

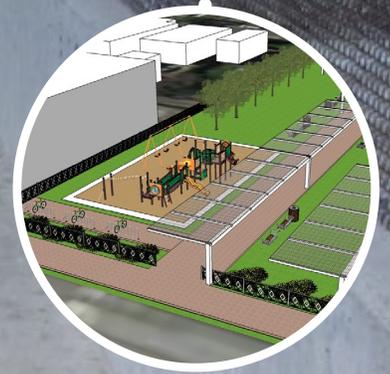
**Appendix B**      **Connect Southwest LA: A TOD Specific  
Plan for West Athens-Westmont**

## Appendices

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# CONNECT SOUTHWEST LA: A TOD SPECIFIC PLAN FOR WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT

FINAL PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT  
MAY 2018



Prepared for Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning  
Prepared by PlaceWorks, IBI Group, and HR&A Advisors

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# CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 OVERVIEW

The Los Angeles County 2035 General Plan (General Plan) provides a policy framework for the implementation of smart growth development to create healthy, livable, and equitable communities. Los Angeles County identified eleven Transit Oriented Districts (TODs) for future specific plan development in order to address each community's needs and priorities in regard to land use, mobility, housing, infrastructure, open spaces, and market conditions. Each of the TOD specific plans offers incredible potential opportunity to leverage the community's assets, connect uses and activities, and attract future investment to create more engaging and vibrant places. Connect Southwest LA: A TOD Specific Plan for West Athens-Westmont (Specific Plan / Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan) is one of the eleven TODs in the General Plan.

The Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning (DPR) identified the following goals to guide each TOD specific plan:

- Increase walking, bicycling, and transit ridership and reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMTs);
- Facilitate compact, mixed use development;
- Increase economic activity;
- Facilitate the public investment of infrastructure improvements;
- Streamline the environmental review process for future infill development projects.

## 1.2 PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

The overall purpose of the Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan is to provide comprehensive direction for the development within the Specific Plan area and facilitate implementation of the goals and policies of the General Plan, including the vision for the TOD priority areas. The Specific Plan provides ways to expand opportunities for compact development around the Vermont/Athens Metro Green Line station, yet is sensitive to the existing development character today. The plan facilitates increased housing opportunities and employment-generating uses in the station area to take advantage of the significant local and regional transit services already provided in its vicinity.

The Specific Plan also lays the foundation to create a more walkable, transit-oriented area with a mix of land uses that is accessible by all modes of transportation, including transit, walking, and bicycling.





The plan not only establishes a vision for the West Athens and Westmont communities, but also provides specific policies, development standards, design guidelines, and recommended capital improvement projects—that will help to achieve that vision. An implementation and financing strategy is included in order to support future implementation of the plan.

The Vermont/Athens Green Line Station's proximity to numerous community facilities, including Los Angeles Southwest College, creates opportunities for improving the built environment and overall community livability, but there are also many challenges that must be addressed as part of a successful planning process.



Much of the commercial portion of the planning area is composed of auto-oriented uses such as gas stations, drive-thru restaurants, automotive repair shops, as well as vacant parcels and low density residential uses. These uses do not promote a pedestrian or transit orientation for neighborhood vitality, and are generally inconsistent with TOD goals. Furthermore, some properties and structures in the planning area are physically deteriorated due to their lack of maintenance and upkeep by property owners and property managers. These ultimately result in an unsafe neighborhood environment that is not conducive to walking and which discourages new development and investment. Perhaps the greatest challenge to creating a vital district is the location of the Vermont Station platform, within the median of the I-105 Freeway. The physical barriers to pedestrian access are exacerbated by the width of Vermont Avenue and the surrounding physical environment.

### 1.2.1 SPECIFIC PLAN LOCATION

The West Athens-Westmont Community is located in the southwestern portion of the Metro Planning Area, described in the 2035 General Plan as the geographic center of Los Angeles County (Figure 1.1: Regional Context). The Community Plan Area is approximately 3.1 square miles, and is bounded on the north and east by the City of Los Angeles, on the south by the City of Gardena, and on the west by the Cities of Hawthorne and Inglewood (Figure 1.2: Local Context). The West Athens-Westmont Community is crossed by Interstate 105 (I-105) Freeway, dividing the Community Plan

**FIGURE 1.1: REGIONAL CONTEXT**

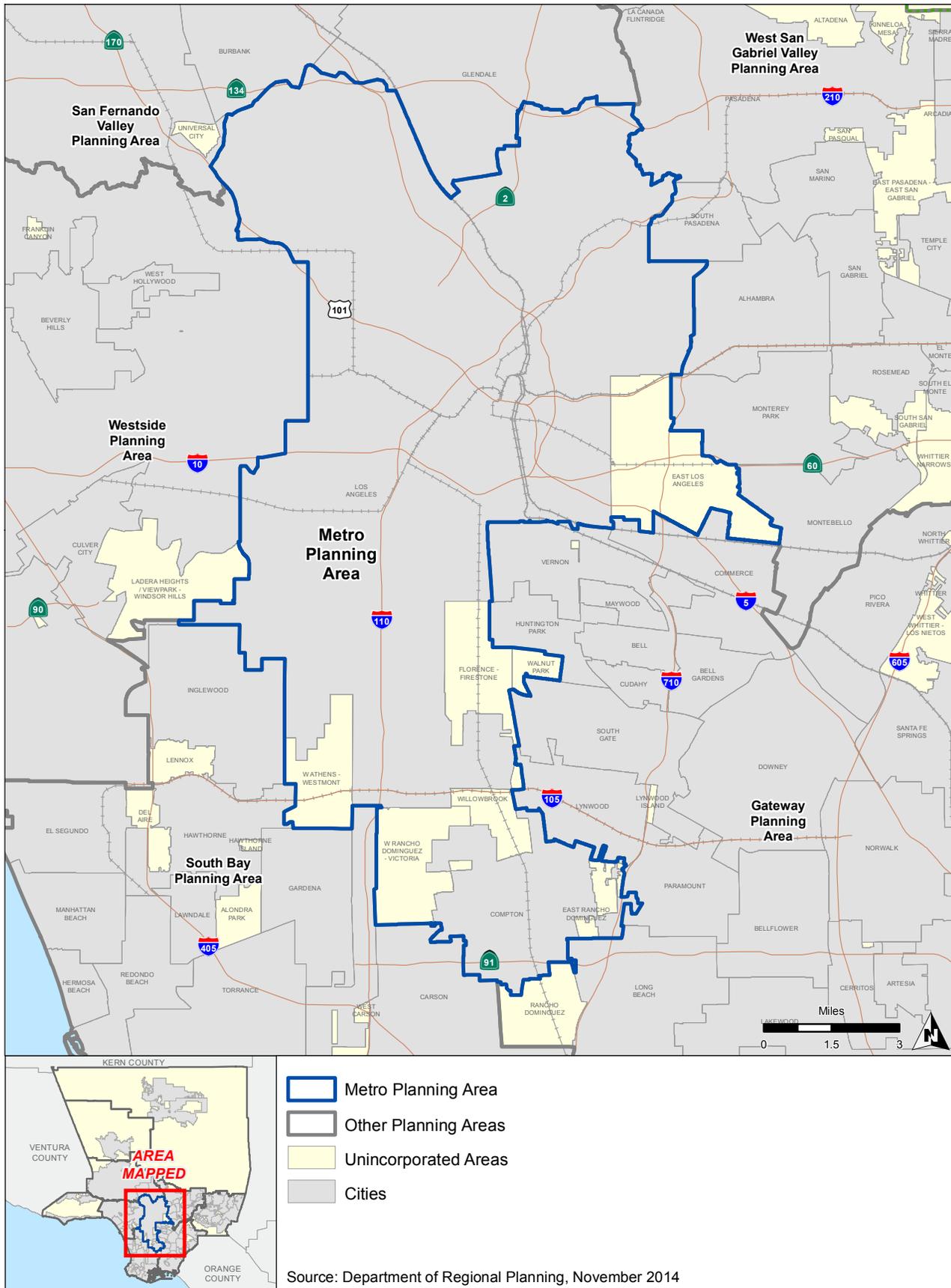
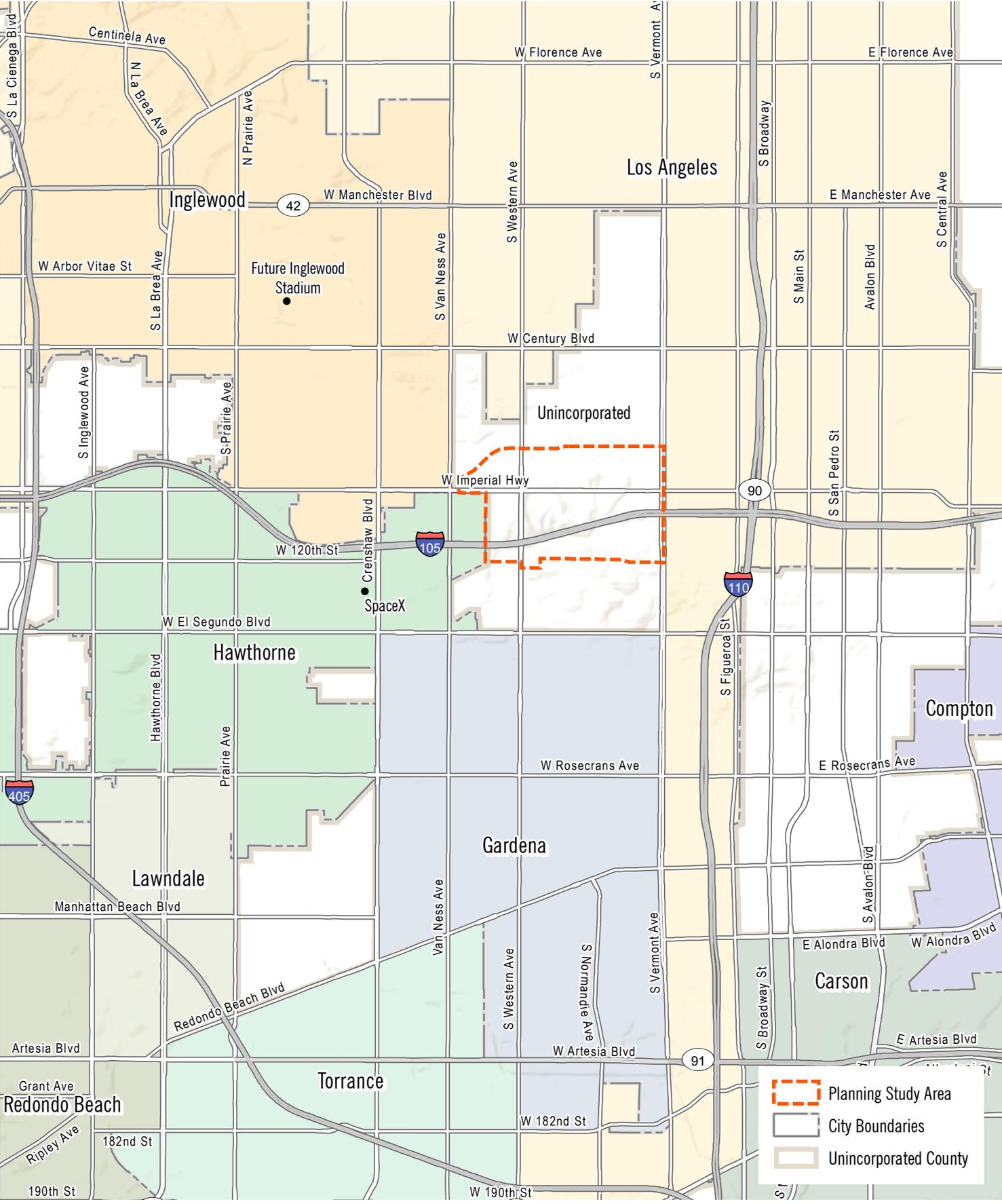


FIGURE 1.2: LOCAL CONTEXT



Area into two distinct subareas. The Metro Green Line runs in the median of the I-105 for the majority of its route, extending from the City of Norwalk to the City of Redondo Beach. The Vermont Green Line station platform is located in the median of the I-105 Freeway below Vermont Avenue.

### Specific Plan Area

The Specific Plan area is the study area boundary for which the Specific Plan has been developed (Figure 1.3: Specific Plan Area). It is defined according to the following streets:

- North Boundary: Lohengrin Street / West 110th Street
- South Boundary: West 120th Street / West 121st Street
- East Boundary: Vermont Avenue
- West Boundary: Lohengrin Street/Imperial Highway/South Wilton Place/Western Avenue

### County of Los Angeles Context

The Specific Plan area falls within the County of Los Angeles on the eastern edge of the Los Angeles County border with the City of Los Angeles. Vermont Avenue is the eastern boundary of the Specific Plan area and is also the geographic boundary of the unincorporated communities of the West Athens and Westmont neighborhoods.

### City of Los Angeles Adjacent Context

The area to the east of Vermont Avenue falls within the jurisdiction of the City of Los Angeles, and therefore is not included within this Specific Plan boundaries. However, the neighboring jurisdiction is important to consider within the context of the TOD Specific Plan area.

In an effort to create a contemporary, 21st Century Zoning Code for the City of Los Angeles, the Department of City Planning has over recent years identified targeted improvements that will facilitate better context-sensitive planning, a more transparent entitlement process, and foster implementable long-range Community Plans. Two examples of such code amendments include a proposed Community Plan Implementation Ordinance (CPIO), which allows for tailored regulations within individual neighborhoods.

The purpose of the South Los Angeles Community Implementation Overlay is to implement the goals and policies of the South Los Angeles Community Plan. There are two CPIO designations for the Vermont TOD Station Area. This includes a Transit-Oriented District (Subarea F-TOD Medium) and a Residential Design District. The TOD Subareas



FIGURE 1.3: SPECIFIC PLAN AREA



● Vermont/Athens Station   
 — Metro Green Line   
  Study Area   
  City Boundaries

encourage the creation of pedestrian-friendly, multi-modal villages around transit. They promote a mix of uses including residential, employment, and shopping opportunities within walking distance of transit stations. The TOD Subareas offer incentives for affordable housing and targeted commercial uses. Development standards ensure that new development is appropriate to the scale and context of each transit neighborhood.

Echoing the concepts set forth in the Mixed-Use Boulevards and Nodes District, the Transit-Oriented District maximizes the presence of fixed light rail transit as well as intersections with established Metro Rapid bus lines, within the community, and offers greater development incentives for mixed-use projects that provide affordable housing.

The Subarea F-TOD Medium designation allows up to a maximum height of five stories with a targeted use, mixed-income housing, or affordable housing integrated into the development. Targeted uses such as banks, child care, and sit-down restaurants are provided with parking, height, and/or FAR incentives. FAR, parking density, and/or height incentives are also offered for mixed-income and 100% affordable housing projects.

The Residential Design District brings increased stability to residential neighborhoods, and provides direction for new infill residential development that is consistent with the strongest assets of the existing residential neighborhood.

## **1.2.2 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER RELEVANT STUDIES AND PLANS**

The Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan will be related to a number of policy and regulatory documents at the local, county, and state level. As a Specific Plan, it is intended to implement the County of Los Angeles 2035 General Plan and will serve as the primary regulatory framework for development in the planning area. The Los Angeles County Code of Ordinances and Zoning Map will be amended to implement any land use changes proposed under the Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan. The regulations in the Specific Plan shall serve as the zoning, development, and design standards for all projects in the Specific Plan area.

This section describes the current and past planning efforts that have helped set the policy and regulatory framework for developing the Specific Plan.

*“The transit center around the Vermont Station for the Metro Green Line in West Athens-Westmont presents an opportunity to capitalize on infrastructure investments in a community with high ridership. Vermont Avenue has the potential for increased economic vitality through the creation of employment-rich activities along the commercial corridors that are adjacent to the Metro station. In addition, the residential areas within the transit center would benefit from increased pedestrian amenities and design improvements.”*

– County of Los Angeles 2035 General Plan

## County of Los Angeles 2035 General Plan

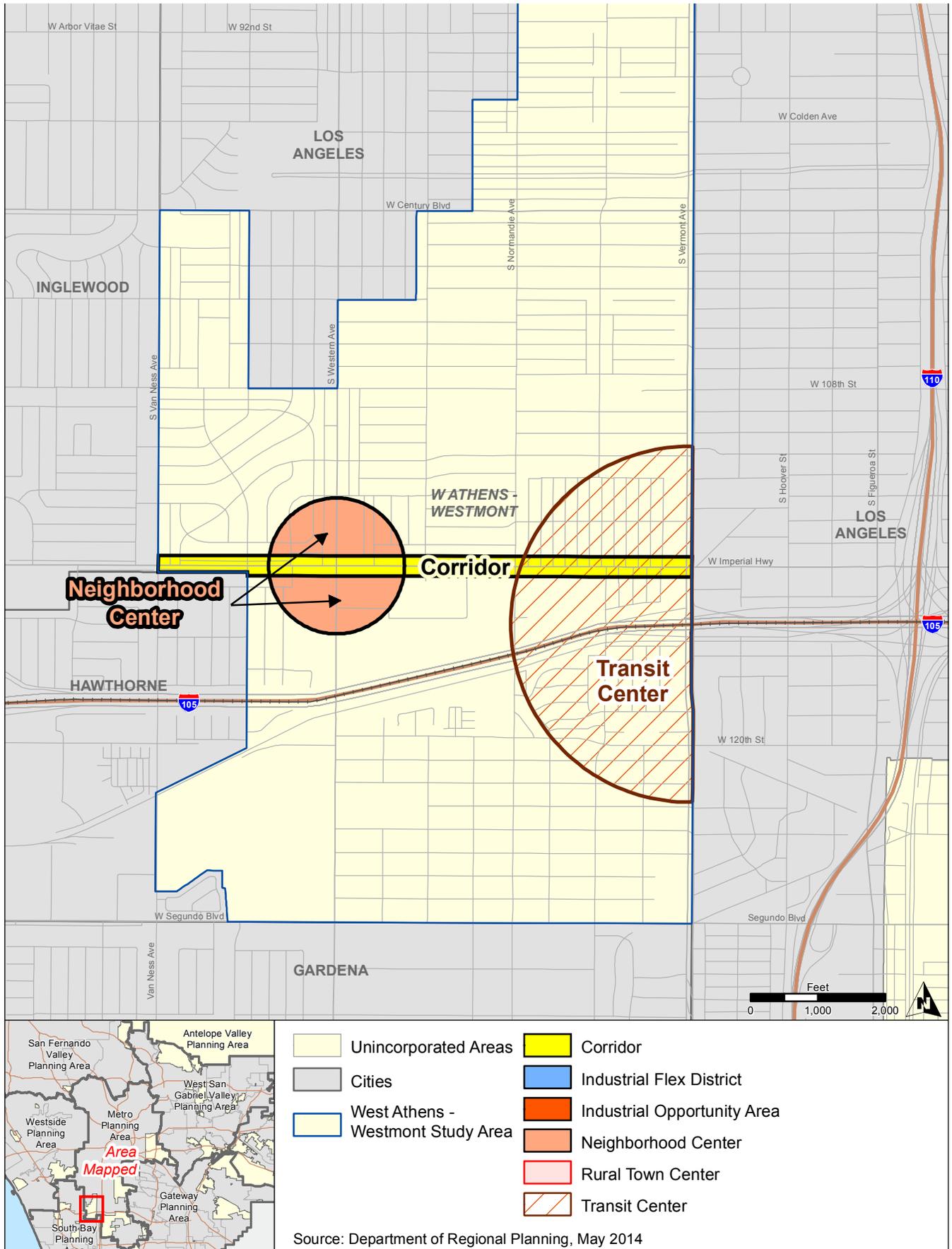
The County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors adopted the County of Los Angeles 2035 General Plan on October 6, 2015. The General Plan established the Planning Areas Framework to provide a mechanism for local communities to work with the County to develop plans that respond to their unique and diverse character. The West Athens-Westmont Community is located within the Metro Planning Area, and is identified as an Opportunity Area in the General Plan due to the area's potential for redevelopment as an employment hub, with increased pedestrian amenities (Figure 1.4: General Plan Opportunity Areas). The General Plan identifies a Transit Center, Neighborhood Center and Corridor in the Opportunity Area.

