

NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

DATE: OCTOBER 23, 2019
TO: AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND INTERESTED PARTIES
SUBJECT: NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP) OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
PROJECT TITLE: LA RIVER PATH PROJECT
FROM: LOS ANGELES COUNTY METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (METRO)

PROJECT LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING: The LA River Path (Project) is a proposed walking and bicycling path along an approximately 8-mile stretch of the Los Angeles River from Elysian Valley through downtown Los Angeles and the City of Vernon to the City of Maywood. The proposed pedestrian and bicycle path would provide connections to and between downtown Los Angeles, including the Arts District, Little Tokyo, Civic Center, El Pueblo District/Union Station, and the Wholesale District; the surrounding communities of Elysian Valley, Cypress Park, Elysian Park, Lincoln Heights, Chinatown, and Boyle Heights; and the cities of Vernon and Maywood (see Figure 1). The surrounding area is currently underserved with limited pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure connecting the communities. Land uses within the Project area include single- and multi-family residences, commercial and retail uses, industrial development, parks and recreational uses including the Los Angeles State Historic Park, health and medical facilities, educational institutions, flood control facilities, and transportation facilities.

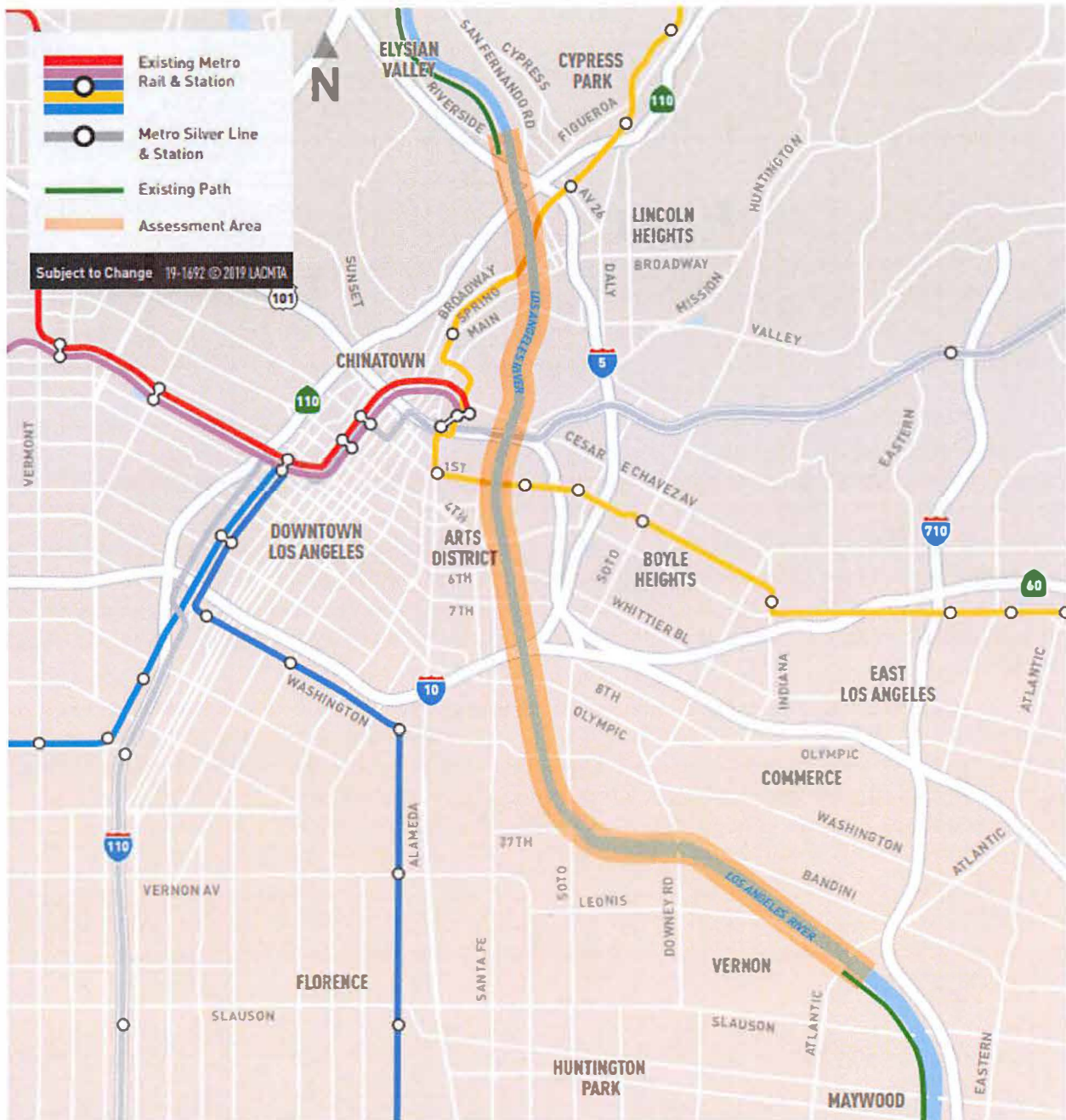
PROJECT INITIATION: Metro has initiated a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Metro is the lead agency for the proposed Project. The purpose of this NOP is to alert interested agencies and parties to the preparation of the Draft EIR, invite public participation in the EIR scoping process, and announce the public scoping meetings.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES: The proposed Project would create a safe and world-class active transportation corridor along the Los Angeles River between Elysian Valley and City of Maywood that enhances and provides recreational opportunities, livability, regional and local connectivity and provides an outstanding user experience, access to economic opportunity, and separation from vehicular traffic for people of all ages and abilities. This new transportation facility would contribute to improved health, economic, environmental, transportation, and equity issues across the study area. Objectives of the proposed Project include:

