach.** This chapter provides an overview of the outreach efforts conducted from the Public Hearings associated with the publication of the 2014 Draft EIR/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) up until the 2022 public outreach efforts associated with this Recirculated Draft EIR.
- **Chapter 7. Acronyms and Abbreviations.** This chapter identifies and defines the acronyms and abbreviations used in the document.
- **Chapter 8. List of Contributors and Preparers.** This chapter lists the persons who contributed to the preparation of this Recirculated Draft EIR.

- **Chapter 9. References.** This chapter lists all the references and sources used in the preparation of this Recirculated Draft EIR. Documents listed in this chapter are available for review upon request.
- **Appendix A: Notice of Preparation and Scoping Summary Report.** This appendix includes the Notice of Preparation as well as a report that summarizes the public scoping process, including all comment letters received during scoping.
- **Appendices B-R: Impact Reports.** A total of 17 impact reports were prepared in support of the environmental evaluation of this Recirculated Draft EIR and are included as appendices to the document.
- **Appendix S.** This appendix includes a summary of the public outreach efforts that have been conducted for this Project.
- **Appendix T.** This appendix includes a detailed summary of alternatives considered and the Alternatives Analysis Report Addendum.
- **Appendix U.** This appendix provides a list of project measures that are incorporated into the Project in compliance with regulations, guidelines, and permit approvals to avoid or reduce potential impacts.
- **Volume 2: Advanced Conceptual Design.** Volume 2 provides the plan set of the advanced conceptual engineering drawings for all of the Build Alternatives, which were used for the environmental evaluation in Chapter 3.o.

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