The Vermont/Athens Station area is identified as a Transit Center Opportunity Area which is defined as an area supported by major public transit infrastructure. Transit Centers are identified based on opportunities of higher intensity development, including multi-family housing, employment and commercial uses; infrastructure improvements; access to public services and infrastructure; playing a central role within a community; or the potential for increased design; and improvements that promote living streets and active transportation, such as trees, lighting, and bicycle lanes.

Neighborhood centers are areas with opportunities suitable for community-serving uses, including commercial only and mixed-use development that combine housing with retail, service, office and other uses. Neighborhood centers are identified based on opportunities for a mix of uses, including housing and commercial; access to public services and infrastructure; playing a central role within a community; or the potential for increased design, and improvements that promote living streets and active transportation, such as street trees, lighting, and bicycle lanes.

Corridors are areas along boulevards or major streets that provide connections between neighborhoods, employment and community centers. Corridors are identified based on opportunities for a mix of uses, including housing and commercial; access to public services and infrastructure; playing a central role within a community; or the potential for increased design, and improvements that promote living streets and active transportation, such as trees, lighting, and bicycle lanes.

**FIGURE 1.4: GENERAL PLAN OPPORTUNITY AREAS**



### **West Athens-Westmont Community Plan (1990)**

The West Athens-Westmont Community Plan was last updated 26 years ago in 1990. The policy document contains policies to preserve and improve the quality of life in the community, based on input received from local residents during the plan's preparation. The land use policies recommended infill development and redevelopment to improve the economic base, while precluding intensification of existing residential neighborhoods. In summary, the Community Plan policies supported the following:

- Mixed-use development, particularly near the Vermont/Athens Green Line Station, that bolstered economic activity and employment opportunities for the community
- The preservation of the existing residential neighborhood, and the renovation of deteriorated housing stock that provided safety and affordability for residents
- Economic incentives for small businesses that improved job opportunities for local residents.
- Multimodal transit infrastructure to support the transit dependent population
- Improve parks and open space in the neighborhood, while mitigating the impacts of environmental pollutants

Figure 1.5 shows the land use designations from the West Athens-Westmont Community Plan.

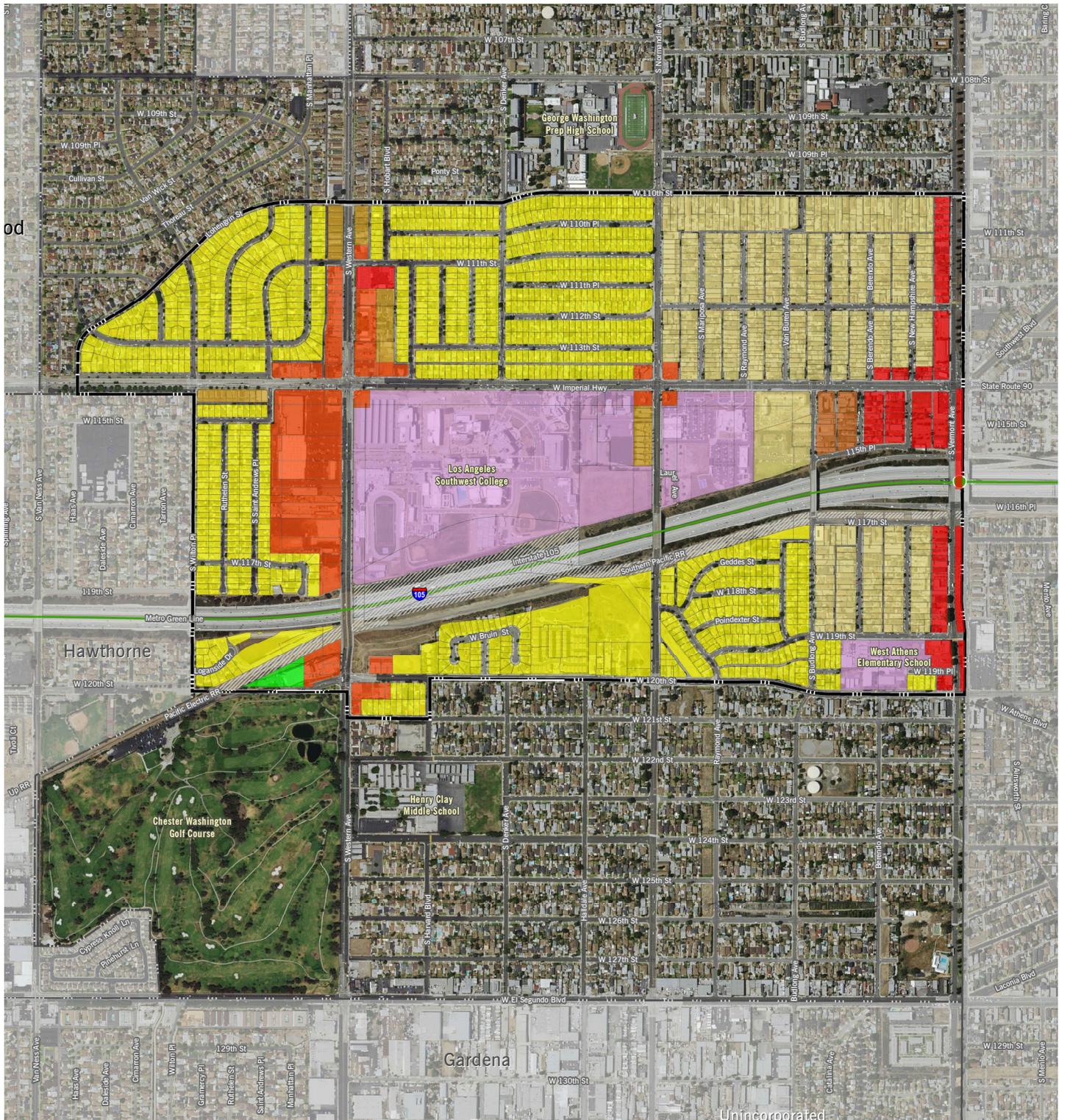
### **Los Angeles County Code of Ordinances**

Since the area is located in unincorporated territory, the zoning for West Athens-Westmont is currently subject to the provisions of Title 22, Planning and Zoning, of the Los Angeles Code of Ordinances (Zoning Code). The provisions of the Specific Plan shall prevail and supersede the applicable provisions of the County Code.

### **West Athens-Westmont Community Standards District**

The West Athens-Westmont Community Standards District is a zoning overlay district established to provide a means of implementing special development standards necessary to ensure the goals and policies of the West Athens-Westmont Community Plan. Property in the Community Standards District may be used for any purpose permitted in the basic zone, unless expressly noted otherwise. The Community Standards District restricts the height of all residential development (R-1, R-2, R-3-( )U) to a 35 foot, or two-story maximum, and requires all residences to maintain 50 percent landscaped front yards.

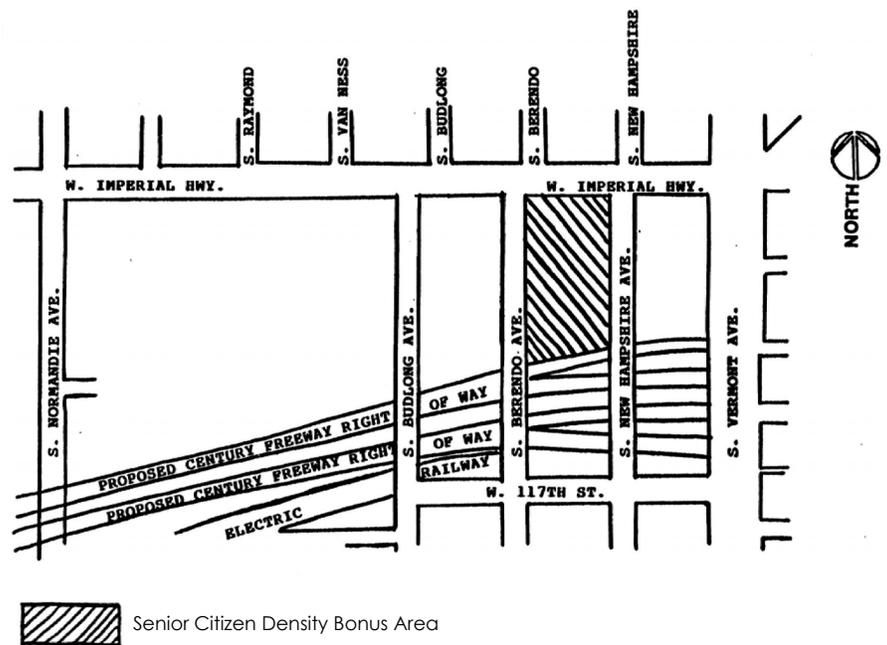
**FIGURE 1.5: COMMUNITY PLAN LAND USE**



|                        |                                  |                                    |                                |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| City Boundaries        | <b>Community Plan Land Use</b>   | RD 3.2 - Medium Density Bonus      | C.2 - Community Commercial     |
| Study Area             | RD 2.3 - Single Family Residence | SCD - Senior Citizen Density Bonus | PL.1 - Public/Quasi-Public Use |
| Vermont/Athens Station | RD 3.1 - Two Family Residence    | C.1 - Regional Commercial          | OS.1 - Recreation / Open Space |
| Metro Green Line       |                                  |                                    | TC - Transportation Corridor   |

Two area-specific development standards are listed in the Community Standards District, one of which is included in the Specific Plan area. The parcels bounded by New Hampshire Avenue, Berendo Avenue, Imperial Highway and the I-105 Freeway, as shown in Figure 1.6, could be developed with senior citizen housing at a maximum density of 50 dwelling units per net acre, pending a conditional use permit.

**FIGURE 1.6: CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN FOR THE WESTERN AVENUE COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR FOCUS AREA**



### Green Line TOD Ordinance (2005-2015)

The Board of Supervisors adopted the Green Line TOD Ordinance to Title 22, Planning and Zoning, as an overlay zone to promote revitalization and higher transit ridership. The ordinance incentivized mixed use development along Vermont Avenue and Imperial Highway, and required pedestrian-friendly development standards including ground floor retail, zero-ten-foot setbacks, transparent frontages, decorative accents, limited driveway access, and streetscape improvements. This ordinance was repealed with the adoption of the 2035 General Plan, which replaced the ordinance with the TOD Program that identified eleven TODs for the development of future specific plans.

### **Los Angeles Southwest College Master Plan**

The Los Angeles Southwest College Master Plan (2003) established a near- and long-term vision for expansion and improvements on the 64 acre campus. The plan provides for the development of new and updated academic, student support, and athletic facilities as well as landscape and pedestrian improvements. Proposition A and AA Bond Measures were committed to funding the improvements proposed in the 2003 Master Plan. The plan provided for the demolition of several academic buildings due to the presence of hazardous earthquake fault lines traversing the campus. In 2008 and 2010, the Master Plan was updated and guided future construction projects that utilized 100% buildout of the permitted development capacity. The college has completed all proposed construction projects to date. Los Angeles Southwest College is currently in the process of updating the Master Plan, expected to be completed by Summer 2017.

### **Metro First-Last Mile Strategic Plan**

#### **(Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority)**

The First-Last Mile Strategic Plan outlines a specific infrastructure improvement strategy that expands the reach of transit through the creation of the Metro Pathway, a network of streets that connect to transit and maximizes multi-modal benefits and efficiencies. The Metro Pathway is intended to facilitate easy, safe, and efficient access to the Metro system. The guidelines provided will serve as a resource to the Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan process to capture potential ridership and take full advantage of LA County's significant investments in the public transportation network.

### **Metro Green Line Station Access Plan, 2007**

#### **(Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority)**

The Green Line Station Access Plan assessed and recommended physical infrastructure and safety improvements to increase walking and bicycling to four selected Metro Green Line stations located in low-income neighborhoods in the South Bay, including the Vermont Green Line Station. Recommendations for the Vermont Station included improved coordination efforts among Metro, Caltrans, Union Pacific Railroad, County of Los Angeles and the City of Los Angeles to facilitate pedestrian infrastructure improvements and beautification projects along Vermont Avenue. Proposed physical improvements included:

- The removal of the barrier walls on 117th Street, and the installation of formal sidewalks that connect in and out of the cul-de-sac south of the station
- The reconfiguration of the sidewalks, travel lanes, and the central median along Vermont Avenue south of the station from the railroad tracks to El Segundo Boulevard.
- The addition of traffic calming measures, like curb extensions or general widening of sidewalks, at intersections adjacent to the Vermont station such as curb extensions or general widening of the sidewalks.
- The creation of a formal or informal bike route (such as with shared use lane arrows) on 117th Street from Vermont Avenue to Main Street and 118th Street from Main Street to Avalon Boulevard as a possible alternative to riding on Imperial Highway.
- The implementation of noise abatement measures for the station platform.
- Install clear signage to indicate the location of the station along major corridors within the station area.

### **Metro Joint Development Program: Policies and Process**

#### **(Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority)**

Metro's Joint Development Program outlines a strategy designed to secure the most appropriate private and/or public sector developments for Metro-owned properties. The policies aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase transit ridership by attracting new riders and increasing the number of transit trips generated from joint development projects. Within the planning area, Metro owns a surface park-and-ride lot that provides 155 parking spaces dedicated for transit patrons. This property may be a potential future joint development site, pending many factors include community will and market demand.

### **Los Angeles County TOD Access Study**

#### **(Southern California Association of Governments)**

The Los Angeles County TOD Access Study assessed the station access capacity and needs within nine proposed TODs in Los Angeles County to inform the creation of the TOD Program within the General Plan. This study recommended significant signalization and crosswalk improvements, as well as curb extensions and bulb-outs at the following intersections:

- 110th and Vermont Avenue
- 112th and Vermont Avenue

- Imperial Highway and Budlong Avenue
- Imperial Highway, Vermont Avenue, and Southwest Boulevard
- I-105 Westbound Ramps and Vermont Avenue
- I-105 Eastbound Ramps/116th Place and Vermont Avenue
- 120th Street and Vermont Avenue

**Vermont Green Line Station TOD Technical Assistance Panel Report  
(Urban Land Institute)**

DRP commissioned the Vermont Green Line Station TOD Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) Report in 2010 to generate innovative ideas and plans for future investment and development in the station area. The panel of experts proposed the following strategies for the study area:

- Develop a multimodal plaza that reduces the wide center median and expands the sidewalks to link the communities north and south of the freeway
- Improve the Vermont Avenue median by developing a linear park to create a sense of identity and place for the community
- Encourage higher density mixed use development on existing commercial nodes to create transit supportive commercial uses, while buffering and protecting the existing single family neighborhood
- Coordinate local community shuttles to increase linkages with the Vermont Metro Station

**Los Angeles Countywide Park Needs Assessment, 2016  
(LA County Department of Parks and Recreation)**

The County Department of Parks and Recreation conducted a comprehensive assessment of the park land and infrastructure needs and opportunities in the planning area. This study conducted significant community engagement to determine a prioritized list of park projects for the West Athens-Westmont community. According to the Park Needs Assessment, unincorporated West Athens-Westmont has a Very High park need. Public realm improvements, like the addition of parks and open space, could increase walkability of a neighborhood and improve connections to the transit station.



### **West-Athens Westmont Community Park and Recreation Plan, 2017 (LA County Department of Parks and Recreation)**

The Department of Parks and Recreation has completed the Community Parks and Recreation Plans to envision greener futures for the following six unincorporated communities in Los Angeles County: East Los Angeles, East Rancho Dominguez, Lennox, Walnut Park, West Athens-Westmont, and Willowbrook. As part of the public outreach process for the West Athens-Westmont Community Parks and Recreation Plan, residents expressed the need for a wide variety of recreational amenities, including the following: multi-use fields for sports; basketball courts; gymnasium; event center; exercise equipment; walking paths; community room; shaded areas to sit and play; security lighting; and community garden.



