

**CHAPTER 1**  
**INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**



## **1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 PROJECT HISTORY**

The voters of Los Angeles County approved Proposition "A" in November 1980, authorizing the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission (LACTC) to assess a county-wide one-half percent sales tax . The proceeds of this tax were to be used to improve and expand public transit in Los Angeles County and plan, build and operate a regional rail rapid transit system. The map accompanying the proposition included an east-west rail transit line connecting Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) with Norwalk through Downey. In June of 1984 the LACTC approved the construction of a rail system in the median of the Century Freeway, also known as the Glenn Anderson Freeway (I-105). The rail line, known as the Metro Green Line, is scheduled to begin operation in 1994. This rail transit project is now called the "Metro Green Line."

In May 1991, the LACTC authorized the preparation of a Route Refinement Study and an Environmental Impact Report (RRS/EIR) for the easterly extension of the Metro Green Line from its present eastern terminus at I-605 and Studebaker Road to a new terminus approximately 2.8 miles further east at the proposed Norwalk Transportation Center. The Metro Green Line Easterly Extension is one of the eight fundable corridors included in the 30-Year Integrated Transportation Plan adopted by the LACTC in April of 1992.

### **1.2 PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT**

The Norwalk to El Segundo Metro Green Line Rail Project, currently under construction, will provide direct rail access from Norwalk to Los Angeles International Airport and the El Segundo employment area, and through its connection with the Metro Blue Line, the Green Line will provide region-wide rail transit accessibility. Efforts by the City of Norwalk are underway to develop a commuter rail station where the Orange/Riverside/San Bernardino County to Union Station commuter trains will stop. Furthermore, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) is formulating plans to develop urban rail in Orange County, and a connection to the Norwalk Transportation Center is being given high priority.

However, the eastern terminus of the Metro Green Line currently under construction is at I-605. The Metro Green Line Easterly Extension is therefore primarily envisioned as a regional rail gap closure between the inter-county Rail Corridor, the Urban Rail network in Los Angeles County, and the Urban Rail Network in Orange County. This 2.8 mile proposed segment would be a regionally significant project, due to the region-wide system linkage it would provide.

Figure 1-1 shows the location of the Metro Green Line Easterly Extension project.



## **1.3 ROUTE SELECTION PROCESS**

### **1.3.1 Alternative Routes Initially Considered**

In the summer of 1991, the Route Refinement Study was initiated under the joint sponsorship of the LACTC and the City of Norwalk. LACTC identified three alternative routes for the proposed easterly extension of the Metro Green Line. The location of the alternative routes were based on discussions between LACTC staff and representatives of the City of Norwalk. All alternatives had a common beginning at I-605/Studebaker Station and a common end point at the proposed Norwalk Transportation Center. The three route alternatives are described below and are also shown in Figure 1-2.

#### Route Alternative 1

This route alternative would begin at the proposed I-605 Metro Green Line Station and take an alignment running north on Studebaker Road then east on Imperial Highway to the proposed eastern terminus at the Norwalk Transportation Center.

#### Alternative 2

Route alternative 2 would begin at the proposed I-605 Metro Green Line Station, proceed north on Studebaker Road to Firestone Boulevard, continue in a southeast direction on the Southern Pacific right-of-way, cross Imperial Highway, proceed north on Pioneer Boulevard and eastward on Imperial Highway to the proposed eastern terminus at the Norwalk Transportation Center.

