



Introduction

The Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 Project is a vital public transit infrastructure investment that would provide a transit connection to the existing Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension and link communities on the eastern side of the County of Los Angeles. With the implementation of the Regional Connector Transit Corridor project, the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension will directly connect to the Metro Expo Line and will be operating light rail trains between Santa Monica, Culver City, University of Southern California (USC), downtown Los Angeles, and the Eastside by 2020, improving mobility within the project area and offering more sustainable transit alternatives. Figure ES-1 shows the regional Metro Rail lines expected to be operational by the year 2035, and illustrates how the Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 Project would extend the existing Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension.

The Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 Project would provide area residents, businesses, and transit-dependent populations with a transit alternative connecting them to the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension and the regional rail system. The proposed Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 Project would extend the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension from the existing Atlantic Station to the east by 6.9 to 9.5 miles. The proposed light rail transit (LRT) build alternatives would terminate near State Route 60 (SR 60)/Peck Road or Washington Boulevard and Lambert Road. Figure ES-1 illustrates how the Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 Project would extend the existing Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension and provide access to the Metro Blue Line, Green Line, and Red and Purple Line subways.

In addition to mobility benefits, the Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 Project would provide the project area with transportation, economic, land use, and environmental benefits. The analysis presented in this document shows that improved mobility to and from the project area has the potential to boost economic development in the project area and improve social justice by providing better access to employment, educational opportunities, and activity centers. Improved transit connectivity would increase transit ridership, which would also generate environmental benefits through reduced vehicle trips, less roadway congestion, and improved air quality.

The Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 Project is included in the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) *2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS)*, adopted in April 2012. The RTP also outlines several projects in and around the project area aimed at maximizing the effectiveness, safety, and reliability of Southern California's transportation system.

Project milestones for the Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 Project include:

- Publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR)
- Public review and comment on the Draft EIS/EIR (60 days following publication)
- Publication of the Final EIS/EIR – Release of the Final EIS/EIR document is based on the condition that funding is available to allow for construction of the project within three years after issuance of the Record of Decision (ROD)

- Metro Board of Directors decides to approve a project alternative and adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) and CEQA Findings
- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Notice of Determination (NOD)
- Federal ROD

Following the Federal ROD, the project can proceed to final design, construction, and operation. The schedule of these milestones will be refined as the project nears the end of the environmental review.