### **County of Los Angeles Bicycle Master Plan, 2012 (LA County Department of Public Works)**

This plan provides direction for improving mobility of bicyclists and encouraging more bicycle ridership within the County by expanding the existing network, connecting gaps, addressing constrained areas, and providing for greater local and regional connectivity. Bikeway improvements are addressed in Chapter 6 - Mobility.



## **1.2.3 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

As part of the planning process for the Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan, County staff from the Department of Regional Planning (DRP) facilitated community outreach events that helped shape the Specific Plan.

### **Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan Task Force**

The Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan Task Force was assembled by the DRP for the purpose of guiding the preparation of this plan. The complex challenges contained within the planning area requires a concentrated effort by a team of professionals and community liaisons to create change and improve the study area. Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning organized a Task Force of various county departments and nearby communities to act as a technical advisory committee to assist the planning process. The roles of the Task Force are as follows:

- Share information with the project consultant team, including other studies or planned projects occurring in the study area
- Act as a conduit for their respective organization, taking information back to their organizations for review and comments
- Respond to the project team's ideas and provide feedback
- Review draft documents, reports, and maps produced

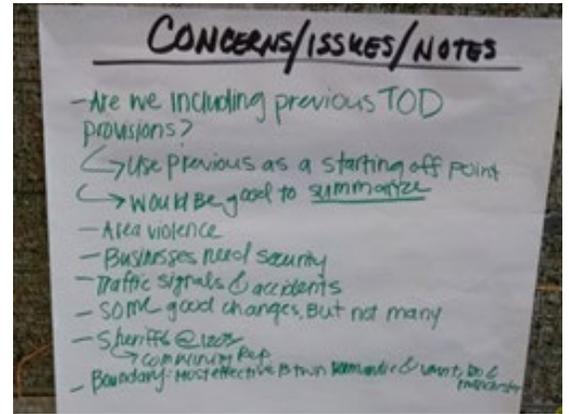
The Task Force consisted of Regional Planning staff; representatives from other County agencies, including the Departments of Public Health, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and the Community Development Commission; and other key stakeholders, including the Cities of Hawthorne and Los Angeles and LA Metro. Task Force members met quarterly throughout the Specific Plan preparation process to review key project products and provide input at major milestones of the project and on draft documents.

### Community Workshops

Two community workshops were held on April 7, 2016 and May 14, 2016 to introduce the policy objectives of the project and review the scope and existing assets within the project area.

Forty members of the community attended these meetings and provided insights and local knowledge about the challenges and opportunities in the community. The following themes were raised as important considerations:

- Security and safety with more coordination between the county and adjacent cities for enforcement presence and visibility
- The area around Los Angeles Southwest College should be more focused on the campus to create a "college town" atmosphere
- Business development to encourage and support new businesses, such as restaurants, as well protecting local businesses
- Green improvements including community gardens on underutilized or vacant parcels
- Mobility improvements including new sidewalks and lighting around LASC
- Clear communication of the plan throughout the planning process and take into consideration previous planning efforts



- Revitalization to encourage and promote the development of new affordable housing
- Avoid gentrification and tailor the plan to meet the needs of existing community members and the unique place that exists today

A follow-up workshop on October 6, 2016 was held and DRP staff reviewed and discussed the draft Vision Statement, Guiding Principles, Goals and Objectives for the Specific Plan as well as themes from the early workshops.

A final workshop on December 8, 2016 prior to release of the draft Specific Plan discussed the availability of a comprehensive existing conditions report, a refined Vision Statement, Guiding Principles, Goals and Objectives document, an Opportunity Areas map, Proposed Specific Plan Zone Descriptions and a Proposed Zoning Map all in draft form for discussion.

### **Stakeholder Outreach**

Throughout the planning process for the Specific Plan, Regional Planning staff met with and received input from the following community groups and stakeholders:

- West Athens-Westmont Task Force
- West Athens-Westmont Best Start
- Southwest Community Association
- LA County Second District Board Office
- West Athens Victory Garden
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
- LA Metro
- Los Angeles Southwest College
- West Athens residents
- Westmont residents

DRP staff attended meetings with the West Athens-Westmont Task Force on March 22, 2016 and the West Athens-Westmont Best Start on March 24, 2016 to announce the project and discuss scheduled public workshops to kick off the Specific Plan study effort. In addition, DRP staff hosted a table distributing project information and giveaways at the Weingart YMCA Wellness & Aquatic Center Healthy Kids Community Day on April 30, 2016, the 74th Street/Raymond Elementary School Fair on June 3, 2016, and the Juneteenth Community Celebration in Willowbrook on June 25, 2016.

DRP staff attended the following stakeholder meetings:

- Southwest Community Association on September 12, 2016 and March 13, 2017
- HawthorNEXT Specific Plan for the nearby Metro Green Line Crenshaw Station on March 21, 2016 and June 20, 2016
- Second District Empowerment Congress, Economic Development Committee on March 17, 2016
- Meetings on April 9, 2016 and April 23, 2016 with plot-owners at the West Athens Victory Garden, which is managed by the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust

## 1.3 SPECIFIC PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Specific Plan includes the following topics:

**Chapter 1 – Introduction:** Establishes the purpose and context for the Specific Plan, provides an overview of the planning process, and the Specific Plan's relationship to other relevant plans and programs.

**Chapter 2 – Vision, Goals, and Policies:** Outlines the vision for the West Athens-Westmont community and the overarching goals and policies for achieving the vision articulated in the Specific Plan.

**Chapter 3 – Land Use and Urban Design Framework:** Develops the recommendations for sub-area districts within the plan and includes conceptual plans for opportunity areas for infill development and revitalization.

**Chapter 4 - Regulating Code:** Permitted land uses, regulations, and development standards for each of the Specific Plan Zones are laid out. They include regulations for building height, density, parking, site configuration, building design, open space and landscaping requirements, and other design standards.

**Chapter 5 – Design Guidelines:** Design guidelines will promote aesthetically pleasing and viable, site-compatible development that supports the vision and guiding principles of the Specific Plan.

**Chapter 6 – Mobility:** Provides a summary of the proposed mobility and circulation plan for the Specific Plan area, including the vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and parking networks.

**Chapter 7 – Infrastructure:** Addresses the critical infrastructure requirements associated with the future development in the Specific Plan area, including water, sewer, stormwater, solid waste, and public services.

**Chapter 8 – Economic Development Strategy:** Highlights opportunities for economic development in the Specific Plan area and associated community benefits.

**Chapter 9 – Administration & Implementation:** Provides specific implementation and funding strategies for realizing the goals of the Specific Plan as well as describing review and approvals.

### 1.3.1 HOW TO USE THE SPECIFIC PLAN

Under California Law (Government Code § 65450 et seq.), cities and counties may adopt specific plans to develop policies, programs, and regulations to implement the jurisdiction's adopted general plan. The specific plan, therefore, serves as a bridge between the general plan and individual development projects.

Specific plans are similar to development zoning ordinances in that they establish implementation through the use of development regulations. However, unlike the County Code, the Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan is targeted to a specific planning area to allow for greater flexibility and specificity.

The Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan will be adopted by **ordinance and resolution** and is intended to be used by residents, business and property owners, developers, designers, County staff, and elected officials in the review of proposed development projects in the project area. The Specific Plan should be used in conjunction with the goals, policies, and regulations in the General Plan and County Code in order to guide users through the development review process. It is important to note that the Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan only establishes land use zones, land use regulations, and development standards. Any particular development proposals would occur through private investment following the adoption of the Specific Plan.

## **CHAPTER 2 – VISION, GOALS, AND POLICIES**

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan sets a vision that captures the West Athens-Westmont communities' key values and aspirations for the future. This chapter provides a detailed vision statement with guiding principles and sets specific goals and policies to help guide the communities in achieving that vision.

## 2.2 VISION

The Vision Statement paints a picture of how the planning area will develop for years to come. This is a vision for how the area will look 20 years from now as future development decisions and public improvements are guided by the Specific Plan.

### VISION STATEMENT

**The Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan area is connected, comfortable, and thriving. It offers a blend of commercial uses that serve the neighborhoods of West Athens and Westmont. Street improvements have made it easier and safer to access the transit station, employment centers, shopping areas, and the schools in the neighborhood. Improvements to the station and better connections into the community have increased ridership and reduced commuting by private automobiles. Residents are able to access affordable housing options that grant stability, security, and a sense of community. Pocket parks and other creative uses of underutilized open space address the need for additional green space and outdoor recreation.**

## 2.3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan establishes a framework for the future of the West Athens/Vermont Green Line Station area. Below are five guiding principles that have been established to create a more livable, sustainable, and accessible TOD station area.

- **Guiding Principle 1:** Promote uses in proximity to the transit station, along major streets, and at significant intersections that benefit from the economic opportunities afforded by the presence of the Green Line and major educational and public facilities. Development opportunities, particularly at the Vermont Green Line Station and Los Angeles Southwest College should offer housing, shopping, and healthy food options for residents and visitors.
- **Guiding Principle 2:** Improve the public right-of-way to increase mobility options for pedestrians and bicyclists. New sidewalks and bike facilities should create safe and secure connections to destinations that are integrated into the transit system.
- **Guiding Principle 3:** Enhance the sense of safety. Design and programmatic improvements that promote safety should contribute to a decrease in criminal activity.
- **Guiding Principle 4:** Ensure compatible development. New development respects and responds to the existing scale and density of the neighborhood, by accommodating growth near the station area and commercial nodes should respect and respond to the existing scale and density of adjacent neighborhoods.
- **Guiding Principle 5:** Improve the Vermont/Athens Green Line Station to make it more inviting to transit users. Exterior improvements to the west-bound station should create a comfortable and safe public place for transit users.

## 2.4 GOALS AND POLICIES

The following goals and policies will support a mix of land uses, create affordable housing options, build and maintain a diverse economy, and provide a variety of mobility options. These policies are aimed at increasing transit-ridership, improving community safety, and providing a cohesive sense of place.

### Goal 1: A Mix of Land Uses

- **Policy 1.1:** Encourage the adaptive reuse of buildings and appropriately scaled infill, mixed-use development in the planning area.



- **Policy 1.2:** Accommodate a variety of housing types to meet the needs of current and future residents. Provide for the development of a neighborhood commercial center that serves as a destination for LASC students, while accommodating residents and other stakeholders that live, work, and gather in the community.
- **Policy 1.3:** Focus new development and mixed use projects in areas adjacent to the Vermont/Athens Green Line Station and at the intersection of Imperial Highway and Western Avenue, as those areas have been identified as strategic opportunity areas.
- **Policy 1.4:** Promote a mix of uses and services to support the needs of families, youth, seniors, and a growing population.
- **Policy 1.5:** Support land uses and infrastructure improvements that can reduce the need for parking and promote alternative modes of transportation, such as transit, walking, or biking.

**Goal 2: Affordable Housing Options**

- **Policy 2.1:** Accommodate the development a mix of housing to meet the needs of current and future residents, including an equitable distribution of affordable housing through such means as value capture development.
- **Policy 2.2:** Allow for the integration of housing strategies such as Single Room Occupancy (SROs), units to alleviate the struggles of those suffering from homelessness.
- **Policy 2.3:** Support the conversion of “nuisance” motels into permanent supportive housing for the homeless population in the neighborhood.
- **Policy 2.4:** Streamline the process for residents to occupy second units or Accessory Dwelling Units as a means of creating new, safe housing units while respecting the look and scale of the single family neighborhoods.



**Goal 3: A Diverse Economy**

- **Policy 3.1:** Encourage employment-generating uses where possible by continuing to allow commercial uses along the major corridors.
- **Policy 3.2:** Encourage the expansion and retention of LASC, and supportive educational and service industries.
- **Policy 3.3:** Require that the street frontages of commercial uses are located and designed to foster active pedestrian activity supporting their economic activity.
- **Policy 3.4:** Work with LASC to offer job-training, continuing education courses, recreational opportunities and programs for local residents.



### Goal 4: A Variety of Mobility Options

- **Policy 4.1:** Develop a balanced, integrated, multi-modal transportation system that is efficient and safe with frequent service connecting to destinations, employment centers, and residential areas.
- **Policy 4.2:** Provide a variety of transportation choices that promote accessible alternatives to the automobile including walking, bicycling, and taking transit.
- **Policy 4.3:** Design streetscapes that are attractive and inviting by incorporating sufficient lighting, street trees/shade, landscaping, benches, and other amenities that are pleasant, offer visual stimulation, and promote activity for all users.
- **Policy 4.4:** Design sustainable and energy-efficient streetscapes with low-impact development strategies including sustainable stormwater practices, permeable paved surfaces, drought-tolerant plant species, and solar lighting fixtures.
- **Policy 4.5:** Support walking and biking as First and Last Mile solutions to transit by providing amenities such as bicycle parking, bike racks, street lights, seating, and wayfinding maps and signage.
- **Policy 4.6:** Provide a safe and comfortable pedestrian network linking the transit station with LASC, commercial centers, county facilities, and residential neighborhoods.
- **Policy 4.7:** Implement parking policies that encourage travel by public transit and other sustainable modes of transportation, such as priced parking, parking time limits, or prohibited on-street parking.
- **Policy 4.8:** Implement more accurate and flexible parking standards that reflect the parking demand for the area.

### Goal 5: A Safe and Healthy Community

- **Policy 5.1:** Incorporate more lighting and visibility along streets and pedestrian ways.
- **Policy 5.2:** Implement traffic calming features along main corridors to improve pedestrian safety.
- **Policy 5.3:** Support safer routes to schools and parks through increased signage, lighting, landscaping, and pedestrian connections around schools.
- **Policy 5.4:** Locate transit stops in areas that are active and visible to maximize personal security and safety of waiting transit riders.
- **Policy 5.5:** Improve community health by supporting policies and programs aimed at promoting physical fitness and increasing access to healthy foods.



- **Policy 5.6:** Promote the production and distribution of locally grown food such as by allowing farmers markets, food cooperatives, and public right-of-ways for urban agriculture.

**Goal 6: Quality Parks, Open Space, and Public Space**

**Infrastructure**

- **Policy 6.1:** Improve visibility and access to the Vermont Green Line Station through increased lighting, signage, public art, and street furniture.
- **Policy 6.2:** Redesign the west-side entrance of the Vermont/Athens Green Line Station with ample amenities and improve the comfort and safety of transit users.
- **Policy 6.3:** Reallocate excess portions of right-of-way, such as wider than necessary vehicular travel lanes, to design sidewalks and bicycle facilities for the comfort and safety of all users.
- **Policy 6.4:** Increase recreational opportunities for the community by creating neighborhood pocket parks and finding other creative uses for underutilized open space.



**CHAPTER 3 – LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK**

## **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan provides the County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning and other partners with a strategy to proactively plan for the future of the Vermont/West Athens station area and the surrounding West Athens-Westmont communities.

The West Athens-Westmont Community Plan and previous studies, along with the economic and market analysis has been taken into consideration to develop land use and urban design recommendations for districts within the Specific Plan area. The Specific Plan also takes into account input received during Task Force meetings and public outreach events.

## **3.2 SPECIFIC PLAN DISTRICTS**

### **3.2.1 LAND USE DISTRICTS OVERVIEW**

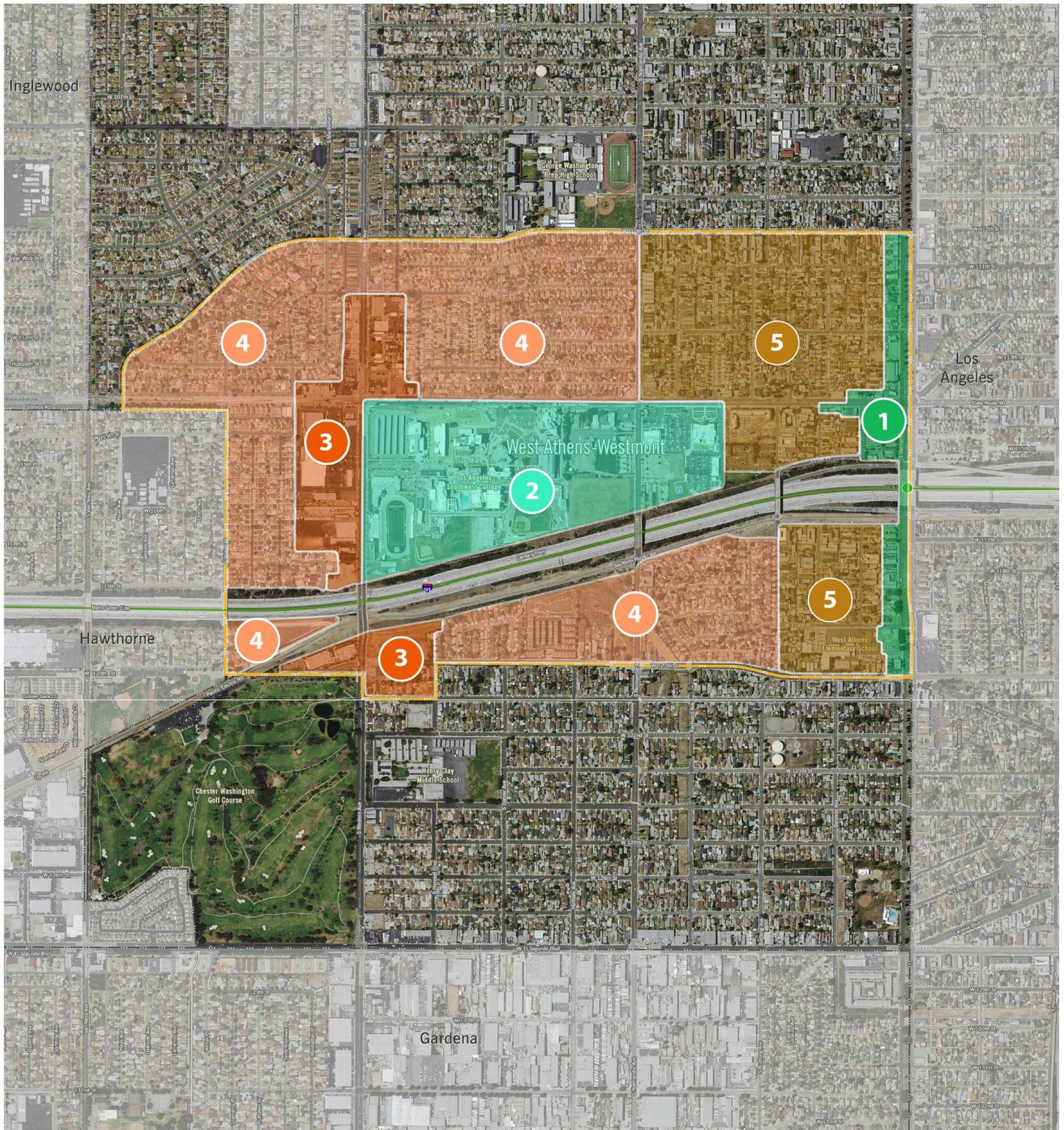
The Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan study area is broken down into five districts to better address community needs and issues within the Specific Plan area (Figure 3.2). Districts are defined as areas of a different scale and unique characteristics that may be the result of the location, quantity or relationship of different elements, such as land use patterns, density, architecture, age, etc.

