

## 3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

### 3.1 Introduction

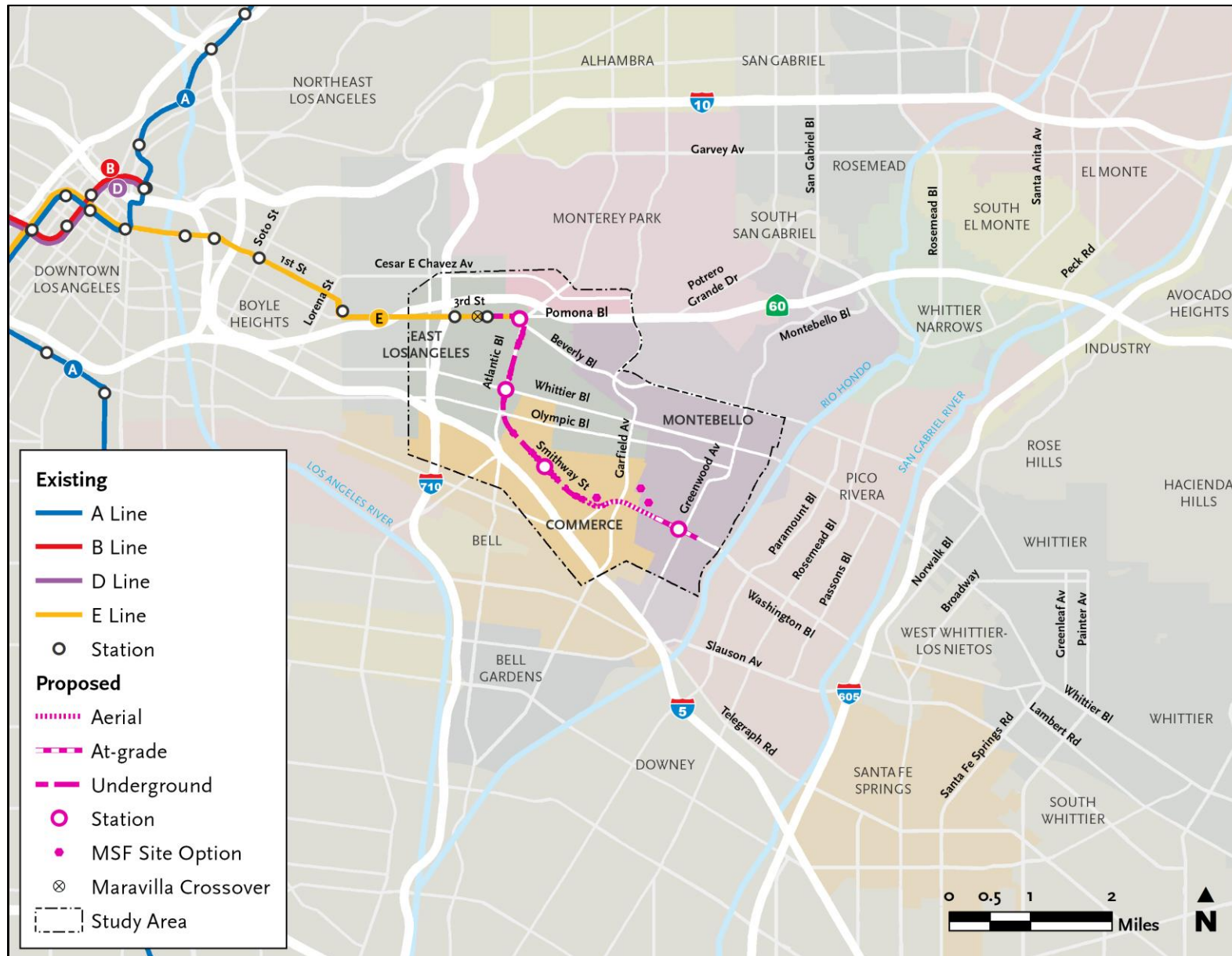
This chapter of the EA discusses the affected environment, environmental effects, project measures, and mitigation measures for operation and construction of the No Build Alternative and Build Alternative. Long-term effects are addressed in **Section 3.2** through **Section 3.16**. Short-term construction effects are addressed in **Section 3.17**. Additional details are provided for some resource topics in **Appendix F** through **Appendix O** of this EA.