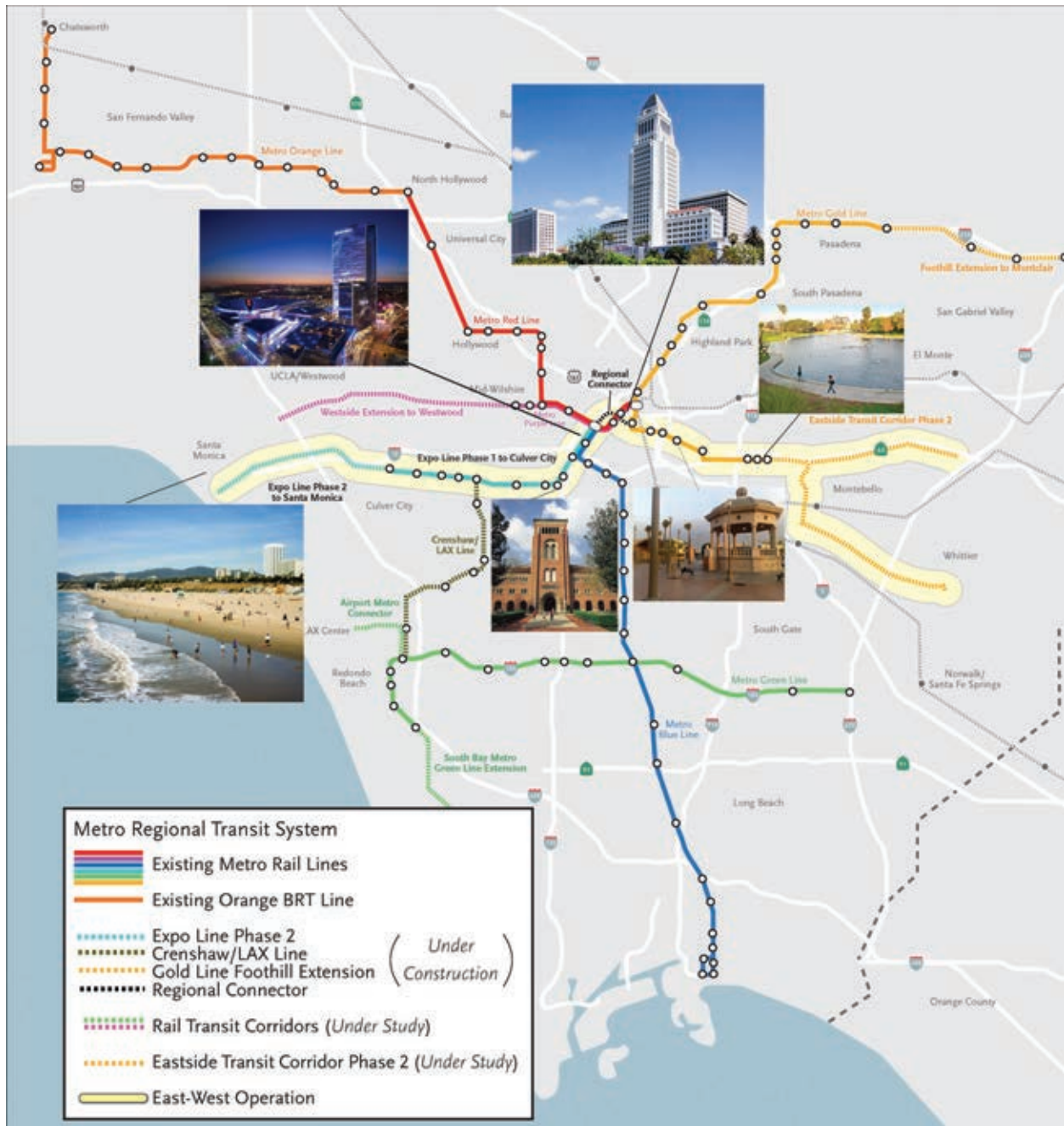


Figure ES-1: Existing and Proposed Regional Metro Rail Lines (2035)

Purpose and Need

Purpose

The purpose of the Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 Project is to provide area residents, businesses, and transit-dependent populations with a transit alternative connecting them to the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension and the regional rail system.

In doing so, the project would improve mobility within the project area and offer a more sustainable transit alternative to address increased travel demand and projected growth, and would meet the following objectives:

- Serve the large number of transit-dependent and low-income populations in the project area;
- Increase access to major employment centers, activity centers, and destinations in the project area and Los Angeles County;
- Provide regional transit connectivity with the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension and Measure R projects; and
- Provide transit alternatives to alleviate roadway congestion, improve mobility options for enhanced quality of life, and provide a convenient and reliable alternative to the automobile.

The project would improve mobility within the project area and offer a more sustainable transit alternative to address increased traffic demand and projected growth.

Need

The following mobility challenges within the project study area will continue to grow, due in large part to population growth, if no action is taken:

- **Increasing travel demand** – The number of work trips taken to and from the project study area in 2006 is forecast to increase 32 percent by 2035.
- **Increasing travel times** – By 2035, the average peak-period travel time within the project study area is expected to increase by 25 percent and 34 percent in the morning and afternoon peak periods, respectively.
- **Transit-dependent population** – The project study area has a significant level of transit-dependent population who need convenient and reliable transit options to get them where they want and need to go; 38 percent of the project study area population is under age 18 or over age 65, 16 percent of households are categorized as low-income, and 12 percent of all households have zero vehicles.
- **Increasing freeway congestion** – With no major freeway improvements planned or funded, a growing population, and forecasted increases in travel demand, freeway congestion will continue to increase.
- **Increasing arterial congestion** – Major arterials in the project study area, including but not limited to Washington Boulevard and Garfield Avenue, experience heavy morning and evening peak period congestion, which negatively affects access for both automobiles and buses.
- **Heavy truck traffic** – The SR 60, I-5, and I-10 Freeways, along with project study area arterial streets, such as Washington Boulevard, are subject to heavy truck traffic. Larger vehicles and slower movements of heavy

truck traffic on freeway and arterial streets lead to a more congested environment in which both automobiles and buses operate.