An existing conditions summary for each district is shown in the chapter, along with a strategy for implementing the vision and goals of the Specific Plan. Opportunities for land use changes, urban design enhancements, and connectivity improvements utilizing a placemaking approach will help to implement the changes at the appropriate scale and location within each district.

### **3.2.2 CONCEPTUAL PLANS**

The conceptual plan drawings on the following pages depict desired building locations, streetscapes and the relationship between buildings and open spaces. A conceptual plan is a plan that portrays one example of how to implement the TOD Specific Plan recommendations. The concept plan is not intended as a defacto design project, yet rather to illustrate one alternative method of development consistent with the recommendations provided in this document. The exact location, scale and design character of future public and private improvements may differ from these plans and should

**FIGURE 3.1: LAND USE DISTRICTS MAP**



- 1 Vermont Station Corridor
- 2 Civic Center
- 3 Western Avenue Commercial
- 4 Single Family Residential
- 5 Multi-Family Residential

respond to scale, form, and architectural design per each block.

The Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan provides the County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning and other partners with a strategy to proactively plan for the future of the Vermont/West Athens station area and the surrounding West Athens-Westmont community. Key influences affecting land use and transportation decisions within this plan include community feedback, the West Athens-Westmont Community Plan, previous studies, and an economic and market analysis. The plan takes all of the aforementioned influences into consideration to ensure the final recommendations are fully informed and meet the vision established by the community.

### 3.2.3 VERMONT STATION DISTRICT

#### Existing Conditions

The Vermont Station District encompasses the properties fronting Vermont Avenue from 110th Street to 120th Street, including the Vermont Green Line Station and a center running median. The Vermont Green Line Station is located at the intersection of the I-105 Freeway, in the freeway median below street level. The station is accessed through a station entrance located on the Vermont Avenue bridge overpass.

Access to the Vermont Green Line Station is poorly indicated; it lacks significant signage, streetlights, and street furniture. The overall aesthetic of the station area is not welcoming to transit use, and likely deters potential riders from using the Metro. The station platform located in the freeway median exposes transit users to excessive noise and air pollution caused by the high volumes of vehicular traffic.

The west side of the corridor, north of Imperial Highway, is occupied by buildings that have a zero-foot setback from the street with an average of 75% street frontage, forming a consistent street wall along its length. The properties at the Vermont Avenue/Imperial Highway intersection have variable building setbacks that accommodate vehicular access, where surface parking is located between the building frontages and the street. Store signage and billboards add to the visual clutter of the intersection.

South of the Vermont/Athens Green Line Station, development transitions to deep rectangular parcels featuring properties with several buildings with varying setbacks, with few properties that accommodate vehicles. On the eastside of Vermont, a large parcel with a building oriented towards the adjacent surface parking lot provides poor definition of the public realm.

#### Specific Plan Strategy

Potential improvements of the Vermont/Athens Green Line Station should be improved to provide better access and visibility from Vermont Avenue. The improvements of the station would primarily be the responsibility of Metro, with Los Angeles County Public Works responsible for those in the public right-of-way. This should include the following:

- Upgrade the elevators, escalator and stairs to the Metro Green Line platforms



Existing Vermont/Athens Station signage.



Existing Metro park and ride lot has 155 parking spaces for transit patrons.



Existing view of transit station boarding area.

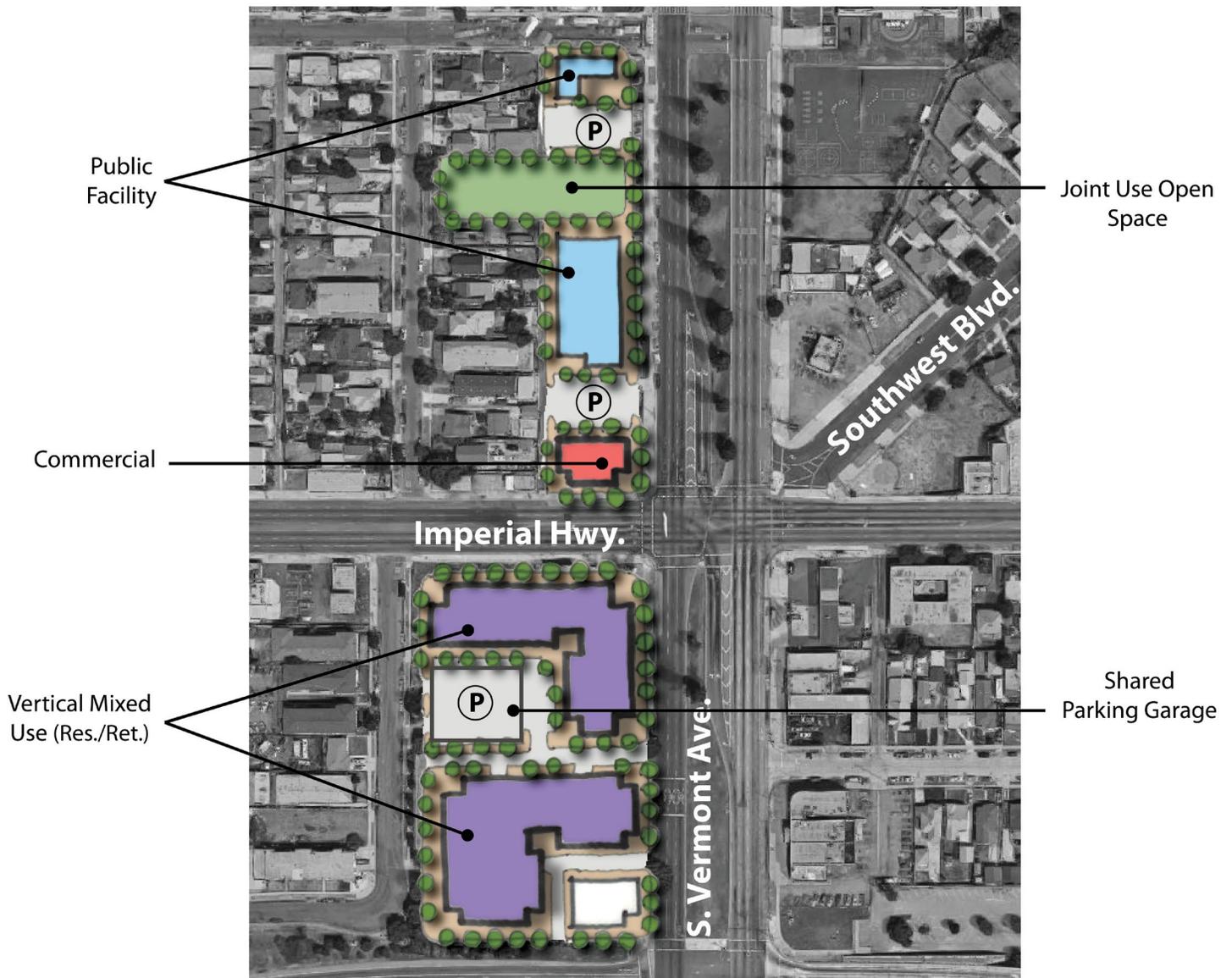
- Improve the west station entry to create a safer and more comfortable area for patrons
- Widen the sidewalk to allow a more prominent entrance into the station and to allow more streetscape amenities, benches, etc.
- Add new bus canopies along the bridge overpass for buses for a more comfortable passenger waiting area
- Improve lighting, landscaping and signage throughout area.

The Vermont Station Corridor District is intended to be developed over time as a transit-supportive environment, providing a higher-intensity mix of retail, office, restaurant uses and residential development in a compact, walkable setting. Residential housing include would include a range of multiple family residential housing types in a vertical mixed-use configuration. Vertical mixed use development along Vermont Avenue would help create a more pedestrian-oriented environment, with storefronts opening on to sidewalks, a consistent and engaging façade, and a dynamic retail mix.

Figure 3.2 illustrates potential new uses, buildings and open space in the Vermont Station Corridor District. Low-to mid-rise vertical mixed use buildings, integrating commercial and office/professional uses would include residential units above. One of the mixed use buildings is shown on the existing Metro Park and Ride lot site just south of Vermont Avenue and Imperial Highway would include structured parking to accommodate parking for residents, visitors, and transit riders.

A variety of open space opportunities, such as pocket parks and urban plazas could also be provided in this district. A conceptual design for an improved median on Vermont Avenue directly south of I-105 would provide a much-needed public benefit to the community. This improved landscaped median would help to create more usable public passive open space, increase pedestrian connectivity, and provide a traffic calming design feature to signal the cars on Vermont Avenue to slow down (See Figure 6.19). Improvements to the aesthetics, safety and connectivity of the station area would help attract more potential riders, which would increase demand for transit-adjacent amenities.

**FIGURE 3.2: CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN FOR MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT NEAR STATION**



 N NOT DRAWN TO SCALE



Highway intersection. These buildings are setback an average of 160 feet from Imperial Highway, separated by a surface parking lot that features well-landscaped parking medians. The buildings are oriented towards the surface parking lot. The buildings are single-story with institutional façade stylings.

### Specific Plan Strategy

Underutilized land owned by the County of Los Angeles at the corner of Imperial Highway and Normandie has the potential to accommodate additional community-serving uses. In order to achieve the long-term vision of the community, the Specific Plan will help facilitate the transition of the existing uses to higher intensity development in this area. Several buildings within this district would likely be retained or replaced, such as the Los Angeles County Probation Department and Sheriff's Department.

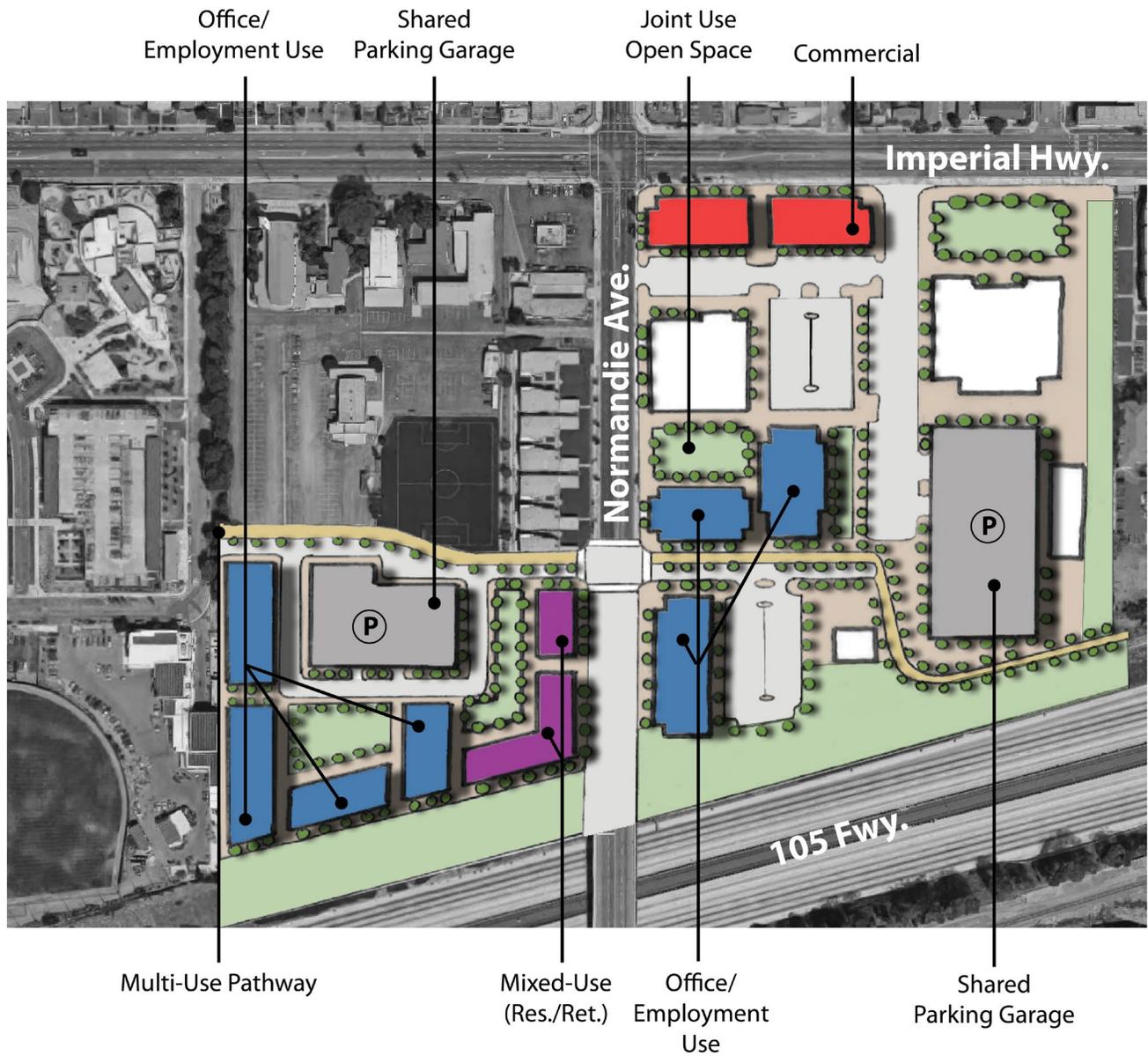
The Conceptual Site Plan illustrates how the Civic Center District could be developed under the development regulations and standards of the Specific Plan. Through lot consolidation and new development of a unified project, a district could be created with public institutional and non-civic uses, including commercial, residential, and public open space along Imperial Highway and Normandie. The Civic Center District could see a potential joint use housing development with a civic use, such as a recreation center or library.

Over time, the Civic Center District would integrate the existing civic uses and the multifamily residential areas to the east into a more a walkable, pedestrian-oriented district that is well connected to the Vermont/Athens Station. This would provide new housing options, including workforce or senior housing, in proximity to both employment uses and transit.



*Example of potential development in civic center zone.*

**FIGURE 3.3: CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN FOR THE CIVIC CENTER**



 **NOT DRAWN TO SCALE**



## 3.2.4 CIVIC CENTER DISTRICT

### Existing Conditions

The Civic Center District encompasses the properties located on the south side of the Imperial Highway between Western Avenue and Budlong Avenue. This district is occupied by institutional land uses that share similar building form, massing, architectural design, and relation to street fronts. Auto-oriented development is concentrated at the intersection of Imperial Highway and Normandie Avenue.

Imperial Highway is a wide arterial street with two travel lanes in each direction with turning lanes. A transit stop is located on Imperial Highway at Denker Avenue and features significant pedestrian amenities: a covered bus stop, street furniture, trash receptacles, and a tree canopy.

Los Angeles Southwest College (LASC) is located on about 64 acres in the center of the study area. Approximately 12,000 commuter students attend classes at LASC. Signage is prominent at the entrances, bold and large for vehicular traffic to view easily. The buildings are setback significantly from the street and are located in the center of campus. The campus stands apart from the scale and aesthetic of the surrounding community. It is an institutional superblock that anchors the West Athens-Westmont community.

The design of the campus supports pedestrian activity, with significant sidewalk connectivity between buildings, and plazas that serve as gathering places. Pedestrian access to the campus from the surrounding street network is limited to Denker Avenue to the north and Western Avenue to the west. One transit stop is located on the edge of the campus block at Denker and features significant pedestrian amenities: a covered bus stop, street furniture, trash receptacles, and a tree canopy.

Despite the college's proximity to the Vermont/Athens Green Line Station, the majority of students do not use the light rail line as their choice form of travel due to the distance to the station and lack of safe pedestrian facilities. Pedestrian infrastructure and safety improvements connecting the station to LASC would likely lead to increased ridership.

The Los Angeles County Probation Department and Sheriff's Department occupies three separate structures on multiple contiguous parcels totaling approximately 15 acres in the southeast corner of the Normandie Avenue and Imperial



*Existing Los Angeles County Sheriff's building along Imperial Highway.*

### 3.2.5 WESTERN AVENUE COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR DISTRICT

#### Existing Conditions

The Western Avenue Commercial Corridor district is located on the north side of the I-105 Freeway along Western Avenue extending to the project area's extent. This area was identified by the General Plan as an Opportunity Area for a Neighborhood Center. Neighborhood Centers are areas with opportunities suitable for community-serving uses, including commercial only and mixed-use development that combine housing with retail, service, office and other uses.

The commercial area is focused south of Imperial Highway along the east side of Western Avenue, with concentrations of development at the street intersection of Western and Imperial Highway. Properties north of Imperial Highway on the west side of Western Avenue are typical of neighborhood commercial built form with minimal setbacks from the sidewalk, creating an uninterrupted street wall between Imperial Highway and 111th Street.

