

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the purpose of this Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the C Line (Green) Extension to Torrance Project (Proposed Project), a discussion of the environmental review process, and a description of the organization of this Draft EIR.

The Proposed Project would provide light rail service connecting several cities and communities in the South Bay to the regional rail network. The Proposed Project would consist of a light rail service that runs from the Redondo Beach (Marine) Station in the City of Redondo Beach through the City of Lawndale and into the City of Torrance ending at Torrance Transit Center (TC). The Project Area, roughly a one-mile buffer around the Metro-owned right-of-way (Metro ROW), with the borders generally following city limits and/or major roadways, includes portions of the Cities of Hawthorne, Lawndale, Redondo Beach, and Torrance. However, the Proposed Project itself would only be in the Cities of Lawndale, Redondo Beach, and Torrance. A one-mile buffer is generally the area in which potential benefits and ridership of a major transportation project are likely to be focused.

### 1.1. PURPOSE OF THIS DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), as Lead Agency for the Proposed Project, has prepared this Draft EIR for the following purposes:

- > 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 Proposed Project, as well as possible ways to minimize those significant effects through mitigation measures, and reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Project that would avoid or minimize those significant effects.
- > To enable Metro to consider environmental consequences when deciding whether to approve the Proposed Project.

Metro serves as the Lead Agency for the Proposed 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 Draft EIR is an informational document designed to identify the potentially significant impacts of the Proposed Project on the environment; to indicate the way those significant impacts can be minimized through implementation of feasible mitigation measures; to identify reasonable and potentially feasible alternatives to the Proposed Project that would avoid or reduce the significant impacts; and to identify any significant unavoidable adverse impacts that cannot feasibly be mitigated. Known areas of controversy associated with the Proposed Project include aesthetic changes and loss of community character, effects to local businesses during construction, noise levels and air quality during construction and operation, changes to street parking, security and safety at stations and along the Metro ROW, and traffic changes due to lane and road closures during construction.

This 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. SCOPE AND CONTENT**

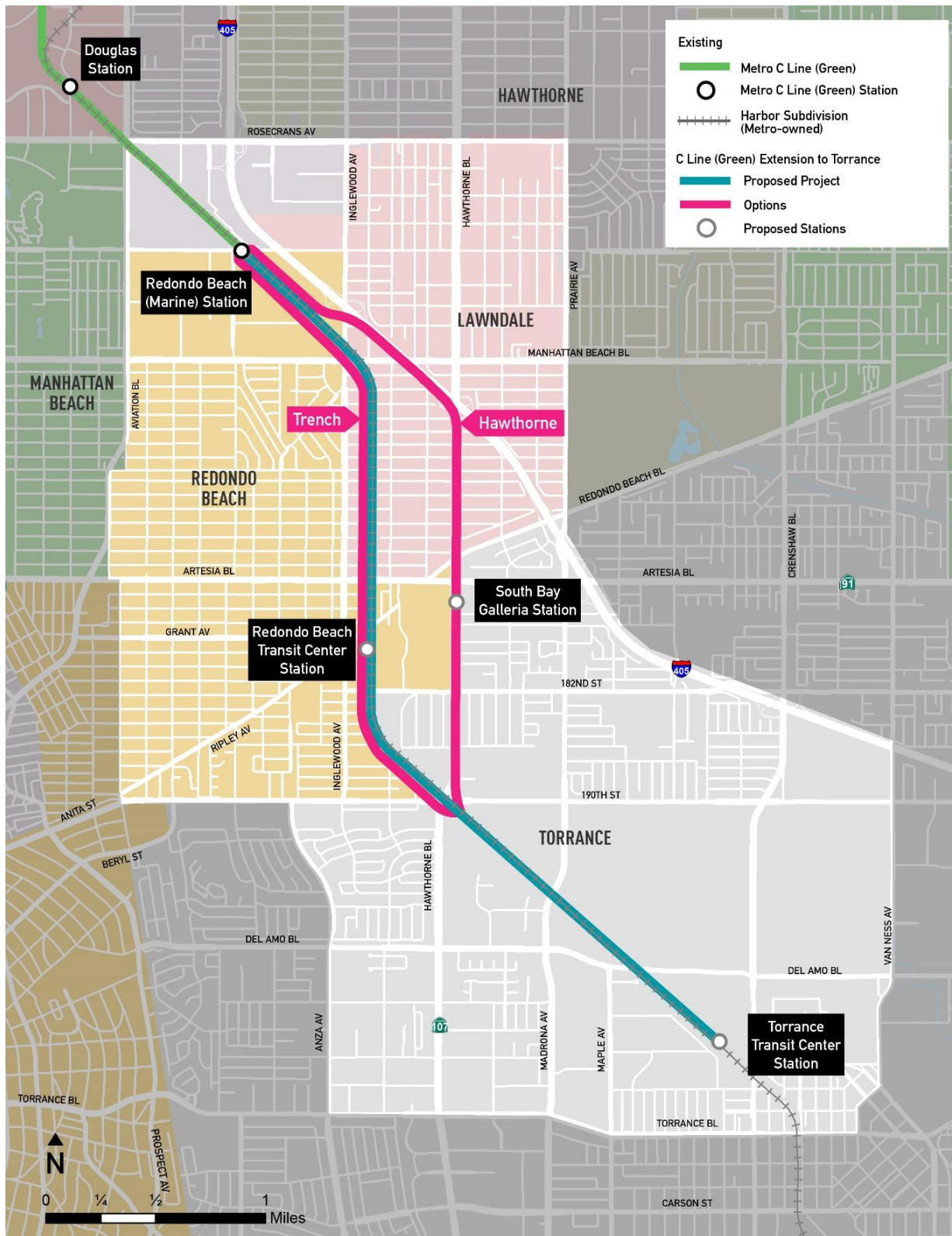
In 2017, Metro initiated a Supplemental Alternatives Analysis (SAA) for the Proposed Project, which assumed an opening year of 2030 and an analysis horizon year of 2042. The intent of the SAA was to build upon previous corridor studies, including an Alternatives Analysis in 2009 and environmental analysis in 2010, and to refine and recommend alternatives to be considered in a future environmental study.

