



Board Report

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REVISED
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
JANUARY 22, 2026

Motion by:

DIRECTORS MITCHELL, SANDOVAL, DUPONT-WALKER, AND BUTTS

Strengthening Transit Access and Mobility in the South Bay through the C Line Extension to Torrance
Motion

Related to Item 11: C Line Extension to Torrance Project Final Environmental Impact Report
Certification

The Metro C (Green) Line Extension to Torrance Project (Project) is a proposed investment to extend the existing light rail C Line approximately 4.5 miles south from the Redondo Beach (Marine) Station through the cities of Lawndale, Redondo Beach, and Torrance, terminating at the Mary K. Giordano Regional Transit Center (Torrance Transit Center). Due to recent service changes, the Project would operate as part of the K Line's operational alignment. The concept of a rapid rail connection to the South Bay was first envisioned in 1980 as part of Proposition A, the first voter-approved sales tax measure dedicated to funding transportation, including bus service improvements, rail development, and local transit programs. More than four decades later, the Project is at a critical juncture - formal project approval - to advance as a regionally significant investment that would provide reliable, high-quality transit access to jobs and essential services, while supporting economic development and climate goals in the South Bay.

Following the passage of Proposition A in 1980, Metro acquired the Harbor Subdivision in the early 1990s from the predecessor to BNSF Railway. Since that time, a series of studies have examined the potential for transit service along all or portions of the Metro-owned Right-of-Way (ROW), shaping the Project's scope and alternatives. These efforts include the 2009 Harbor Subdivision Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis, the 2010 South Bay Green Line Extension Draft EIS/EIR, and the 2017 Supplemental Alternatives Analysis. Most recently, Metro initiated environmental review to study two primary alignments, the Metro ROW and Hawthorne Boulevard, identified in the Supplemental Alternatives Analysis.

Although the Project was placed on hold following funding uncertainties after the failure of Measure J in 2012, it continued to be a priority of both local and regional interest. Voters reaffirmed their support by approving funding allocations for the Project through Measure M in 2016, adding to previously approved allocations in Measure R in 2008. The Metro Board also prioritized the C Line Project as

one of four Pillar projects in 2019 as approved by Board motion.

In recent years, Metro reinitiated environmental review for the Project, evaluating both the Metro ROW and Hawthorne Boulevard alignments and culminating in the Board adoption of the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) on the Metro ROW. Since the commencement of scoping in 2021, Metro has conducted extensive community outreach, generating substantial input from residents, local jurisdictions, and community stakeholders. Throughout the Draft EIR process, community engagement conducted by Director Mitchell's office and Metro staff helped to illuminate both the opportunities and challenges associated with the ROW and Hawthorne Boulevard alignments.

While the Metro ROW alignment presents several technical advantages, residents and local jurisdictions directly impacted by the Project have raised substantive concerns regarding whether the ROW alignment fully advances the Project's core objectives. These concerns include proximity to homes, removal of green space, utility pipeline relocation, rail safety, noise and vibration, and potential air quality impacts during construction. Although some of these issues have been addressed or mitigated through measures identified in the Final EIR, community apprehension regarding the ROW alignment remains.

The Hawthorne Boulevard alignment offers an alternative that addresses many of these concerns while advancing the Project's broader mobility and transit access goals. By locating high-frequency rail service within an established commercial corridor, the alignment places stations in close proximity to existing jobs, retail, services, and the South Bay Galleria redevelopment, which includes a projected housing development of 650 units. This configuration supports stronger walk-up access, higher visibility, and greater ridership potential.

While both the Hawthorne Boulevard and Metro ROW options have similar overall completion timelines, the Hawthorne alignment's active construction period is estimated to be approximately a year shorter than that of the ROW option, which requires undercrossing construction, restricted working hours in residential neighborhoods, and freight and utility pipeline relocation. Metro staff's weighted benefits analysis and benefit-cost ratios further indicate that both alignments deliver comparable levels of benefits and that the benefits of each option outweigh their respective costs.

It is important to acknowledge that the Hawthorne Boulevard alignment presents challenges that require careful management, but ones that are not insurmountable. Most notably, the Hawthorne alignment has a higher funding gap and greater construction complexity, including the need for encroachment permits and approvals from Caltrans and local jurisdictions, utility relocation, and coordinated management of construction impacts to traffic and businesses. These considerations are particularly relevant given Metro's current fiscal climate and the need to deliver major capital projects efficiently.

However, lower cost and ease of construction should not be conflated with best value, nor should they serve as the primary determinants of alignment selection at the expense of long-term community benefits. The Hawthorne Boulevard alignment is estimated to cost approximately \$737 million more than the Metro ROW alignment. Yet, with \$1.41 billion already secured for the Project, the Hawthorne alignment is more than 40 percent funded—an amount that exceeds the level of funding typically secured for the full alignment of rail projects at the Final EIR stage.