Properties south of Imperial Highway on the west side of Western Avenue are generally automobile-oriented with buildings setback an average of 60 feet from the roadway. Surface parking lots are located between the building frontages and Western Avenue, and all the buildings face the parking lots. The buildings occupy a relatively low percentage of the street frontage and provide poor spatial definition to the public realm.

#### Specific Plan Strategy

This conceptual site plan illustrates how the Western Avenue Commercial Corridor District could be developed under the development standards of this Specific Plan. The properties on the west edge of Western Avenue, north of Imperial Highway, exhibit a development character similar to a neighborhood retail district. Infill commercial and mixed use development would respect the existing character of the district. New development, as well as the adaptive reuse of existing buildings, would promote more pedestrian activity along Western Avenue and Imperial Highway in this area.

Through lot consolidation and development of a unified project at higher densities in the Food For Less shopping center, this district offers the potential to create a mixed use district with new retail, residential, and employment opportunities for local residents and college students.



Existing view of LASC entrance from Western Avenue.



Existing Food4Less shopping center.

**FIGURE 3.4: CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN FOR THE WESTERN AVENUE COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR FOCUS AREA**



## 3.2.6 SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

### Existing Conditions

The Single-Family Residential District encompasses the residential neighborhoods north of the I-105 Freeway/west of Normandie Avenue and south of the I-105 Freeway/west of Budlong Avenue. These were largely developed between 1947 and 1955, apart from the two gated subdivision developments located to the north of 120th Street between Western and Normandie that were constructed in 1987 and 2012.

The older single-family homes are typical of post-war housing in Southern California; single-story, stucco-covered minimalist, traditional, or ranch style homes with gable-styled pitched roofs. These homes were constructed as tract housing developments, likely by various land-owning real estate developers. The homes are mostly single-story structures setback 15 feet from the right-of-way, oriented towards the street, and accessed by a driveway. Many of these single-family homes have accessory units located to the rear of the property, used for storage space or additional living space.

### Specific Plan Strategy

The single-family neighborhoods are established communities and will continue to consist of single-family homes and duplexes. The Specific Plan aims to preserve and enhance these uses. Adding additional living quarters as Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) or limiting the requirements for constructing second units would help increase the density of the single-family residential areas surrounding the station.

Accessory dwelling units provide an additional housing resource for families including multi-generational households. An accessory dwelling unit includes an interior connection to the remainder of the residence and may also have a separate exterior entrance. An accessory dwelling unit typically includes a living room with a kitchenette (microwave and refrigerator but no stove), a bathroom, and one of more bedrooms. Accessory dwelling units are permitted in the Residential Zone districts in the Specific Plan (see Chapter 4).

In addition, proposed new residential housing types such as single-family attached houses (townhouses) would be appropriate through infill development in the Single-Family District, as can be seen in Figure 3.7.



Existing single family housing.



Existing single family housing.

**FIGURE 3.5: CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN OF ATTACHED RESIDENTIAL**



## 3.2.7 MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

### Existing Conditions

The Multi-Family Residential District encompasses residential neighborhoods north of the I-105/east of Normandie Avenue and south of the I-105/east of Budlong Avenue. These neighborhoods mainly consist of multi-family duplexes, triplexes, and apartment buildings, built between 1920 and 1960.

These homes and apartments vary significantly in size, orientation, setback, lot coverage, materials, and design. Most structures are separated from the public realm by a security fence, ranging in size and design material. The average front-yard setback is 12 feet, and side-yard setback averages 5 feet. Street-facing structures and side-yard facing structures feature pedestrian walkways that link to the sidewalk, as the majority of on-site tenant parking is accessed via the alley network.

### Specific Plan Strategy

The Specific Plan provides opportunities for development of housing with multiple units, as either apartments or condominiums. The intent is to promote desirable transit-supportive densities close to transit and other services. The development standards promote a variety of housing types given the range of lot sizes and configurations. It is intended to encourage the development of affordable and workforce housing to serve the needs of the West Athens-Westmont communities, as well as Los Angeles Southwest College.



*Existing multi-family housing.*



*Example photo of potential multi-family housing.*

**FIGURE 3.6: CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN OF ATTACHED RESIDENTIAL**



 **NOT DRAWN TO SCALE**



**CHAPTER 4 – REGULATING CODE**

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

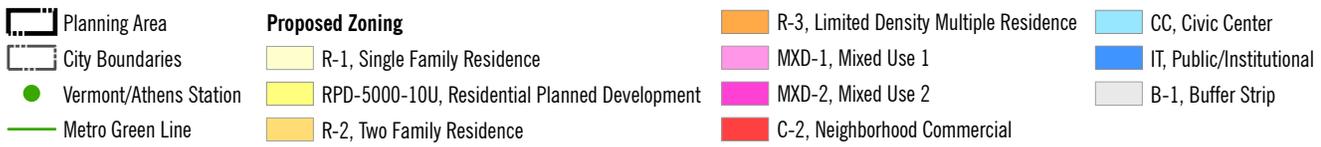
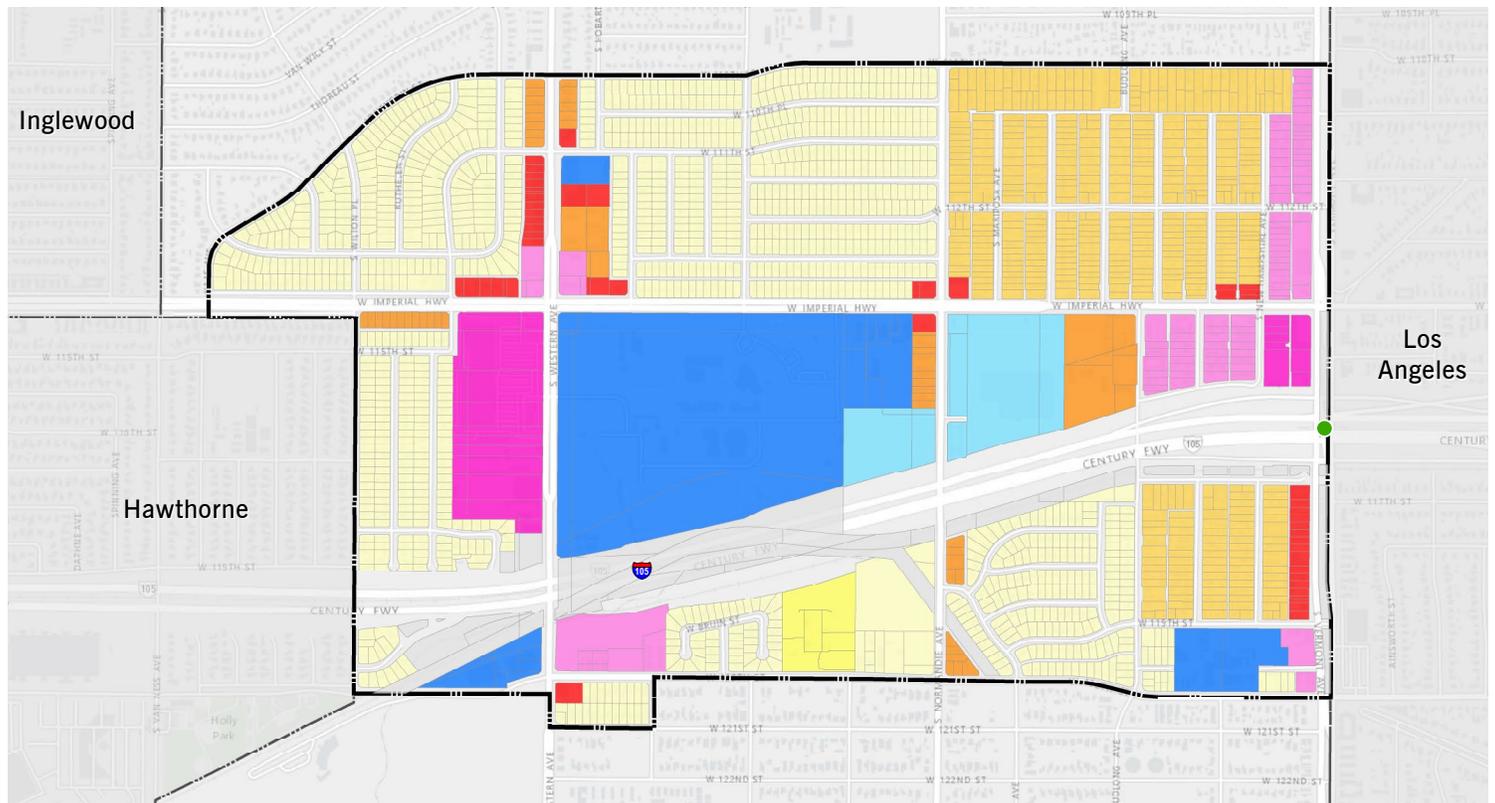
This Regulating Code is intended to achieve development consistent with the vision defined for the future of the West Athens-Westmont community. The standards in this section regulate the development of buildings, streets, and public spaces with a focus on the physical, built environment including the relationship between the private and public realms. Certain standards may apply only to specific planning areas or streets, and are indicated as such in this section.

Development regulations and standards established in this Specific Plan are tailored to each zoning designation based on its location, adjacent streets, and intended use, as shown in Figure 4.1, Regulating Plan. The Specific Plan's capacity for housing units and non-residential buildings are based on the standards established in the Regulating Plan as shown in Table 4.1.

The Regulating Code below includes development standards for each applicable planning area, as follows:

- Use regulations, which provide permitted and conditionally permitted uses in the Specific Plan area. Those uses not specifically listed are subject to a determination by the Director of Regional Planning (Director) as either permitted, permitted subject to a conditional use permit, or prohibited consistent with the intent of the planning area and the Specific Plan. Decisions of the Director are appealable to the Planning Commission.
- Built form standards, which address specific aspects of site development, including building mass and placement adjacent to streets and other buildings.
- Building frontage standards, which identify permitted frontage types per applicable street. Frontages dictate the relationship between the street (back of right-of-way) and the façade of the ground-floor of the building.
- Open space standards, which address the required amount of private and public open space for residential and nonresidential developments.
- Landscape standards, which address the placement and type of vegetation, for residential and nonresidential developments.
- Other design standards addressing streetscape elements such as lighting, furnishings, public art, outdoor dining, etc.

**FIGURE 4.1: REGULATING PLAN**



**TABLE 4.1: DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL OF SPECIFIC PLAN**

| Zoning Description              | Acres      | % Of Total    | Estimated Buildout |                          |
|---------------------------------|------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
|                                 |            |               | Residential        | Non-Residential          |
| Residential 1                   | 167        | 35.3%         | 1,278 units        | 0 sq. ft.                |
| Residential 2                   | 80         | 16.8%         | 1,432 units        | 0 sq. ft.                |
| Residential 3                   | 18         | 3.9%          | 478 units          | 0 sq. ft.                |
| Residential Planned Development | 7          | 1.4%          | 67 units           | 0 sq. ft.                |
| Neighborhood Commercial         | 11         | 2.3%          | 0 units            | 164,363 sq. ft.          |
| Mixed Use Development 1         | 27         | 5.6%          | 536 units          | 574,580 sq. ft.          |
| Mixed Use Development 2         | 23         | 4.9%          | 559 units          | 1,217,935 sq. ft.        |
| Civic Center                    | 22         | 4.7%          | 168 units          | 731,244 sq. ft.          |
| Public / Institutional          | 83         | 17.5%         | 0 units            | 786,925 sq. ft.          |
| Buffer Strip                    | 35         | 7.4%          | 0 units            | 0 sq. ft.                |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>473</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>4,518 units</b> | <b>3,475,047 sq. ft.</b> |

Note: Right-of-way not included in total acres.

## **4.2 LAND USE APPLICABILITY**

The provisions of this Regulating Code are applicable to all parcels in the Specific Plan area and shall supersede the provisions in the Los Angeles County Code of Ordinances (Code). The County shall administer the provisions of this Regulating Code in accordance with the State of California Government Code and the Los Angeles County General Plan and Code of Ordinances. Where this Regulating Code differs from provisions in the Code, the provisions herein shall prevail. If the Specific Plan is silent on an issue, the provisions of the Code shall be consulted.

Design standards and guidelines in Chapter 5, Design Guidelines, of this Specific Plan shall be used in concert with the development standards in the Regulating Code. No construction, modification, addition, placement, or installation of any building or structure shall occur, nor shall any new use commence on any lot, on or after the effective date of this Specific Plan, except in conformity with the provisions of this Specific Plan.

## **4.3 SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS**

The following special requirements shall be required for all zoning designations where applicable.

### **4.3.1 HOUSING ELEMENT REQUIREMENTS**

California law requires that cities and counties zone land to encourage and facilitate their fair share of housing growth—referred to as the regional housing needs assessment (RHNA). The preparation of this Specific Plan provides the County with the opportunity to create new affordable units to accommodate the needs of the residents. Based on the County of Los Angeles 2014 Housing Element, there is remaining development potential that can be accommodated in the Specific Plan area and could help facilitate lower income residential development. The remaining development potential does not include additional potential density bonus units. Development within the Specific Plan area may, but is not necessarily anticipated to, occur during the Housing Element planning period.

### **4.3.2 ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS**

On January 1, 2017, California State Senate Bill 1069, Assembly Bill 2299, and Assembly Bill 2406 went into effect making several changes to address barriers to the development of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and expanding capacity for their development in zones where housing is allowed by right. An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is a secondary dwelling unit with complete independent living facilities for one or more persons and generally takes three forms: detached (separate from the primary structure), attached (connected to the primary structure), and repurposed existing space (space such as a master bedroom within the primary residence converted into an independent living unit). ADU's are regulated by State Law, until the County adopts its own ADU ordinance, which is currently being drafted at time of this Plan.

### **4.3.3 TRANSITIONAL HOUSING**

Transitional housing, as defined in California Government Code 65582(h), is housing configured as rental housing developments, but operated under program requirements that call for the termination of assistance and recirculation of the assisted unit to another eligible program recipient at some predetermined future point in time, which shall be no less than six (6) months from beginning of assistance. Transitional housing shall be considered a residential use of property, and may be subject only to those restrictions that apply to other residential dwellings of the same type (single-family, multi-family) in the same zone.

### **4.3.4 EXISTING STRUCTURES**

Reuse of existing structures shall comply with applicable codes, including but not limited to the California Building Code as amended by the County of Los Angeles, State of California Title 24 Access Compliance (handicapped provisions), and requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Demolition of existing structures may be required by the County of Los Angeles to be undertaken under the following conditions:

- Where information determines the need for demolition to eliminate public health and safety risk.
- To accommodate the completion of public improvements.

- To properly implement the permanent development intent of the plan and site in which the structure is located.

Prior to the issuance of use and occupancy permits, adaptive reuse and renovations of existing buildings, open space areas, and other site improvements shall be aesthetically upgraded through architectural and landscape improvements. Such improvements may include, but are not limited to:

- Upgraded treatments to building façades, including the use of plaster, brick, stone, and/or other approved materials.
- Updated building facade painting.
- Upgraded window types and window treatments
- Upgraded roofing materials and roof overhangs.
- Decorative treatment of all exposed site walls with new materials.
- Enhancement of the design and placement of private patios and balconies.
- Upgraded appearance of entrances, including doorways, walkways, driveways, and decorative paving.
- Extensive planting of trees and shrubs throughout the site, including parking areas and common open space areas.
- Improved landscape design of front yards and common areas and/or along building perimeters and entries.
- Improvements to common recreational areas including provision of shelters, lighting, and refurbishing of facilities.
- Addition of pedestrian amenities including paths, benches, shade trees, trash receptacles, drinking fountains, lighting, and decorative paving.
- Addition of bicycle facilities including bike racks/and storage areas.
- Creation of project entryways through signage and landscape design, as applicable.
- Creation of signage program for building identification and directional signs.
- Upgraded and consistent signage, including tenant project identification, addressing, and directional signs.
- Enhanced lighting scheme for building entrances, common areas, paths, and parking areas.
- Application of defensible space techniques in landscaping and lighting to deter criminal activity.

### 4.3.5 WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT RESIDENTIAL 1 (R-1) ZONE

#### Purpose and Intent

The Single-Family Residence (R-1) Zone is applied to preserve the scale and form of the area's existing single-family residential neighborhoods. The R-1 Zone provides primarily for single-family detached homes, up to 9 dwelling units per acre. Within this zone are larger lots that may be suitable for accessory dwelling units and other habitable accessory structures, as defined in Chapter 22.18 of Title 22.

#### Development Potential for R-1 Zone

- Total Developable Area: 167 acres
- Residential: 1,278 units
- Non-Residential: None

#### Development Standards for R-1 Zone

Standards for the Residential 1 Zone shall be consistent with Chapter 22.18, R-1 Single Family Residence Zone, unless otherwise specified in this section and Chapter 5, Design Guidelines, below. The following development standards regulate new site and building development by establishing standards for intensity, building height, open space, and other elements. The development standards accommodate the single-family residential uses anticipated in this zone. They are intended to preserve established single-family neighborhoods, improve connectivity, and provide screening and landscape design along roadways.



Existing housing in R-1 Zone.