The SAA evaluated four light rail transit alternatives and on September 27, 2018, the Metro Board voted to carry two alignments (Metro ROW and Hawthorne Boulevard) forward for further study and environmental analysis. In February 2021, Metro conducted scoping for this EIR. As a result of community input, the project team included an additional design option along the Metro ROW, which would travel below street level in an open-air trench. As part of the planning and conceptual engineering process, Metro determined that the Hawthorne Boulevard alignment would need to be elevated to address safety, as there was not a safe design solution to locate the light rail at street level along Hawthorne Boulevard.

For purposes of defining the project under CEQA, the alignment options were renamed for this Draft EIR. This Draft EIR serves to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Project (Metro ROW Elevated/Street-Level alignment) and two Options: Trench Option (Metro ROW Trench/Below-Grade) and Hawthorne Option (entirely elevated), described in more detail in Chapter 2, Project Description. An overview of the Project Area and alignments are shown in Figure 1.2-1.

The Metro ROW Elevated/Street-Level alignment is referred to as the Proposed Project in the Draft EIR because it is the alignment that has been historically studied and advanced for the extension of the Metro C Line (Green) to the South Bay region. This term does not, however, convey any preference or recommendation as to the alignment or options. Metro staff will prepare a recommendation on its preferred alignment in Spring 2023 based on findings from the Draft EIR, public comments made during the comment period, technical analysis, stakeholder input, and other factors such as cost, ridership, and project objectives.

Figure 1.2-1. C Line (Green) Extension to Torrance – Overview



Source: STV, 2022

### 1.3. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) of the Draft EIR was prepared and distributed on January 29, 2021 to the State Clearinghouse, other public agencies, and the general public for a review and comment period ending March 15, 2021. During this initial comment period, Metro extended the review and comment period to end on March 29, 2021. Virtual public scoping meetings were held on Wednesday, February 24 and Saturday, February 27, 2021, and a virtual agency scoping meeting was held on Tuesday, February 23, 2021 to gather feedback on the scope of the Draft EIR.

Metro received nearly 700 comment letters, emails, and phone calls during the scoping period on various topics. No comments were received regarding the following subjects: wildfires, utilities and service systems, energy resources, agriculture and forest resources, or mineral resources. The NOP and Scoping Report are contained in Appendix 1-A, Notice of Preparation/Scoping Summary of this Draft EIR. The baseline condition and existing setting for the Draft EIR are those that existed at the NOP date except as noted in individual sections in Chapter 3, Environmental Impacts.

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

- > Transportation
- > Land Use and Planning
- > Aesthetics
- > Air Quality
- > Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- > Noise and Vibration
- > Biological Resources
- > Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources
- > Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- > Hydrology and Water Quality
- > Utilities and Service Systems
- > Energy Resources
- > Cultural Resources
- > Tribal Cultural Resources
- > Public Services and Recreation
- > Agricultural and Forestry Resources
- > Mineral Resources
- > Population and Housing
- > Wildfires

This 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 on the Draft EIR by email or mail to the address below. Comments can also be provided by phone at the project hotline at 213.922.4004.

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Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Email: [greenlineextension@metro.net](mailto:greenlineextension@metro.net)

Metro will conduct public hearings to take testimony on the Draft EIR during the public review and comment period. After 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 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 Final

EIR by the Metro Board. Upon completion of the Final EIR and other required documentation, the Metro Board will consider whether to certify the Final EIR, adopt CEQA findings of fact and a statement of overriding considerations for the Proposed Project, adopt a mitigation monitoring and report program, and approve the Proposed Project.

#### 1.4. EIR ORGANIZATION

This Draft EIR is comprised of the following chapters:

- > **Executive Summary.** This chapter provides a summary of the Proposed Project and Options, project background, environmental impacts, and mitigation measures. The 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 Draft EIR, the scope and content, identifies the environmental topics, describes the environmental review process and organization, and discusses the intended use of this Draft EIR.
- > **Chapter 2. Project Description.** This chapter provides a detailed description of the Proposed Project and Options, including location and surrounding uses, history, objectives, operating characteristics, and construction schedule and phasing.
- > **Chapter 3. Affected Environment and Environmental Impact Analyses.** This chapter presents the environmental setting, project analyses, and if applicable, mitigation measures, and conclusions regarding the level of significance after mitigation for each environmental resource. This chapter summarizes possible effects of the Proposed Project and Options that were determined not to be significant; discusses significant unavoidable impacts that would result from the Proposed Project and Options; analyzes significant irreversible changes in the environment; and assesses potential growth-inducing impacts, related to economic or population growth or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding area. This chapter addresses cumulative impacts and analyzes the potential for the Proposed Project and Options to contribute incrementally to significant cumulative effects when combined with other past, present, and probable future projects.
- > **Chapter 4. Evaluation of Alternatives.** This chapter provides an analysis of a range of reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Project, including the No Project Alternative required by CEQA.
- > **Chapter 5. References.** This chapter lists all the references and sources used in the preparation of this Draft EIR.
- > **Chapter 6. Acronyms and Abbreviations.** This chapter lists all terms and organizations which were abbreviated for this report.
- > **Chapter 7. List of Preparers.** This chapter lists the persons who contributed to the preparation of this Draft EIR.