- **Increasing population and employment growth** – Population densities, employment densities, and the concentration of activity centers in the project study area are expected to increase by five percent for population and one percent for employment by 2035.
- **Limiting travel options** – With limited regional rail system connections, residents of and visitors to the project study area can rely only on available bus systems operating on the same congested roadway network. Commuter rail options are limited to two Metrolink stations within the 82-square-mile project study area.

Project Corridor



See Figure ES-2 on page ES-5

The Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 project area encompasses over 50 square miles of communities to the east and southeast of downtown Los Angeles. As illustrated in Figure ES-2, the project area includes portions of the cities of Commerce, Los Angeles, Montebello, Monterey Park, Pico Rivera, Rosemead, Santa Fe Springs, South El Monte, and Whittier, and portions of unincorporated Los Angeles County, which include East Los Angeles and west Whittier-Los Nietos.

Description of Alternatives

The Alternatives Analysis (AA) process identified and screened 47 potential transportation alternatives in light of the project’s purpose and need, goals, and objectives. The AA process included initial technical analyses and community and public agency feedback gathered at meetings and public workshops. Alternatives considered during the AA process represent the full spectrum of reasonable means of achieving the goals and objectives outlined above. The AA evaluated the potential alternatives based on their environmental impacts, efficiency, financial feasibility, effectiveness, and equity. From the AA effort, alternatives emerged which were analyzed further in the addendum to the AA Report, and two build alternatives were confirmed and refined based on the public scoping process and community input received for this Draft EIS/EIR.

Both proposed LRT build alternatives would begin at the existing Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension Atlantic Station at-grade and extend in an east direction terminating either in the vicinity of the SR 60/Peck Road interchange in South El Monte or in the vicinity of the Washington Boulevard and Lambert Road intersection in Whittier.



Existing Atlantic Station

In addition to the LRT alternatives, a No Build Alternative and a Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative are also being studied. The No Build Alternative demonstrates how the regional transportation system would function if the proposed project was not implemented, and serves as a benchmark for measuring the potential impacts of the TSM and build alternatives.