- Improving safety for pedestrians and bicyclists from existing conditions;
- Increasing access from local neighborhoods to employment centers, regional destinations, resources, and amenities, including healthcare services;

- Reducing vehicle miles traveled by allowing people to walk and bicycle on a dedicated, vehicle separated path through and within Los Angeles County, thereby reducing trip lengths, and expanding travel choices;
- Improving access to opportunity for historically under-invested communities, especially in low-income and minority communities;
- Creating a path that feels safe, comfortable, and is a world-class transportation corridor open to people of all ages and abilities;
- Creating a path that meets the needs of both recreational and utilitarian users.

Figure 1. Proposed Project Location Map

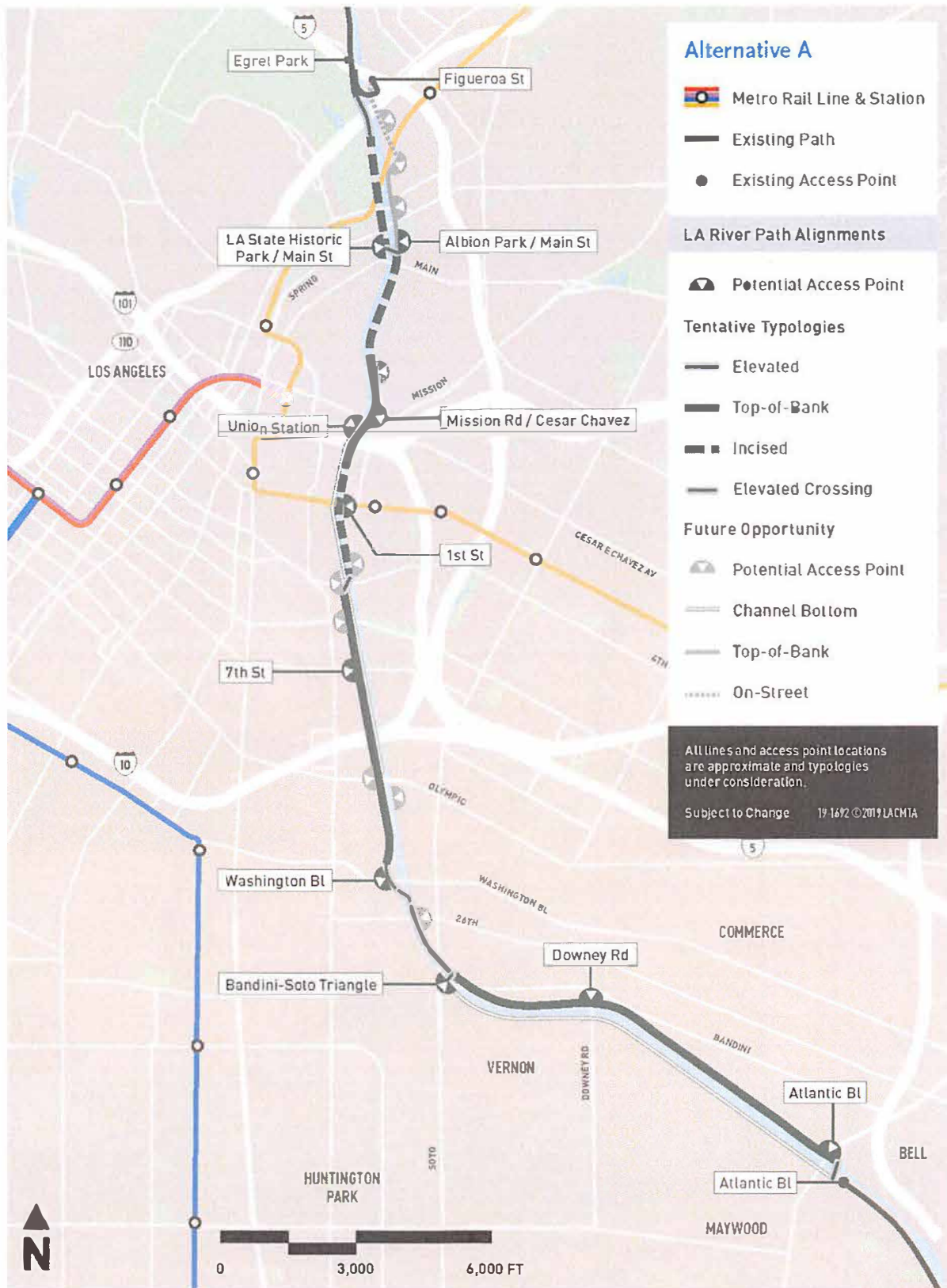


Source: Metro, 2019

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The LA River Path Project is an approximately 8-mile bicycle and pedestrian path proposed along the Los Angeles River from Elysian Valley through downtown Los Angeles and the City of Vernon to the City of Maywood. The northern limit of the project area is the terminus of the Los Angeles River Greenway Trail at Riverside Drive and the southern limit is at Atlantic Boulevard where the Los Angeles River Bicycle Path begins in the City of Maywood. The proposed Project would close the longest remaining gap in the LA River Path to serve existing communities, meet future demand, and help increase the value and benefits of the two existing paths to the north and south of the Project. When complete, this transportation and recreational facility will provide a seamless 32-mile traffic-separated regional corridor for walking, rolling, and bicycling from the San Fernando Valley to the City of Long Beach along the Los Angeles River. The proposed Project is a Measure M project with a projected opening by 2027. Currently, \$365 million in Measure M funds are allocated for this Project.