**TABLE 4.2: SITE DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS FOR R-1 ZONE**

| Standard                            | Minimum             | Maximum              |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Density</b>                      |                     |                      |
| Dwelling Units per Acre             | 1 du/ac             | 9 du/ac              |
| Lot Size (Sq. Ft. per Lot)          | 5,000 sq. ft.       | None                 |
| <b>Building Setback<sup>1</sup></b> |                     |                      |
| Front Setback                       | 15 feet             | None                 |
| Side Setback                        | 5 feet <sup>2</sup> | None                 |
| Rear Setback                        | 10 feet             | None                 |
| <b>Building Height</b>              |                     |                      |
| Floors                              | None                | 2 Stories            |
| Building Height                     | None                | 35 feet <sup>3</sup> |

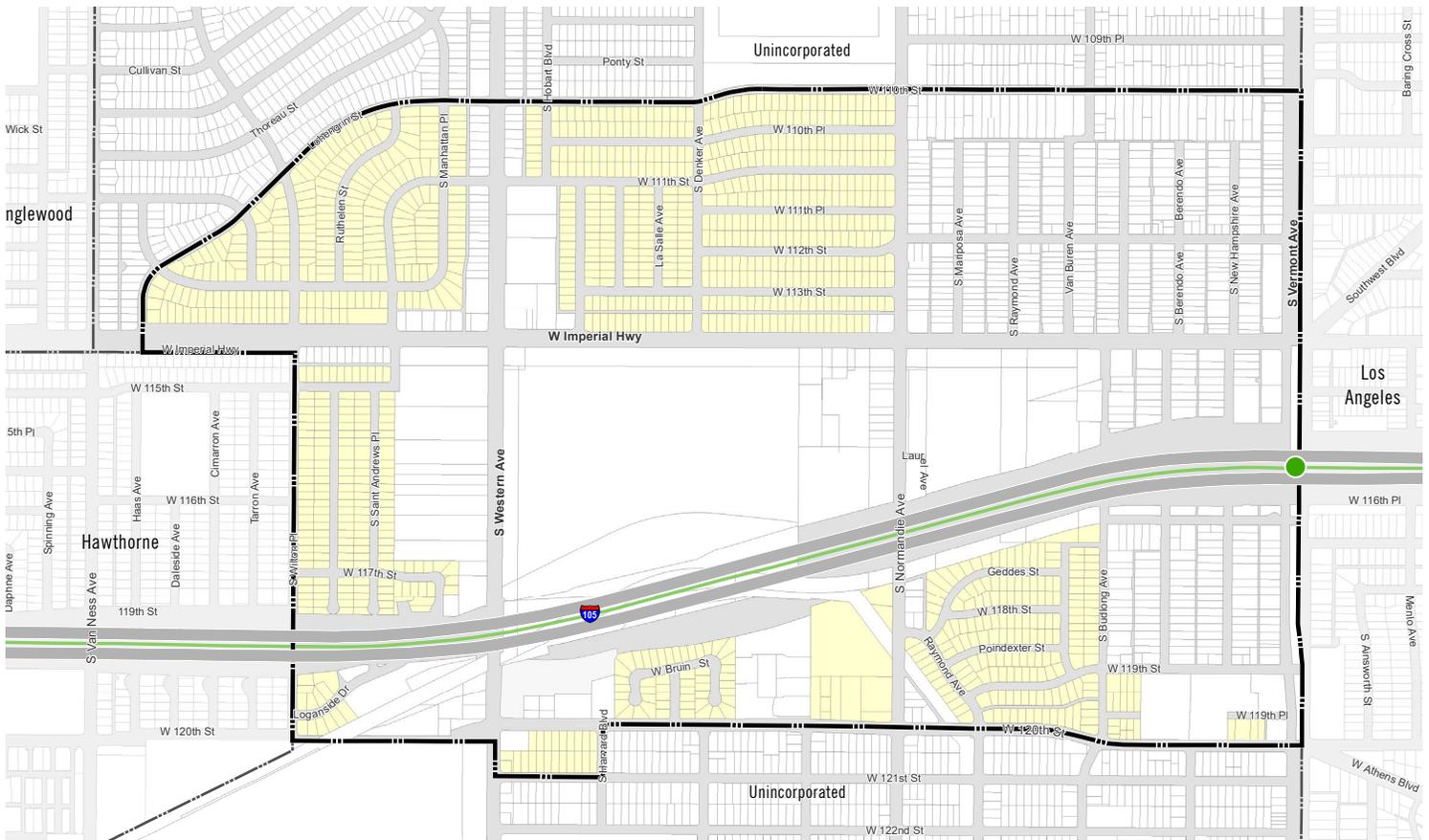
Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Where a lot or parcel of land is less than 50 feet in width, such lot or parcel of land may have interior side yards equal to 10 percent of the average width, but in no event less than three feet in width.

<sup>2</sup> Minimum landscaped areas are required within building setback areas per Landscaping section on the next page; and Chapter 6.0, Mobility and Public Realm Strategy. Building setbacks from streets are measured from back of rights-of-way.

<sup>3</sup> Building height shall be determined from the finished grade within 5 feet of the structure to the highest point of the structure, excluding chimneys and rooftop antennas.

**FIGURE 4.2: R-1 ZONE MAP**



### **Landscaping**

- Front Yard Landscaping: With the exception of the required paved driveway and walkway, all areas within the street-fronting yard shall be landscaped and maintained.
- Where possible, existing trees shall be maintained.
- Drought-tolerant landscaping requirements shall be consistent with Los Angeles County Code, Title 31, Green Building Standards, Section 4.106.5.

### **Fences**

- If street fencing is required for security reasons, wrought-iron-style fences that do not obscure views to or from the public right-of-way may be permitted up to five feet high in front yards and corner side yards, subject to Director's review.
- Fence design may include a combination solid wall and open fencing as long as over 50 percent of the wall is transparent.
- Barbed wire and chain-link fencing are prohibited.

### **Utility and Mechanical Equipment**

- All utility and mechanical equipment shall be placed in locations that are not exposed to view from the street or shall be screened from view. Satellite dishes shall be located away from public view.
- Screening elements shall be an integral part of the building's design.

### **Use Regulations for R-1 Zone**

The land use regulations define permitted, conditionally permitted, and prohibited uses in the West Athens-Westmont Residential 1 Zone, as shown in Table 4.3, Use Regulations for R-1 Zone. Use regulations shall remain consistent with Chapter 22.18, R-1 Single Family Residence Zone, unless otherwise specified in this section.

Accessory uses and structures are permitted when associated with, and subordinate to, a permitted use on the same site, and would include:

- Carport
- Garage/garage conversions
- Home occupation subject to provisions of Los Angeles County Code Chapter 22.140.290
- Patio cover/trellis
- Swimming pool, spa, jacuzzi

**TABLE 4.3: USE REGULATIONS FOR R-1 ZONE**

| Use  | Regulation  |
|--|-------------|
| <b>Residential</b>   |             |
| Farmworker dwelling units  | Prohibited  |
| Farmworker housing complexes   | Prohibited  |
| Mobile home units  | Prohibited  |
| Condominium and cooperative  | Conditional |
| Multiple-family dwelling unit (apartment)  | Prohibited  |
| <b>Public / Institutional</b>  |             |
| School, public or private community college/educational campus                   | Conditional |
| Parks and playgrounds with appurtenant facilities found in conjunction therewith | Permitted   |
| Residential care facility for six or fewer persons                               | Conditional |
| <b>Commercial</b>  |             |
| Community care facility for six or fewer persons                                 | Conditional |
| Juvenile halls   | Prohibited  |

Notes: This table only reflects uses that are different from Chapter 22.18 R-1 Single Family Residential Zone.

### 4.3.6 WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT RESIDENTIAL 2 (R-2) ZONE

The Two Family Residence (R-2) Zone is applied to provide opportunities for medium density housing containing multiple units up to 18 dwelling units per acre. The development standards for this designation promote a variety of attached housing types, including courtyard housing, row homes, townhomes, and garden apartments, to provide a variety of housing options.

#### Development Potential for R-2 Zone

- Total Developable Area: 80 acres
- Residential: 1,432 units
- Non-Residential: None

#### Development Standards for R-2 Zone

Standards for the Residential 2 Zone shall remain consistent with Chapter 22.18, R-2 Two-Family Residence Zone, unless otherwise specified in this section and Chapter 5, Design Guidelines, below. The following development standards regulate new site and building development by establishing standards for intensity, building height, open space, and other elements. Housing types that can be accommodated in this zone include single-family, duplexes, and townhouses. The standards are intended to preserve established residential character, improve connectivity, and provide screening and landscape design along roadways.



*Example of attached housing that may be allowed in the R-2 Zone.*

**TABLE 4.4: SITE DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS FOR R-2 ZONE**

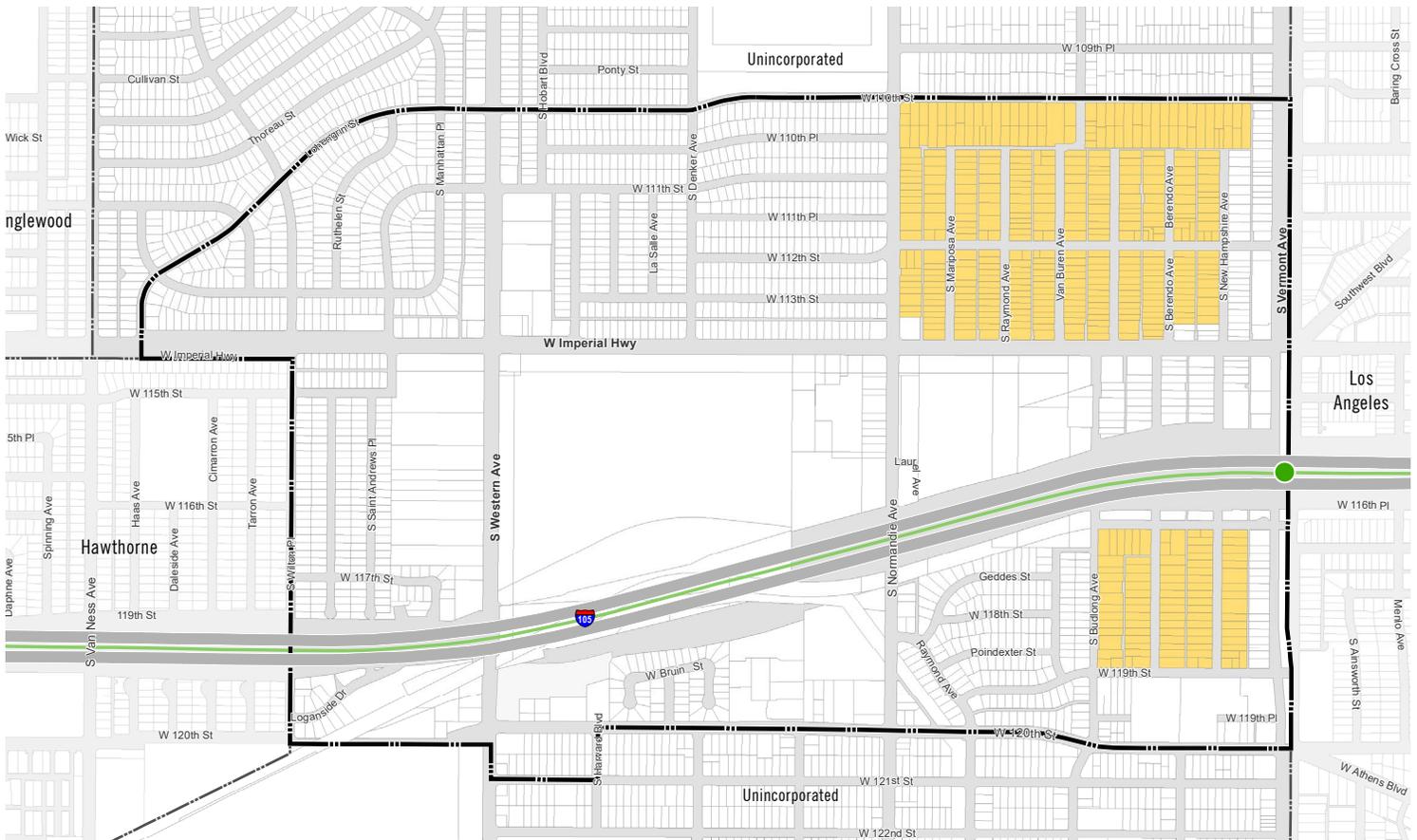
| Standard                   | Minimum             | Maximum              |
|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Density</b>             |                     |                      |
| Dwelling Units per Acre    | 10 du/ac            | 18 du/ac             |
| Lot Size (Sq. Ft. per Lot) | 5,000 sq. ft.       | None                 |
| Lot Size per Unit          | 2,500 sq. ft.       | None                 |
| <b>Building Setback</b>    |                     |                      |
| Front Setback              | 15 feet             | None                 |
| Side Setback               | 5 feet <sup>1</sup> | None                 |
| Rear Setback               | 10 feet             | None                 |
| <b>Building Height</b>     |                     |                      |
| Floors                     | None                | 2 Stories            |
| Building Height            | None                | 35 feet <sup>2</sup> |

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Four stories maximum for stand-alone residential configuration, five stories allowed in a mixed use configuration.

<sup>2</sup> Height excludes signs, chimneys, and rooftop antennas.

**FIGURE 4.3: R-2 ZONE MAP**



**Landscaping**

- Front Yard Landscaping: With the exception of the required paved driveway and walkway, all areas within the street-fronting yard shall be landscaped and maintained.
- Where possible, existing trees shall be maintained.
- Drought-tolerant landscaping requirements shall be consistent with Los Angeles County Code, Title 31, Green Building Standards, Section 4.106.5.

**Fences**

- If street fencing is required for security reasons, wrought-iron-style fences that do not obscure views may be permitted up to five feet high in front yards and corner side yards, subject to Director's review.
- Fence design may include a combination solid wall and open fencing as long as over 50 percent of the wall is transparent.
- Barbed wire and chain-link fencing are prohibited.

**Utility and Mechanical Equipment**

- All utility and mechanical equipment shall be placed in locations that are not exposed to view from the street or shall be screened from view. Satellite dishes shall be located away from public view.
- Screening elements shall be an integral part of the building's design.

**Use Regulations for R-2 Zone**

The land use regulations define permitted, conditionally permitted, and prohibited uses in West Athens-Westmont Residential 2 Zone, as shown in Table 4.5, Use Regulations for R-2 Zone. Use regulations shall be consistent with Chapter 22.18, R-2 Two-Family Residence Zone, unless otherwise specified in this section.

Transitional housing," as defined in California Government Code 65582(h), is housing configured as rental housing developments, but operated under program requirements that call for the termination of assistance and recirculation of the assisted unit to another eligible program recipient at some predetermined future point in time, which shall be no less than six (6) months from beginning of assistance. Transitional housing shall be considered a residential use of property, and may be subject only to those restrictions that apply to other residential dwellings of the same type (single-family, multi-family) in the same zone.

Accessory uses and structures are permitted when associated with, and subordinate to, a permitted use on the same site, and would include:

- Carport
- Garage/garage conversions
- Home occupation subject to provisions of Los Angeles County Code Chapter 22.44.1490
- Patio cover/trellis
- Swimming pool, spa, jacuzzi

**TABLE 4.5: USE REGULATIONS FOR R-2 ZONE**

| Use  | Regulation  |
|--|-------------|
| <b>Residential</b>   |             |
| Farmworker dwelling units  | Prohibited  |
| Farmworker housing complexes   | Prohibited  |
| Mobile home units  | Prohibited  |
| Condominium and cooperative  | Conditional |
| Multiple-family dwelling unit (apartment)  | Prohibited  |
| <b>Public / Institutional</b>  |             |
| School, public or private community college/educational campus                               | Conditional |
| Parks and playgrounds with appurtenant facilities customarily found in conjunction therewith | Permitted   |
| Residential care facility for six or fewer persons   | Conditional |
| <b>Commercial</b>  |             |
| Community care facility for six or fewer persons   | Conditional |
| Juvenile halls   | Prohibited  |

Notes: This table only reflects use that are different from Chapter 22.18 R-2 Two Family Residence Zone.

### 4.3.7 WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT RESIDENTIAL 3 (R-3) ZONE

The West Athens-Westmont Residential 3 (R-3) Zone accommodates developments containing higher density multiple units, either apartments or condominiums, up to 30 dwelling units per acre. The intent is to promote desirable medium to higher density residential close to transit and other services. The development standards for this designation promote a variety of product types given the range of lot sizes and configurations. This designation is also intended to encourage the development of affordable and workforce housing to serve the needs of the West Athens-Westmont community, and especially associated with Los Angeles Southwest College.

#### Development Potential for R-3 Zone

- Total Developable Area: 18 acres
- Residential: 478 units
- Non-Residential: None

#### Development Standards for R-3 Zone

Standards for the West Athens-Westmont Residential 3 Zone shall remain consistent with Chapter 22.18, R-3 Limited Density Multiple Residence Zone, unless otherwise specified in this section and Chapter 5, Design Guidelines, below. The following development standards regulate new site and building development by establishing standards for development intensity, building height, open space, and other site design elements. The standards accommodate the single- and multi-family residential uses anticipated in this zone. They are intended to buffer established residential neighborhoods from non-residential uses, provide screening and landscape design along roadways, and provide connectivity.



Existing multi-family housing in R-3 Zone.