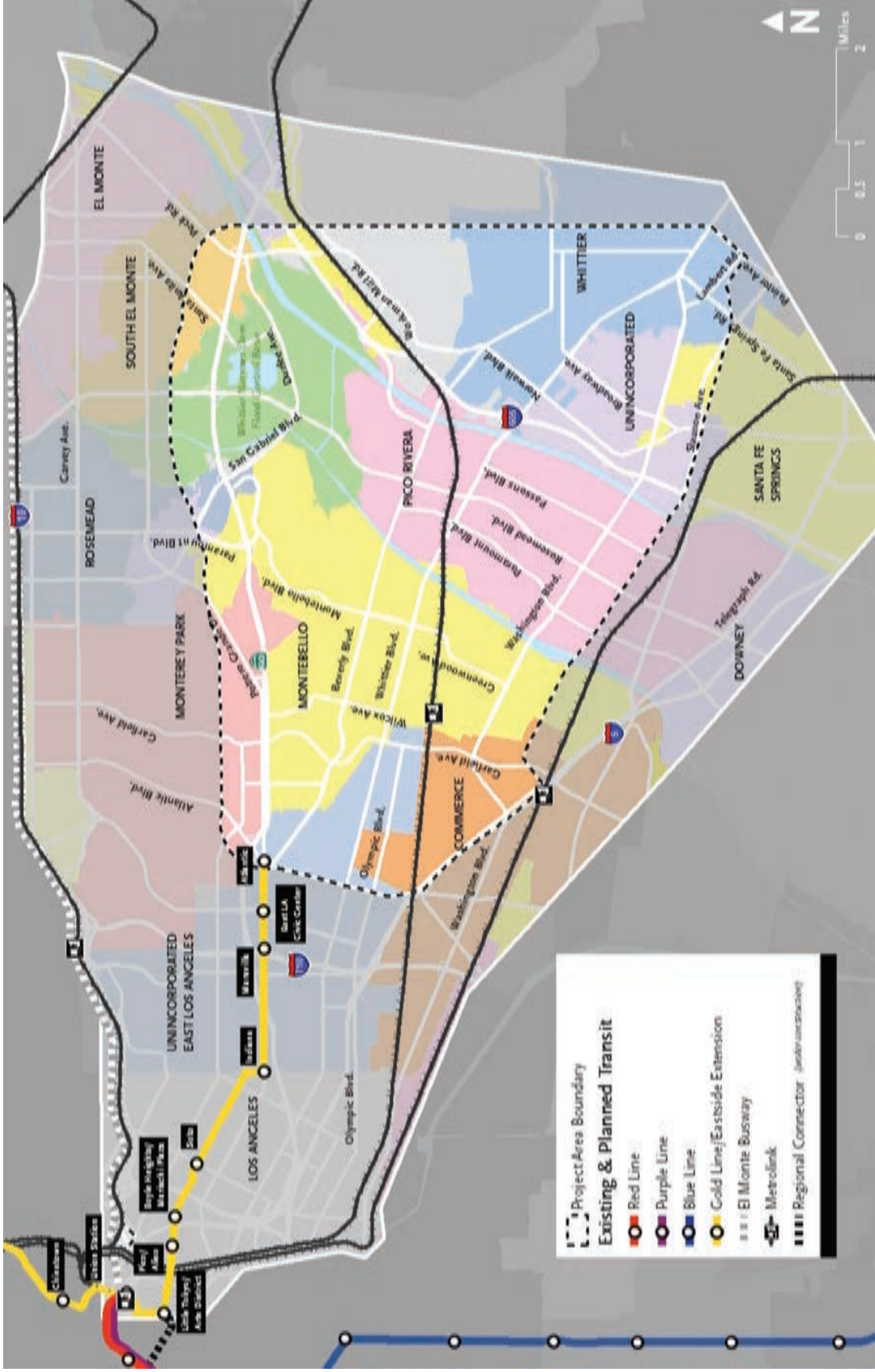


Figure ES-2: Project Area



See Figure ES-3 on page ES-7

No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative is the future scenario without either of the proposed build alternatives. The No Build Alternative does not include any major service improvements or new transportation infrastructure beyond what is listed in Metro’s 2009 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) through the year 2035 and all of the projects that are identified for construction and implementation in the financially constrained project list of the SCAG 2012-2035 RTP/SCS. Figure ES-3 illustrates the transit lines that currently serve the project area.

By the projection year of 2035, the Metro Crenshaw/Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) Line, Metro Expo Line to Santa Monica, Metro Purple Line to Westwood, Airport Metro Connector, and the South Bay Metro Green Line Extension, Metro Gold Line to Montclair, the LAX People Mover, and the Regional Connector that will connect existing lines through downtown Los Angeles will have opened. A number of bus routes will have been reorganized and expanded to provide connections with these new rail lines. The transit network within the project area would otherwise be largely the same as it is now.

Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative

The TSM Alternative includes all of the transit and roadway provisions of the No Build Alternative, plus proposed enhancements to existing bus service. Under the TSM Alternative, the basic approach is to enhance the east-west bus service in the same corridor as the build alternatives to develop the TSM network. In order to leverage the investment in an east-west transit spine, the TSM Alternative also includes enhancements to north-south bus services that would feed and integrate with the improved east-west spine. The TSM Alternative is presented in Figure ES-4.



See Figure ES-4 on page ES-8

Build Alternatives

An LRT system consists of electric trains powered by overhead wires, typically operating in an urban transit setting. LRT uses conventional steel tracks, which have the flexibility to be placed in exclusive surface right-of-way (ROW), in tunnels, on elevated viaducts, in street medians, or in mixed flow traffic lanes. This allows light rail trains to operate in a variety of environments. From the AA effort, two build alternatives emerged which were analyzed further in this Draft EIS/EIR. These alternatives are:

- SR 60 LRT Alternative
- Washington Boulevard LRT Alternative

Figure ES-5 shows all of the possible LRT routes and stations studied in this Draft EIS/EIR. The features and impacts of each of the build alternatives are compared in the following section.



Figure ES-3: No Build Alternative