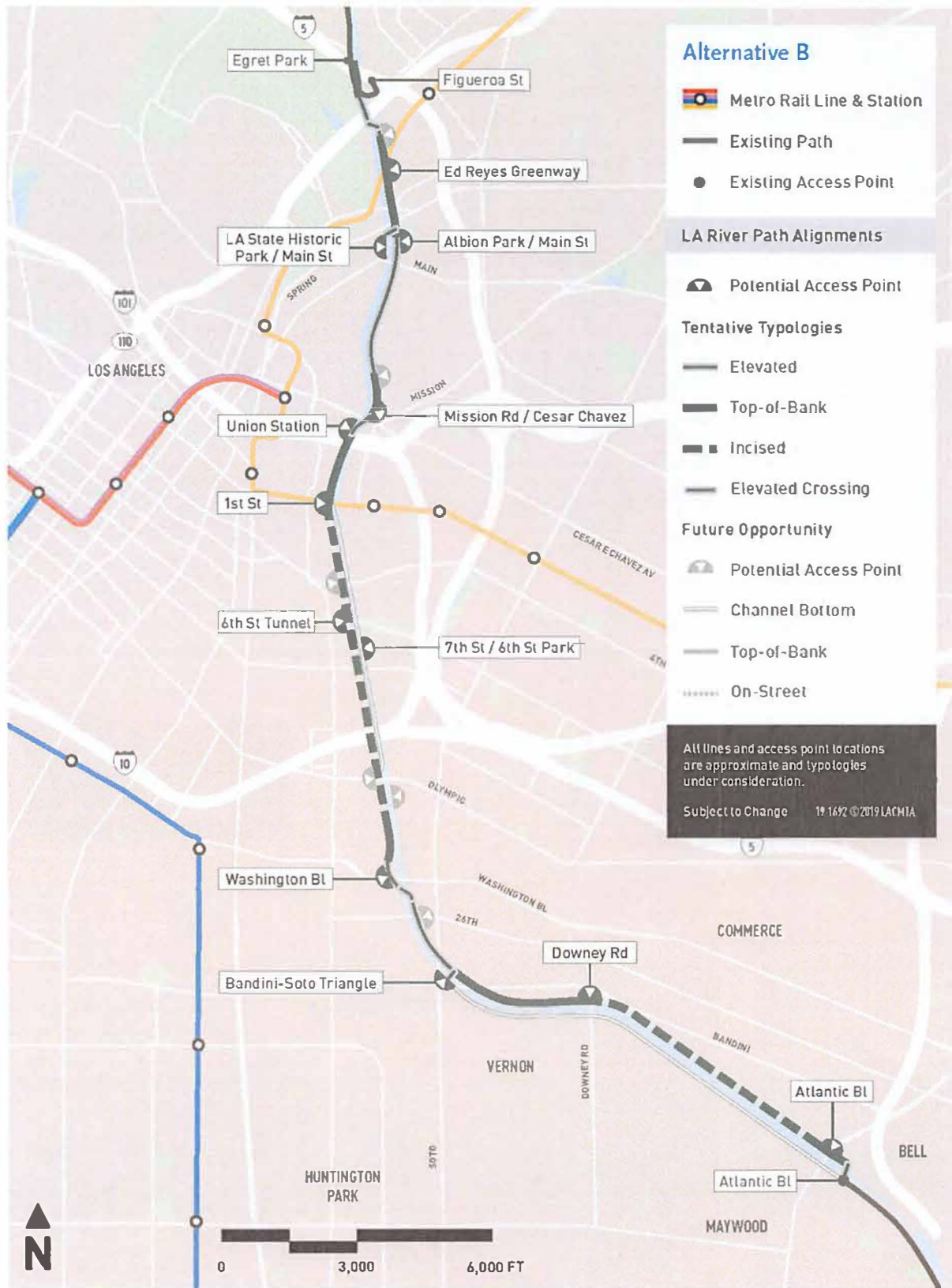
The Draft EIR will analyze three possible alignment alternatives. These three alternatives are generally located along the Los Angeles River and utilize a combination of top-of-bank/cantilevered, elevated, and incised path typologies. Access points would be located along and adjacent to both sides of the river and would connect the path to existing and proposed future on-street bicycle networks, and provide connections to serve people walking and taking transit including connections to Union Station, and Metro Gold and Blue Line Stations. Access points are significant capital investments and physical structures that extend beyond Los Angeles River channel. Alternative A would cross the river approximately six times and would add approximately 10 new access points (see Figure 2). Alternative B would cross the river approximately seven times and would add approximately 12 new access points (see Figure 3). Alternative C would cross the river approximately seven times and would add approximately 11 new access points (see Figure 4). These alternatives contain many common access points and path types, but contain minor distinctions that are unique to each one. Stakeholder coordination, design options and refinements, and impact evaluation of the proposed Project are ongoing. As a result, Project design iterations are anticipated. It is anticipated that the Draft EIR may include, but is not limited to, variations in river crossings and locations, variations in access points and locations, design options for path typologies, refinements to the proposed Project, and ancillary improvements in collaboration with Metro's local partners.