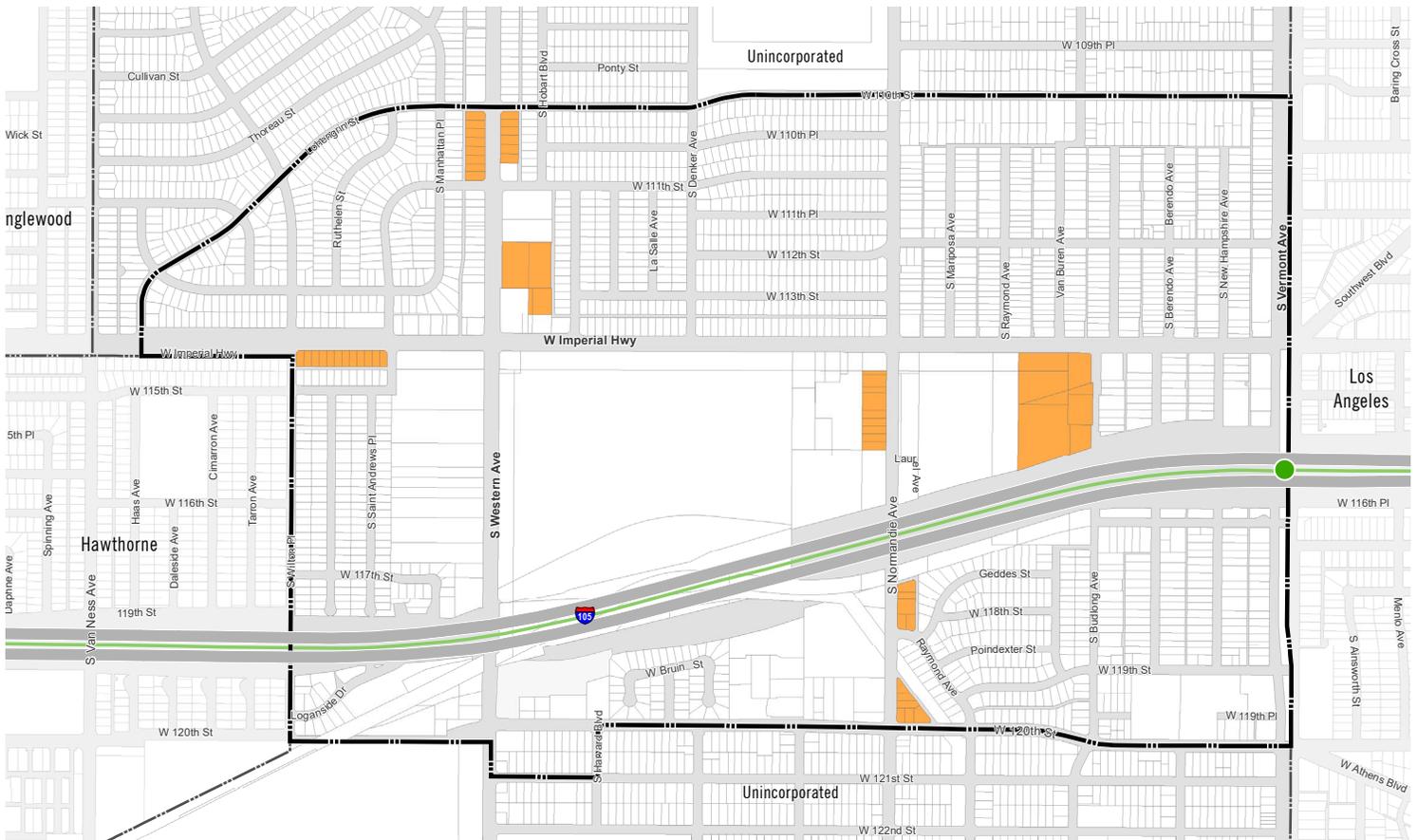
**TABLE 4.6: SITE DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS FOR R-3 ZONE**

| Standard   | Minimum       | Maximum              |
|--|---------------|----------------------|
| <b>Density</b>   |               |                      |
| Dwelling Units per Acre  | 18 du/ac      | 30 du/ac             |
| Lot Size (Sq. Ft. per Lot)   | 5,000 sq. ft. | None                 |
| <b>Building Setback</b>  |               |                      |
| Front Setback  | 10 feet       | None                 |
| Side Setback   | 5 feet        | None                 |
| Rear Setback   | 10 feet       | None                 |
| Interior Yard Adjacent to Single-Family Residential (Side or Rear) | 15 ft.        | None                 |
| <b>Building Height</b>   |               |                      |
| Floors   | None          | 3 Stories            |
| Building Height  | None          | 40 feet <sup>1</sup> |

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Building height shall be determined from the finished grade within 5 feet of the structure to the highest point of the structure, excluding chimneys and rooftop antennas.

**FIGURE 4.4: R-3 ZONE MAP**



## Landscaping

- Drought-tolerant landscaping requirements shall be consistent with Los Angeles County Code, Title 31, Green Building Standards, Section 4.106.5.
- Required Open Space: 200 sq. ft./du for multi-family developments for common recreational-leisure areas, private areas, or a combination of both.
  - » Minimum dimension for private areas is 7 feet.
  - » Minimum dimension for common areas is 20 feet.
  - » Side and rear yards may be included in the calculation of open space, but not required front yard set-back area.
  - » Open space areas shall have no parking, driveway, or right-of-way encroachments.
  - » All common areas shall be improved as either active or passive facilities, with landscaping or hardscape elements designed to serve the residents of the project. All common areas shall be developed and professionally maintained in accordance with approved landscape and irrigation plans.
  - » Pedestrian walkways within a project shall be a minimum of four (4) feet in width.
  - » Private usable open space shall be contiguous to the residential units served and screened for privacy.
  - » Courtyard internal to a project, or enclosed on at least three (3) sides, shall have a minimum of width of forty (40) feet.
- Front Yard Landscaping: With the exception of the required paved driveway and walkway, all areas within the street-fronting yard shall be landscaped and maintained.
- Where possible, existing trees shall be maintained.

## Fences

- If street fencing is required for security reasons, wrought-iron-style fences that do not obscure views may be permitted up to five feet high in front yards and corner side yards, subject to Director's review.
- Fence design may include a combination solid wall and open fencing as long as over 50 percent of the wall is transparent.
- Barbed wire and chain-link fencing are prohibited.

### **Utility and Mechanical equipment:**

- All utility and mechanical equipment shall be placed in locations that are not exposed to view from the street or shall be screened from view. Satellite dishes shall be located away from public view.
- Screening elements shall be an integral part of the building's design.

### **Circulation and Parking**

- Bicycle and pedestrian circulation facilities shall provide connections to surrounding uses in the plan area and to regional bicycle facilities where applicable.
- On-site Parking shall not occupy more than 30% of any linear street frontage.
- Parking shall not be located in the street-fronting yard area.
- Carports shall be architecturally compatible with the design of the main structures in the project.
- Parking structures shall be architecturally integrated with the project design and shall be screened from view at street level by architectural detailing, façade treatment, artwork, landscaping, or similar visual features to enhance the street façade.
- Use of asphalt for paving driveways and walkways is prohibited.

### **Use Regulations for R-3 Zone**

The land use regulations define permitted uses within West Athens-Westmont Residential 3 Zone as shown in Table 4.7, Use Regulations for R-3 Zone. Use regulations shall remain consistent with Chapter 22.18, R-3 Limited Multiple Density Residence Zone, unless otherwise specified in this section.

Transitional housing," as defined in California Government Code 65582(h), is housing configured as rental housing developments, but operated under program requirements that call for the termination of assistance and recirculation of the assisted unit to another eligible program recipient at some predetermined future point in time, which shall be no less than six (6) months from beginning of assistance. Transitional housing shall be considered a residential use of property, and may be subject only to those restrictions that apply to other residential dwellings of the same type (single-family, multi-family) in the same zone.

Accessory uses and structures are permitted when customarily associated with, and subordinate to, a permitted use on the same site.

**TABLE 4.7: USE REGULATIONS FOR R-3 ZONE**

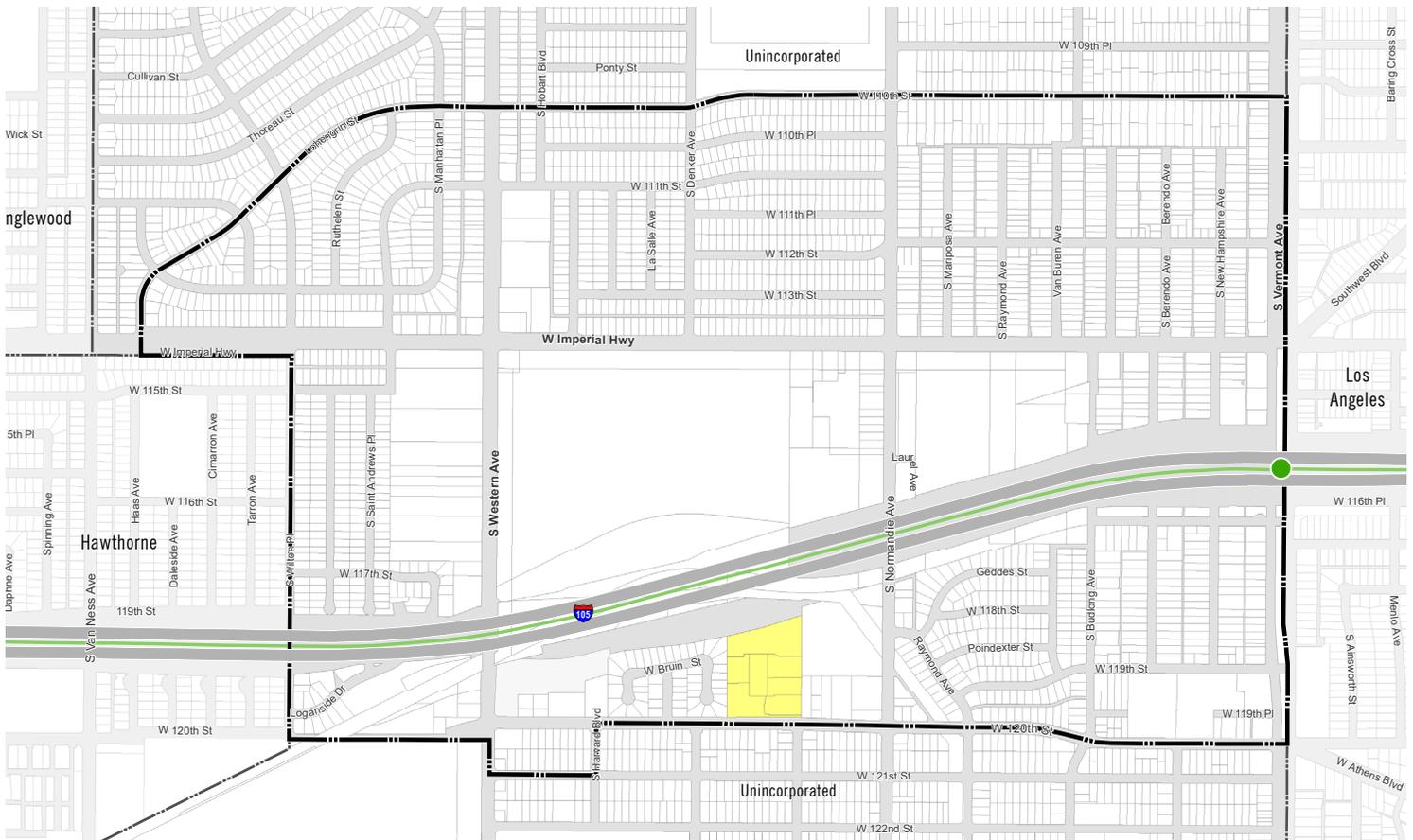
| Use   | Regulation  |
|---|-------------|
| <b>Residential</b>  |             |
| Single-family detached and attached dwelling units  | Permitted   |
| Multi-family dwelling unit  | Permitted   |
| Patio home  | Conditional |
| Farmworker dwelling units   | Prohibited  |
| Farmworker housing complexes  | Prohibited  |
| Mobile home units   | Prohibited  |
| <b>Public / Institutional</b>   |             |
| School, public or private community college/educational campus                            | Conditional |
| Churches and other religious institutions   | Conditional |
| Nursery school or childcare center  | Conditional |
| Parks, playgrounds with appurtenant facilities customarily found in conjunction therewith | Permitted   |
| <b>Commercial</b>   |             |
| Community care facility for six or fewer persons  | Permitted   |
| Condominium and cooperative   | Permitted   |
| Convalescent hospital   | Conditional |
| Family care home, foster home, or group home for six or fewer persons                     | Permitted   |
| Golf courses  | Prohibited  |

Notes: This table only reflects use that are different from Chapter 22.18 of Title 22.

### 4.3.8 RPD-5000-10U-RESIDENTIAL PLANNED DEVELOPMENT (RPD-5000-10U)

Consistent with Section 22.18.050, RPD-5000-10U, Title 22, the RPD-5000-10U zone is established to promote residential amenities beyond those expected under conventional single-family development, to achieve greater flexibility in design, to encourage well-planned neighborhoods through creative and imaginative planning as a unit, and to provide for appropriate use of land that is sufficiently unique in its physical characteristics or other circumstances to warrant special methods of development.

**FIGURE 4.5: RPD ZONE MAP**





*Residential development in the RPD Zone.*

### **Development Potential for RPD-5000-10U Zone**

- Total Developable Area: 7 acres
- Residential: 67 units
- Non-Residential: None

### **Development Standards for RPD-5000-10U Zone**

Standards for the RPD-5000-10U Zone shall remain consistent with Chapter 22.18, RPD-5000-10U, of the Los Angeles County Code.

### **Use Regulations for RPD-5000-10U Zone**

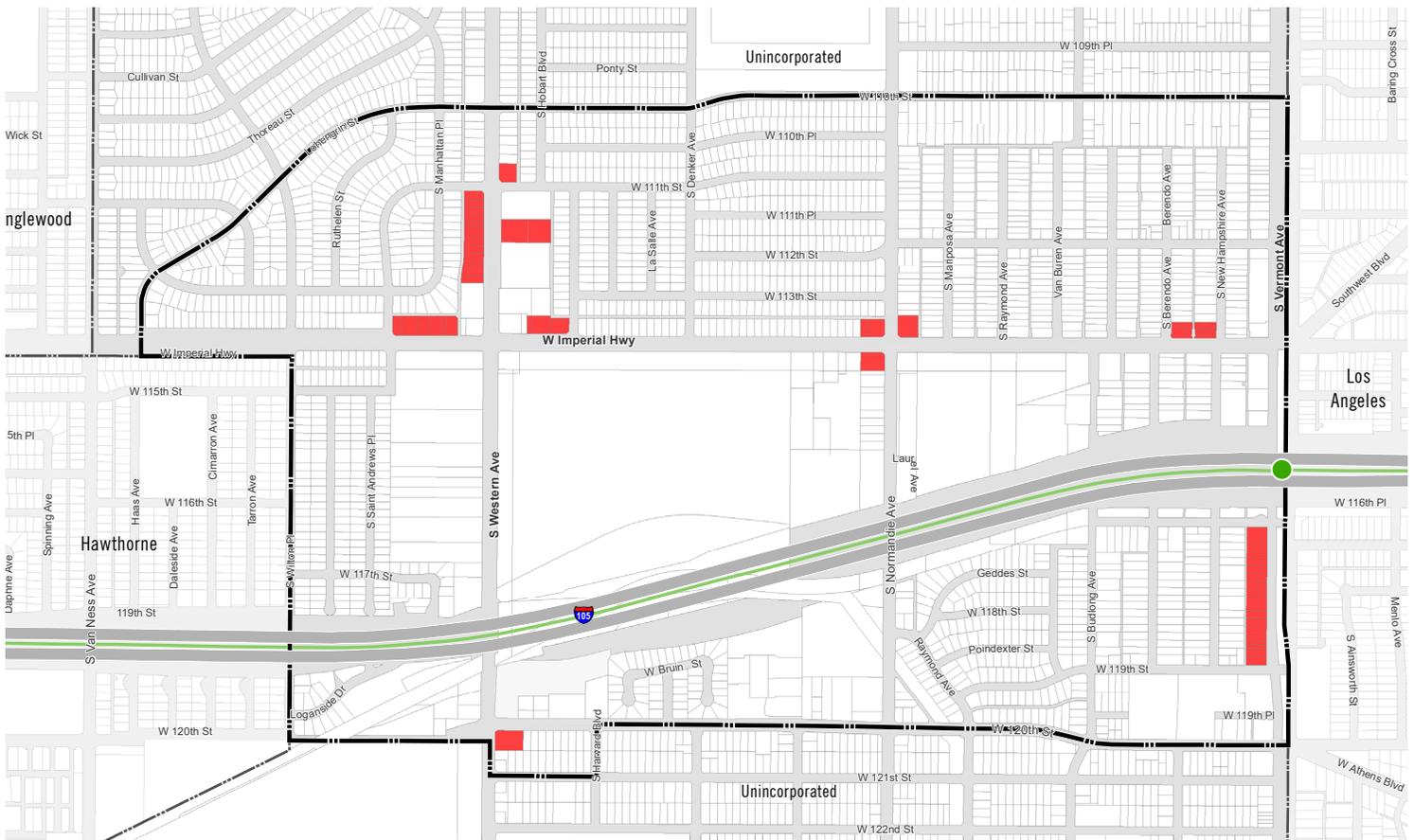
The land use regulations that define permitted, conditionally permitted, and prohibited uses within RPD-5000-10U Zone shall remain consistent with Chapter 22.18.

Accessory uses and structures are permitted when customarily associated with, and subordinate to, a permitted use on the same site.

### 4.3.9 NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL (C-2) ZONE

The Neighborhood Commercial Zone is established to serve the local retail and service needs of the residents, employees, and students in West Athens-Westmont. This zone is suited for small scale retail service developments and restaurants that serve the daily needs of adjacent neighborhoods. The intent is to maintain and promote the continuation of the neighborhood-service commercial uses.

**FIGURE 4.6: C-2 ZONE MAP**





Example of development in the C-2 Zone.

### Development Potential for C-2 Zone

- Total Developable Area: 11 acres
- Residential: None
- Non-Residential: 164,363 sq. ft.

### Development Standards for C-2 Zone

Standards for the Neighborhood Commercial Zone shall remain consistent with Chapter 22.20.030, C-2 Neighborhood Business Zone, unless otherwise specified in this section and Chapter 5, Design Guidelines, below. The following development standards regulate new site and building development by establishing standards for intensity, building height, open space, and other elements. They have been developed to accommodate the neighborhood-serving retail and service uses anticipated. They are intended to maintain and promote the continuation of the neighborhood-service commercial center along the northern edge of the study area at Vermont Ave.