In addition, Caltrans Director's draft Transit Policy, once finalized, is expected to encourage public transit on the state highway system and establish processes to expedite permitting on encroachments, directly applicable to the Hawthorne alignment. Caltrans District 7 is also in the process of relinquishing Hawthorne Boulevard (State Route 107) to the cities of Torrance and Redondo Beach. Caltrans relinquished the segment of Hawthorne Boulevard in Lawndale to the city in 2003. Once the relinquishment processes with Torrance and Redondo Beach are complete, the section of Hawthorne Boulevard impacted by the Project would be under local control. Together with the draft Transit Policy, these efforts are anticipated to support a streamlined permitting and approval process. Construction and business impacts can further be mitigated through early and sustained engagement and expanding Metro's existing construction mitigation and business support programs, and targeted investments to support corridor recovery during and after project construction.

The Hawthorne Boulevard alignment offers the strongest opportunity to deliver lasting mobility, economic, and environmental benefits that outweigh the short-term challenges of construction. This motion approves the Hawthorne Boulevard alignment as the Project for the C Line Extension to Torrance, maximizes the use of Metro's construction mitigation programs, and directs Metro to immediately coordinate with responsible agencies and jurisdictions to secure required permits and approvals to ensure the Project's timely delivery.

In 2008 and again in 2016, voters approved the C Line Extension to Torrance as a priority transit project for the South Bay that has historically lacked fast, frequent, and reliable transit connections to the rest of Los Angeles County. Advancing the Hawthorne Boulevard alignment ensures that the C Line Extension to Torrance fulfills its promise as a transformative investment for the South Bay, now and for generations to come.

SUBJECT: STRENGTHENING TRANSIT ACCESS AND MOBILITY IN THE SOUTH BAY THROUGH THE C LINE EXTENSION TO TORRANCE MOTION

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE Motion by Mitchell, Sandoval, Dupont-Walker, and Butts that the Board direct the Chief Executive Officer to:

- A. APPROVE the Hawthorne Option, a 4.5-mile light rail line with two (2) stations that extends from the existing Redondo Beach (Marine) Station at its northern terminus along Hawthorne Boulevard before rejoining the Metro Right of Way south of 190th Street to its southern terminus station at the Torrance Transit Center, as the Project (Project);
- B. CERTIFY in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR);
- C. ADOPT, in accordance with CEQA, the:
 - 1. Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations for the Hawthorne Option, and
 - 2. Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP); and

D. AUTHORIZE the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to file a Notice of Determination (NOD) with the Los Angeles County Clerk and the State of California Clearinghouse.

WE, FURTHER MOVE, that the Board direct the Chief Executive Officer to:

E. Report back on recommendations for enhanced pedestrian access to the South Bay Galleria Station in addition to or instead of the proposed mid-block pedestrian crossing and signalized crossing, including the benefits and challenges of a pedestrian bridge;

F. Expand Metro's construction mitigation programs for the C Line Extension to Torrance Project, including but not limited to the Business Interruption Fund (BIF); Eat, Shop, and Play Program; and the Business Solutions Center;

G. Upon commencement of preparations to establish the BIF, report back to the board:

1. An analysis of the construction impacts on the business corridor along the Project and updated construction timeline; and
2. Activities to support the establishment of the BIF on the Project and coordination across Metro's other construction mitigation programs, including BIF outreach that utilizes best practices inclusive of but not limited to culturally competent and inclusive technical assistance;

H. Prioritize the C Line Extension to Torrance Project for inclusion in the Pilot Investment Fund program or an iteration of the Pilot Investment Fund to maximize business preservation after the construction of the Project;

I. Continue to refine the Project, including environmental analysis, while conducting value engineering and identifying and implementing pre-construction and early works projects in order to reduce cost;

J. Continue to pursue State and local funding to complete the funding plan;

K. Report back quarterly on progress on Caltrans Director's Transit Policy, including expediting permitting, that can be utilized on this and other Metro projects, and on progress on Caltrans relinquishing Hawthorne Boulevard to the Cities of Redondo Beach and Torrance;

L. Initiate outreach to responsible agencies and jurisdictions requiring permits and approvals for the Project's construction and implementation, including Caltrans and the Cities of Lawndale, Redondo Beach, and Torrance, to centralize and streamline permits and approvals expeditiously without delay; and

M. Initiate outreach with the Cities of Redondo Beach and Torrance to discuss qualifying contributions toward the 3% local contribution obligation, including centralized permitting and qualifying First-Last-Mile improvements for the South Bay Galleria and Torrance Transit Center stations.