Individual topic resources analyzed in this EA include: Air Quality; Biological Resources; Community Impacts; Historic, Archaeological and Tribal Resources; Economic Impacts; Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources; Visual Resources; Hazardous Materials; Water Resources; Land Use and Development; Acquisitions and Relocations; Noise; Safety and Security; Transportation; and Utilities; Construction Impacts; and Section 4(f) Resources.

#### 3.1.1 Study Area

The Study Area is an approximately 0.5-mile to 2-mile radius from the centerline of the Build Alternative's guideway; it primarily encompasses the Cities of Commerce and Montebello, and the community of East Los Angeles (unincorporated Los Angeles County), which are located along the alignment corridor (see **Figure 3.1**). A small portion of the City of Monterey Park is on the northwestern edge. The Study Area varies in distance from the alignment to encompass the area of localized impacts and also include nearby boundaries of Cities and census tracts that are considered in the evaluation of topics such as land use and growth.

The Study Area and greater eastern Los Angeles County consist of a diverse mix of uses and activity centers including single- and multi-family residences, commercial and retail uses, industrial development, parks and recreation, health and medical facilities, educational institutions, and vacant land. Major activity centers include East Los Angeles Community College, recreation areas, major retail and commercial centers (e.g., Citadel Outlets and the Historic Whittier Boulevard Shopping District), and medical centers. The Study Area is densely populated with low-income and transit dependent communities. In addition, many industrial and commercial properties utilize the arterials and freeways within the Study Area for logistical freight activities.



Source: Metro; CDM Smith/AECOM JV 2026.

Figure 3.1 Study Area

### 3.1.2 NEPA Implementing Regulations

In January 2025, President Trump signed Executive Order 14154, Unleashing American Energy, which required the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) to issue guidance on implementing the NEPA, 42 United States Code. 4321 *et seq.*, and propose rescinding its NEPA regulations at 40 CFR Part 1500 *et seq.* Subsequently, on February 25, 2025, CEQ published an Interim Final Rule removing the CEQ NEPA implementing regulations, effective April 11, 2025 (90 Federal Register 10610). The United States Department of Transportation NEPA implementing regulations at 23 CFR Part 771, Environmental Impact and Related Procedures, were modified to remove cross-references to the defunct CEQ regulations through an Interim Final Rule that became effective immediately upon its publication in the Federal Register on July 3, 2025.

### 3.1.3 Reasonably Foreseeable Effects

On February 19, 2025, CEQ issued a memorandum, encouraging Federal agencies to “analyze the reasonably foreseeable effects of the proposed action consistent with Section 102 of NEPA, which does not employ the term ‘cumulative effects;’ [...and the agencies should consider] ‘reasonably foreseeable’ effects, regardless of whether or not those effects might be characterized as ‘cumulative.’” Further, the United States Supreme Court decision in *Seven County Infrastructure Coalition v. Eagle County, Colorado* held that the focus of NEPA is the project at hand, not other separate projects (United States Supreme Court Report, Volume 605, Pages 168 -203 May 29, 2025). It also reinforced the “reasonably foreseeable” effects standard for measuring effects in NEPA, which was incorporated into the United States Department of Transportation’s NEPA implementing regulations at 23 CFR Part 771.

Accordingly, relying upon the NEPA requirements, as revised by the Building United States Infrastructure through Limited Delays and Efficient Reviews Act of 2023, and 23 CFR Part 771, effective July 3, 2025, this EA analyzes reasonably foreseeable effects that result from the Project.<sup>7</sup> Reasonably foreseeable effects are those effects that have a rational link to the Project in terms of geographic and temporal proximity, and must be sufficiently likely to occur. Reasonably foreseeable effects do not include effects that are speculative in nature or causally attenuated<sup>8</sup> from the Project.

Unless otherwise defined in the resource-specific section of the EA, for the purposes of assessing reasonably foreseeable effects, the following parameters apply:

- Geographic proximity includes effects within or directly adjacent to the Study Area as described in **Section 3.1.1**. For some environmental resource topics, specialized study areas are geographical boundaries designed to analyze a specific environmental, social, or technical impact. **Appendix S** (Regulatory Setting Summary) summarizes applicable federal, state, and local regulations for the individual environmental resource.
- The temporal scope for long-term effects is between 2025 (the year the EA for the Project was started) and 2050 (the horizon year for planned regional projects in operation). Temporary effects are expected to occur during Project construction and are described in **Section 3.17** (Construction). Project construction is anticipated to last approximately 60 to 84 months.