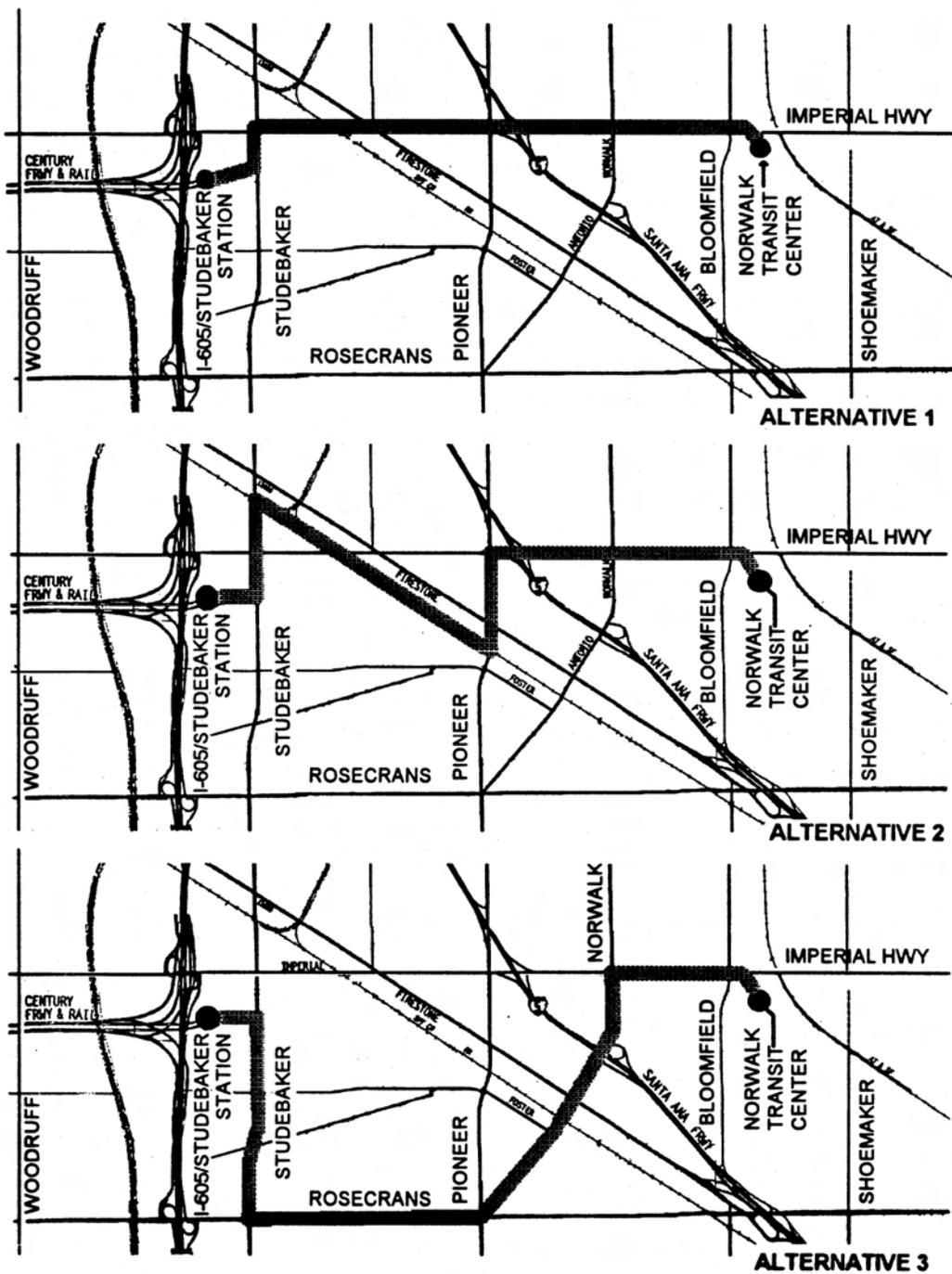
#### Alternative 3

Route alternative 3 would proceed south on Studebaker Road from the proposed I-605 Metro Green Line Station, continue an eastward alignment on Rosecrans Avenue, then northeast on San Antonio Boulevard and east on Imperial Highway to the proposed eastern terminus at the Norwalk Transportation Center.

During the initial phase of the study it became apparent that evaluating aerial guideways along all three routes would be logical. In the case of a subway configuration, however, only one route closely following Alternative 1 would be appropriate to evaluate because subway construction technology would require following a direct route connecting the two end points. Also, no at-grade alternatives for any of the routes were studied because the Metro Green Line will be fully grade separated. The grade separation would allow higher operating speeds without having to negotiate grade crossings or other traffic, as the Metro Blue Line does, and it would leave open the option of utilizing either fully automated or driver operated vehicles.

### **1.3.2 Design Guidelines and Evaluation Criteria**

The following design guidelines and evaluation criteria were observed in the development and evaluation of alternatives.



Source: Myra L. Frank & Associates, Inc., 1992.

*Myra L.  
Frank &  
Associates, Inc.*

**Metro Green Line Easterly Extension  
Environmental Impact Report**

**Figure 1-2: Alternative Routes Considered**

### Design Guidelines

1. Consistency with the Metro Green Line technology and standards;
2. Maintain a minimum average operating speed of 40 miles per hour;
3. Maintain 2.5 minutes headway;
4. Maintain the ability to provide a connection with Orange County;
5. Provide for convenient transfers between Metro Green Line, Commuter Rail, Orange County Fixed Guideway Transit and Buses at the Norwalk Transportation Center.

### Evaluation Criteria

1. Minimize negative impacts on the surrounding community;
2. Avoid major utility disruptions;
3. Avoid serious engineering problems;
4. Minimize travel time; and,
5. Emphasize cost effectiveness.

#### **1.3.3 Recommended Route Alternatives**

Key findings of the evaluation as of May 1992 were as follows:

##### Route Alternative 1-A (Aerial Guideway)

- The alternative would have 42 single-family units and 28 multi-family buildings in the study area.
- Eight properties would be required for right-of-way purposes.
- Crossing over I-5 would be at a very high elevation (67 feet).
- Crossing Firestone Boulevard would necessitate very long-spanned striders (300 to 400 feet).
- Traffic impacts would be low.