Figure 2. Alternative A



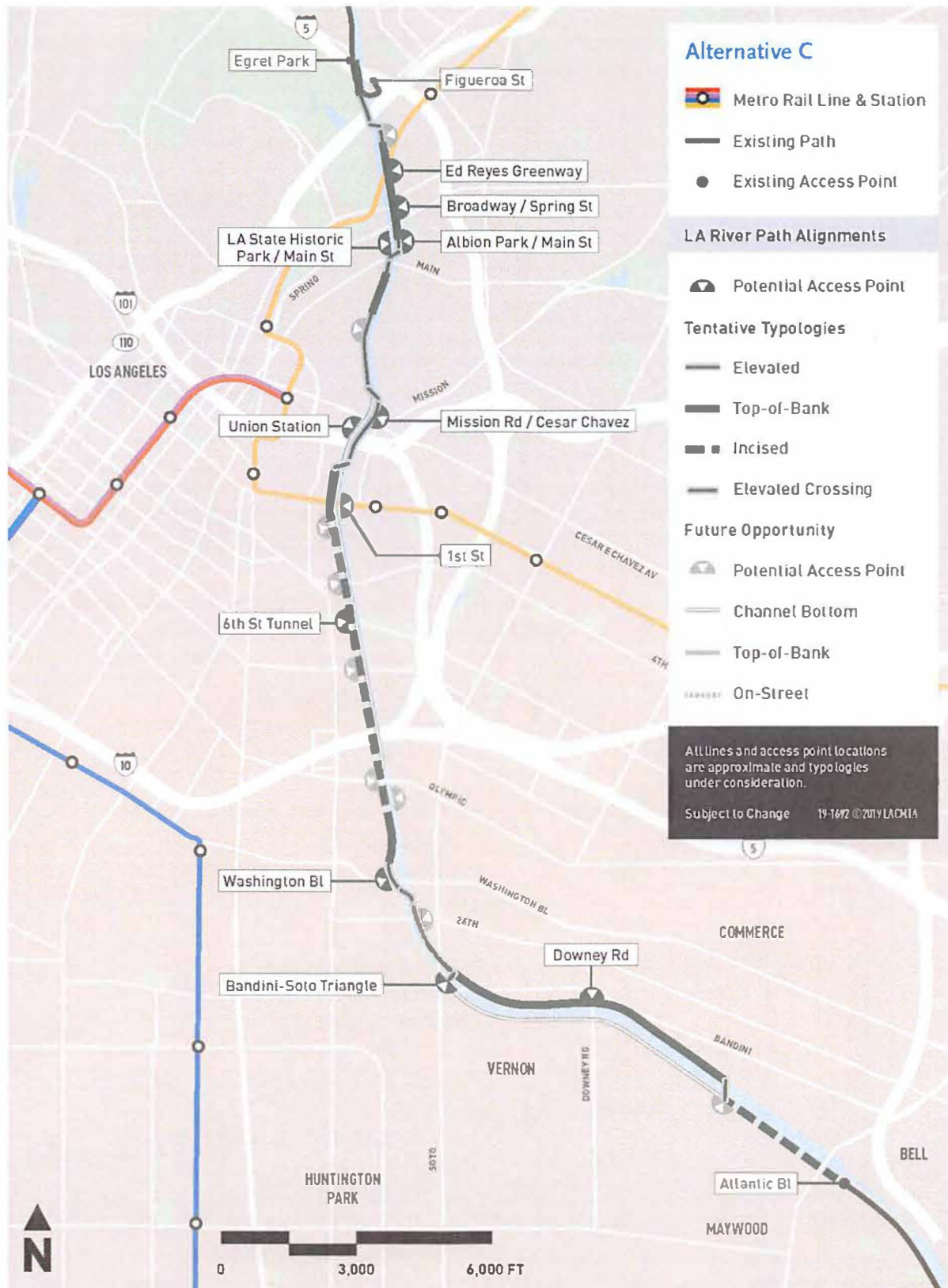
Source: Metro, 2019

Figure 3. Alternative B



Source: Metro, 2019

Figure 4. Alternative C



Source: Metro, 2019

PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS: The purpose of the Draft EIR is to environmentally evaluate, identify, and disclose the potential impacts of the Project on the environment. The Draft EIR will address all topics listed in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, and will focus on the following topics that have been identified as key impact areas:

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

Project design features and mitigation measures to reduce potentially significant impacts during construction and operation would be identified in the Draft EIR. More information about the Project is available at <https://www.metro.net/projects/lariverpath/>.

SCOPING MEETINGS: Public scoping meetings to accept comments on the scope of the Draft EIR will be held on the following dates and times:

Scoping Meeting# 1 Tuesday, November 12, 2019 6:00 - 8:00 pm Boyle Heights Senior Center, Auditorium 2839 E 3 rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90033	Scoping Meeting# 2 Wednesday, November 13, 2019 6:00 - 8:00 pm St. Francis Xavier Church Japanese Catholic Center 222 S. Hewitt St., Los Angeles, CA 90012