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<sup>7</sup> This EA does not categorize the reasonably foreseeable effects of the proposed action based upon types of effects. As a result of the changes discussed in this chapter, FTA and Metro reviewed the documentation supporting the NEPA analysis to determine whether the effects that had previously been characterized as direct, indirect, and cumulative were reasonably foreseeable. The appendices supporting the EA, which contain the terms “direct” and “indirect” were included in this review. The appendices contain these terms because the terms were required under the CEQ regulations in effect at the time the appendices were prepared. Although the terms “direct” and “indirect” have not been removed from the appendices, FTA and Metro reviewed the effects characterized (or categorized) as indirect in the appendices to determine whether such effects are reasonably foreseeable.

<sup>8</sup> In this context, “causally attenuated” means effects that are remote in time or place, or are the result of a lengthy causal chain (meaning intervening variables such as other actions may contribute or cause an effect), thereby making it difficult to establish a sufficiently close connection between the Project and a particular environmental impact. Generally, an outcome or effect is causally attenuated if it cannot be directly attributed to one particular action, but rather may result from another action or series of actions.

- Sufficiently likely to occur includes effects associated with other projects for which funding has been committed, including, for example, projects included in the fiscally-constrained list of projects in the Regional Transportation Plan with dedicated funding for construction.

In accordance with 23 CFR 771.107, this EA investigates reasonably foreseeable environmental impacts to determine the environmental process to be followed and to assist in the preparation of the environmental document. Environmental effects from the alternatives are evaluated based on the following criteria:

- No effect – The alternative would not alter the environmental status quo.
- No adverse effect – The alternative could result in alterations to the environmental setting but would not negatively affect the environmental resource value or quality as it exists prior to the alternative.
- Adverse effect – The alternative would result in alterations to the environmental setting and would significantly and negatively affect the environmental resource value or quality as it exists prior to the alternative.
- Beneficial effect – The alternative would result in the improvement of the environmental resource value or quality as it exists prior to the alternative.

Project measures and mitigation measures are identified for various resources:

- Project measures are incorporated as part of the Build Alternative and consist of design features, best management practices, or other measures required by law and permit approvals that avoid or minimize potential adverse effects.
- Mitigation measures are additional actions, not otherwise part of the Build Alternative, that are designed to minimize, reduce, or compensate for adverse effects. Mitigation measures are required where adverse effects have been identified based on the analyses presented within this EA. The project measures, mitigation measures, and the level of effects after implementation are presented in **Appendix D** (Environmental Commitments Record), of this EA.

### 3.1.4 Environmental Resources of No Concern

The following resources would not be affected by the No Build Alternative or Build Alternative; thus, they are not discussed in detail in this EA:

- Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. The Study Area does not provide suitable habitat for bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) or golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*). Thus, there would be no effect on bald or golden eagles from the Project.
- Coastal Zones (California Coastal Commission 2025; United States Fish and Wildlife Service 2025a): The Study Area is not in or near a defined coastal zone or coastal barrier resources system unit; therefore, the alternatives have no potential to affect coastal resources.
- Farmland (United States Department of Agriculture 1981, California Department of Conservation 2025): The Study Area is primarily urban, and no farmland or soils that could support farmland are in the area. Further, the Build Alternative and No Build Alternative would not convert or otherwise affect farmland.
- Growth: Neither the No Build Alternative nor the Build Alternative would result in substantial changes to the existing population in the Study Area. Neither alternative would include the development of temporary or permanent housing.
- Wild and Scenic Rivers (National Wild and Scenic Rivers System 2025): There are no wild or scenic rivers in or near the Study Area; thus, the alternatives have no potential to affect designated wild or scenic rivers.

- Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act: This requires that public parks and recreation areas that were established or improved with funds available through the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act be retained and used for public outdoor recreation. One potential resource was identified within 0.25 mile of the Build Alternative alignment using the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act database: the East 60th Street Community Youth Center or East Los Angeles Community Youth Center at 5120 Beverly Boulevard (Land and Water Conservation Fund 2022). However, this resource was not listed on the California State Parks, Land and Water Conservation Fund Act projects database (California State Parks 2019). Further, on July 22, 2025, the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation confirmed that the community center is privately owned (Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation 2025). Thus, no Section 6(f) resources were identified within 0.25 mile of the Build Alternative alignment and Section 6(f) resources are not analyzed further.