### Route Alternative 1-S (Subway)

- Would have the shortest travel time of all alternatives.
- Impacts on utilities would be very low.
- The construction process would require crossing beneath a portion of Imperial Highway while a vent shaft is constructed, and a construction staging area would be needed for tunnel construction.
- The alternative would have 42 single-family units and 28 multi-family buildings in its study area, but its below grade profile would reduce the likelihood of adverse effects.
- Traffic impacts would be low.

### Route Alternative 2 (Aerial Guideway)

- Would have the lowest overall operating speed of all alternatives.
- Moderate impacts on utilities would be expected.
- A high elevation crossing of I-5 would be required, and its many curves would reduce speed.
- The study area would include 44 single-family units and 21 multi-family buildings.
- Expected traffic impacts would be moderate.

### Route Alternative 3 (Aerial Guideway)

- Would be the longest of all alternatives (3.61 miles), resulting in the longest travel time (5.27 minutes).
- Impacts on utilities would be moderate.
- A high elevation crossing of I-5 would be required.
- Right-of-way takings for roadway widening purposes may be required at I-5 and Imperial Highway, Foster Road and Firestone Boulevard.
- The study area would include 142 single-family units and 29 multi-family buildings.
- Right-of-way requirements would require the taking of 12 properties.
- Traffic impacts would be high.

Results of the evaluation were presented to the Metro Green Line Easterly Extension Task Force, which had representatives from the LACTC, RCC, Norwalk and Caltrans. The consultant team recommended to the Task Force that Route Alternatives 2 and 3 be dropped from further consideration, due to their higher costs, longer travel times, slower operating speeds and more extensive environmental impacts.

Of the remaining two route alternatives along Imperial Highway, the consultant team recommended that Alternative 1-S (Subway) should be studied in more detail and be carried forward through the environmental documentation process. The consultant team felt that the subway alternative along Imperial Highway was more advantageous due to its shorter length, higher operating speed, comparable cost with the aerial alternative along Imperial Highway and fewer environmental and traffic impacts.

This recommendation was presented to the Planning and Mobility Improvement Committee (PMIC) at its May 13, 1992, meeting. PMIC concurred with the consultant and staff recommendation that the EIR document focus on the subway alignment along Imperial Highway. This recommendation was presented to the full LACTC Board on May 27, 1992. The Board decided that both the aerial and subway alignments along Imperial Highway should be carried forward through the EIR process, and LACTC staff was directed to carry out that recommendation.

The remainder of this environmental document presents impacts and mitigation measures associated with an aerial alignment and a subway alignment, both of which follow a direct route from the Metro Green Line station at I-605 and terminate at the Norwalk Transportation Center.

#### **1.4           FORMAT OF THE EIR**

This EIR has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended and as described in the most recent State Guidelines for its implementation. The Los Angeles County Transportation Commission and the City of Norwalk were cooperative parties in the studies and analyses leading to this document. Pursuant to Section 15051 of the State Guidelines, the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission is designated as the lead agency, and pursuant to Section 15096 of the State Guidelines, the City of Norwalk is designated as a responsible agency. The content and format of the EIR is established by Article 9 (sections 15120 through 15132) of the State Guidelines. The information contained in this EIR was developed in response to an Initial Study Checklist prepared by the lead agency pursuant to Section 15063 of the State Guidelines, and in satisfaction of Subsection (c)(3)(A) of that citation, is intended to focus on the effects considered to be significant.

It should be noted that the Metro Green Line Easterly Extension project would qualify for an exemption under CEQA, as described in Section 15275 (b) of the State CEQA Guidelines:

Specified Mass  
Transit Project

15275.

CEQA does not apply to the following mass transit projects:

(b) Facility extensions not to exceed four miles in length which are required for transfer of passengers from or to exclusive public mass transit guideway or busway public transit services.

The LACTC has elected to prepare and circulate an EIR in order to fully disclose potential effects of the project and to ensure public participation in the process.

In addition to the Summary, the EIR is organized into chapters, as follows:

Chapter 1 provides an introduction and background for the project. Chapter 2 describes the proposed project. In this chapter, two alternative (aerial and subway alignments) are discussed. Chapter 3 identifies the setting, impacts and proposed mitigation measures associated with the project. Chapter 4 discusses a range of other effects required by State Guidelines. Chapter 5 identifies other alternatives to the project that could be considered. Chapter 6 provides comments and responses occurring as a result of the public comment period. A series of appendices are provided that contain supporting documentation and references.