Scoping Meeting# 3 Thursday, November 14, 2019 6:00 - 8:00 pm Maywood Elementary School 5200 Cudahy Ave., Maywood, CA 90270	Scoping Meeting# 4 Saturday, November 16, 2019 10:00 am - 12:00 pm Cypress Park and Recreation Center, Auditorium 2630 Pepper Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90065

The scope of the Draft EIR, including the goals and objectives, Project area and description, and the potential environmental impacts to be evaluated will be presented at the public scoping meetings. All Metro meetings are held in facilities compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Spanish translation and Spanish-speaking staff will attend all the

scoping meetings. ADA accommodations and other language translations are available by calling 213.418.3423 at least 72 hours before the meeting.

COMMENT DUE DATE: Written comments on the scope of the Draft EIR, including the goals and objectives, Project area and description, potential impacts to be evaluated, and the methodologies to be used in the evaluation, will be accepted during the comment period beginning on October 23, 2019 through December 6, 2019. Comments will be accepted at the public scoping meetings and written or electronic (e-mail) comments may be sent to Metro on or before December 6, 2019 at the addresses below.

ADDRESS: Written or electronic (e-mail) comments may be sent to the following addresses:

Lauren Cencic, Sr. Director
Metro
One Gateway Plaza, Mail Stop: 99-22-5
Los Angeles, CA 90012
e-mail at lariverpath@metro.net

Date 10/17/2019

Signature 

Title David Mieger, Interim Senior Executive Officer