**TABLE 4.8: SITE DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS FOR C-2 ZONE**

| Standard   | Minimum | Maximum              |
|--|---------|----------------------|
| <b>Floor Area Ratio</b>                              |         |                      |
| All Buildings  | None    | 0.35                 |
| <b>Building Setback</b>                              |         |                      |
| Vermont Ave.   | 10 ft.  | None                 |
| Imperial Hwy   | 10 ft.  | None                 |
| Western Ave.   | 10 ft.  | None                 |
| Normandie Ave.                                       | 10 ft.  | None                 |
| Interior Yard (Side or Rear)                         | 0 ft.   | None                 |
| Interior Yard Adjacent to Residential (Side or Rear) | 15 ft.  | None                 |
| <b>Building Height</b>                               |         |                      |
| Building Height                                      | None    | 45 feet <sup>1</sup> |

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Building height shall be determined from the finished grade within 5 feet of the structure to the highest point of the structure, excluding chimneys and rooftop antennas.

### **Landscaping**

- A minimum of 20 percent of the lot shall be landscaped with trees, ground cover, shrubbery and flowers, and shall be continuously maintained in good condition. Parking lot landscaping does not count toward this requirement. Pedestrian walkways, plazas, and outdoor dining areas may be developed in the landscape area. Setback areas may be included this requirement.
- Part 20 Chapter 22.126 establishes site tree requirements, including those for surface parking lots.
- Sites with multiple buildings shall be clustered to the extent possible with shared outdoor spaces and with direct pedestrian access between uses, from parking areas, and from the street.
- Buildings shall be oriented to the street.

### **Circulation and Parking**

- Bicycle and pedestrian circulation facilities shall provide connections to surrounding uses and to the plan area networks.

### **Use Regulations for C-2 Zone**

The land use regulations define permitted, conditionally permitted, and prohibited uses within the Neighborhood Commercial zone, as shown in Table 4.9, Use Regulations for C-2 Zone. Use regulations for the Neighborhood Commercial Zone shall remain consistent with Chapter 22.20, C-2 Neighborhood Business, unless otherwise specified in this section.

Accessory uses and structure are permitted when customarily associated with, and subordinate to, a permitted use on the same site.

**TABLE 4.9: USE REGULATIONS FOR C-2 ZONE**

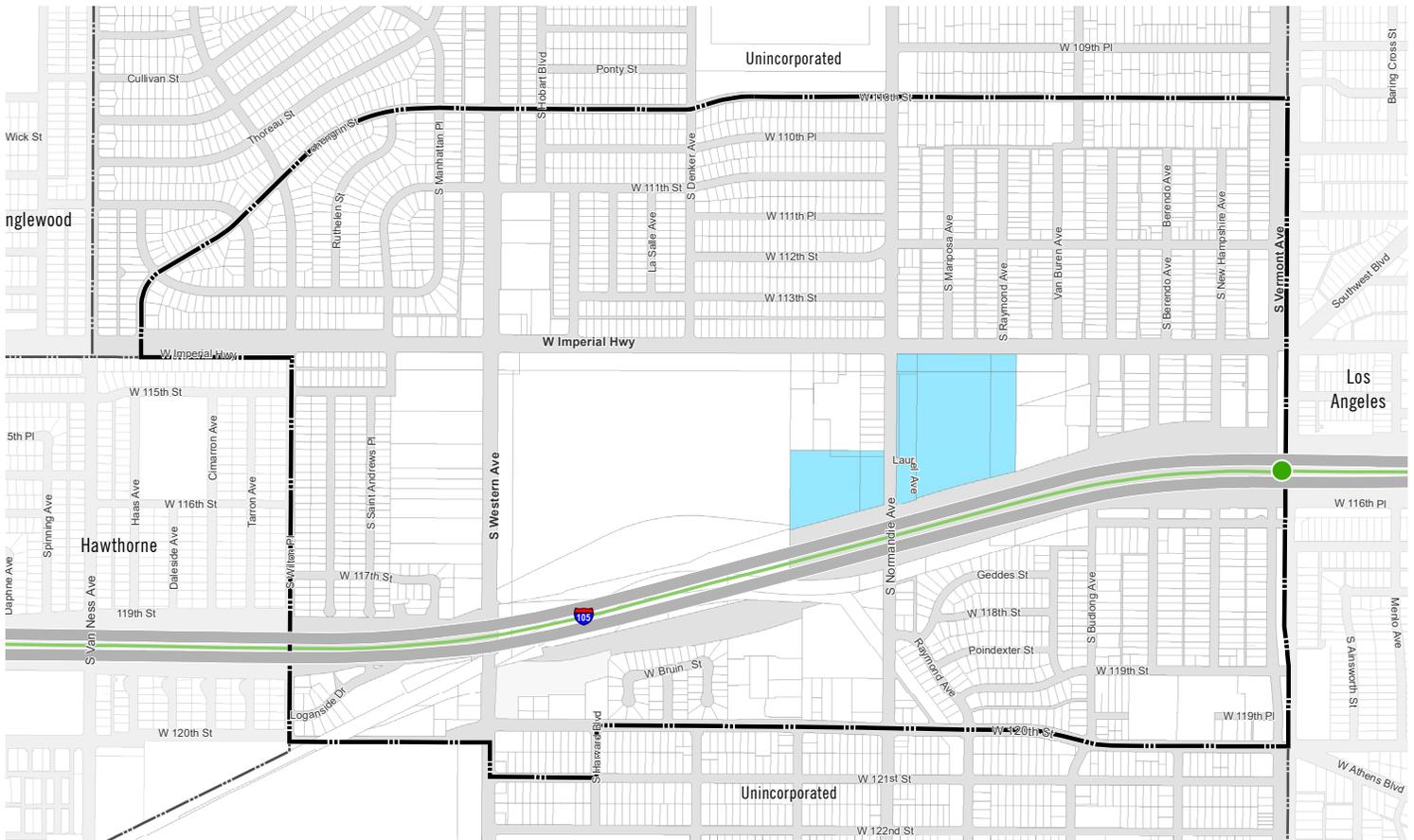
| <b>Use</b>  | <b>Regulation</b> |
|---|-------------------|
| <b>Residential</b>  |                   |
| Mixed use developments  | Conditional       |
| Multi-family dwelling unit  | Prohibited        |
| <b>Public / Institutional</b>   |                   |
| School, private or public   | Conditional       |
| Residential care facility for six or fewer persons                    | Prohibited        |
| Family care home, foster home, or group home for six or fewer persons | Prohibited        |
| Fire station  | Conditional       |
| <b>Service Commercial</b>   |                   |
| Acute care/rehabilitation uses  | Conditional       |
| Automobile service station  | Prohibited        |
| Automobile battery and repair shops                                   | Prohibited        |
| Amusement rides and devices   | Prohibited        |
| Bulk recycling vending  | Prohibited        |
| Car wash  | Prohibited        |
| Tobacco shops   | Prohibited        |
| Union halls   | Prohibited        |

Notes: This table only reflects use that are different from Section 22.20.

### 4.3.10 CIVIC CENTER (CC) ZONE

The West Athens-Westmont Civic Center Zone is intended to allow opportunities for non-civic uses, including commercial, multifamily residential uses and public open space, where appropriate, to occur with civic uses located along Imperial Highway. The Civic Center Zone allows multifamily residential uses, as an incentive for the development of affordable housing. Over time, the Civic Center Zone will integrate the existing civic uses and the multifamily residential areas to the east into a walkable, safe district that is well connected to the nearby Vermont Station. Residential uses are intended to provide for housing options and affordability, particularly workforce housing, and dwelling units in proximity to both employment uses and transit.

**FIGURE 4.7: CC ZONE MAP**



### Development Potential for CC Zone

- Total Developable Area: 22 acres
- Residential: 168 units
- Non-Residential: 731,244 sq. ft.

### Development Standards for CC Zone

The site configuration regulations included in Table 4.10 regulate new site and building development by establishing standards for intensity, building height, open space, and other elements. They have been developed to accommodate the mix of public institutional, office, commercial, office, and other uses anticipated.

**TABLE 4.10: SITE DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS FOR CC ZONE**

| Standard                      | Minimum | Maximum                  |
|-------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|
| <b>Density</b>                |         |                          |
| Residential                   | None    | 30 du/ac                 |
| <b>Floor Area Ratio (FAR)</b> |         |                          |
| All Buildings                 | None    | 1.0                      |
| <b>Building Setback</b>       |         |                          |
| Imperial Hwy.                 | 5 ft.   | None                     |
| Normandie Ave.                | 5 ft.   | None                     |
| Internal Roadway              | 15 ft.  | None                     |
| <b>Building Height</b>        |         |                          |
| Floors                        | 1       | 3/4 stories <sup>1</sup> |
| Building Height               | None    | 50 ft <sup>2</sup>       |
| Floors                        | None    | 3 stories                |
| Building Height               | None    | 45 ft <sup>2</sup>       |

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Three stories maximum for stand-alone residential configuration, four stories allowed in a mixed-use configuration.

<sup>2</sup> Height excludes signs, chimneys, and rooftop antennas.

Site, building, and landscaping design standards are as follows:

**Landscaping**

- Large façades/walls of structures within 20 ft. of a roadway, such as parking structures, operations plant, or other buildings, shall be screened with trees, large shrubs, and other vegetation to soften and buffer massing from the surrounding community.
- Landscaping along Imperial Highway shall be permeable and open to the street to allow visibility; encourage access and connectivity to/from the walking path along Imperial Highway and LA Southwest College campus; and create an attractive, inviting pedestrian experience.

**Circulation and Parking**

- Bicycle and pedestrian circulation facilities shall provide connections to surrounding uses and to existing/planned pedestrian and bicycle networks.

**Utility and Mechanical Equipment**

- All utility and mechanical equipment shall be placed in locations that are not exposed to view from the street or shall be screened from view. Satellite dishes shall be located away from public view.
- Screening elements shall be an integral part of the building's design.

**Use Regulations for CC Zone**

The land use regulations define permitted, conditionally permitted, and prohibited uses within the Civic Center zone, as shown in Table 4.11, Use Regulations for Civic Center (C-C) Zone.

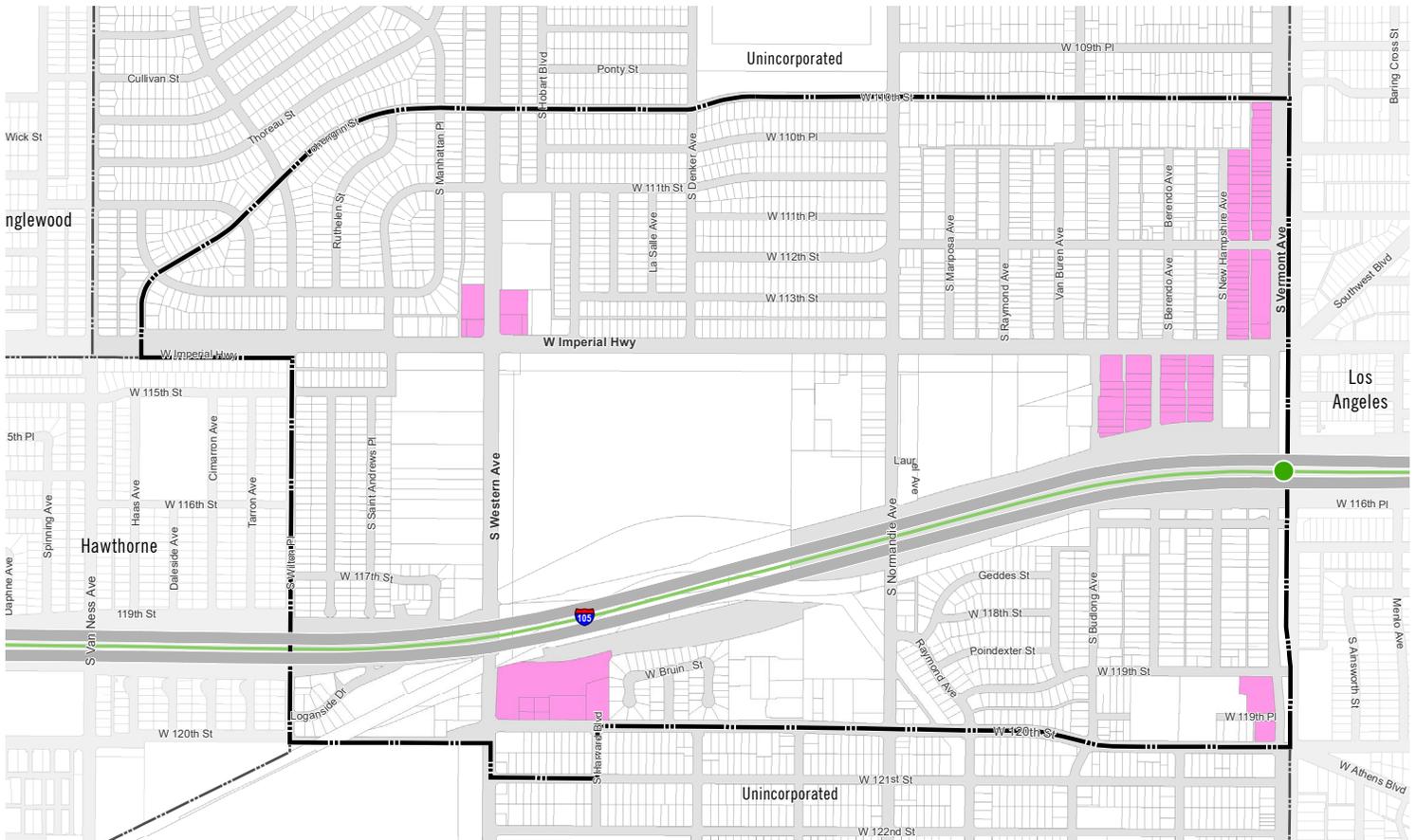
**TABLE 4.11: USE REGULATIONS FOR CIVIC CENTER ZONE**

| <b>Use</b>  | <b>Regulation</b> |
|---|-------------------|
| <b>Residential</b>  |                   |
| Multi-family dwelling unit  | Permitted         |
| <b>Public / Institutional</b>   |                   |
| Art and cultural facility   | Permitted         |
| Churches and other religious institution                              | Permitted         |
| Family care home, foster home, or group home for six or fewer persons | Conditional       |
| Fire station  | Conditional       |
| Park, open space, playground and accessory use                        | Permitted         |
| Residential care facility for six or fewer persons                    | Conditional       |
| School, private or public   | Permitted         |
| <b>Service / Retail Commercial</b>                                    |                   |
| Acute care/rehabilitation uses  | Conditional       |
| Automobile service station  | Prohibited        |
| Automobile battery and repair shops                                   | Prohibited        |
| Amusement rides and devices   | Prohibited        |
| Bakery, coffee house/café, delicatessen/cafeteria                     | Permitted         |
| Bank and financial institution  | Permitted         |
| Childcare facility or nursery school                                  | Conditional       |
| Commercial recreational facility                                      | Permitted         |
| Grocery   | Permitted         |
| Health club   | Conditional       |
| Hotel   | Conditional       |
| Theater, including live performance                                   | Permitted         |
| On-site alcoholic beverage sales establishment                        | Conditional       |
| Restaurant, family, specialty, food hall without drive-thru           | Permitted         |
| Tobacco shops   | Prohibited        |
| <b>Office</b>   |                   |
| General office  | Permitted         |
| Medical office  | Permitted         |
| Professional office   | Permitted         |

### 4.3.11 MIXED USE 1 (MXD-1) ZONE

The MXD-1 Zone promotes development of a mix of commercial, office, and residential, with an emphasis on neighborhood serving uses. The MXD-1 Zone provides for a range of smaller to medium scale retail, horizontal and vertical mixed use developments, and multiple family residential uses up to 30 dwelling units per acre. Developments would have private/public open space components and strong bicycle and pedestrian connections to the Vermont/Athens Station, LASC campus, and into the community.

**FIGURE 4.8: MXD-1 ZONE MAP**



### Development Potential for MXD-1 Zone

- Total Developable Area: 27 acres
- Residential: 536 units
- Non-Residential: 574,580 sq. ft.

### Development Standards for MXD-1 Zone

The following development standards regulate new site and building development by establishing standards for intensity, building height, open space, and other elements. They have been developed to accommodate the mix of commercial, office, and residential uses anticipated. The standards are intended to encourage the development of medium-density housing as well as daily retail and service commercial uses to serve the needs of the West Athens-Westmont community. Development standards include street-based frontage standards regulating building frontages along existing and new streets to form adequate and pedestrian-friendly building faces. The following development standards apply in conjunction with Chapter 5, Design Guidelines.

**TABLE 4.12: SITE DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS FOR MXD-1 ZONE**

| Standard   | Minimum  | Maximum   |
|--|----------|-----------|
| <b>Density</b>                                       |          |           |
| Residential  | 18 du/ac | 30 du/ac  |
| <b>Floor Area Ratio (FAR)</b>                        |          |           |
| All Buildings  | 1.0      | 1.5       |
| <b>Building Setback</b>                              |          |           |
| Vermont Ave  | 5 ft.    | 15 ft.    |
| Imperial Hwy.  | 5 ft.    | 15 ft.    |
| Local Road   | 15 ft.   | None      |
| Interior Yard (Side or Rear)                         | 0 ft.    | None      |
| Interior Yard Adjacent to Residential (Side or Rear) | 15 ft.   | None      |
| <b>Building Height</b>                               |          |           |
| Floors   | None     | 3 stories |
| Building Height                                      | None     | 45 ft     |

### Frontages

Frontages dictate the relationship between the street (back of right-of-way) and the façade of the ground-floor of the building (see Section 5.3.1, Frontage Types for

building frontage design standards and guidelines). All new development adjacent to a street with frontage requirements, as shown in Figure 5.1, Streets with Frontage Requirements, shall have a primary building façade and entry from the identified street and must adhere to the following building frontage requirements.

- Building orientation shall be determined by the location of the primary entrance, which shall indicate the front of the building.
- Pedestrian access to public right-of-way is required either through common corridors or courtyards from buildings adjacent to the road.
- Open fencing is allowed, but a solid wall greater than three (3) feet high shall not be allowed.

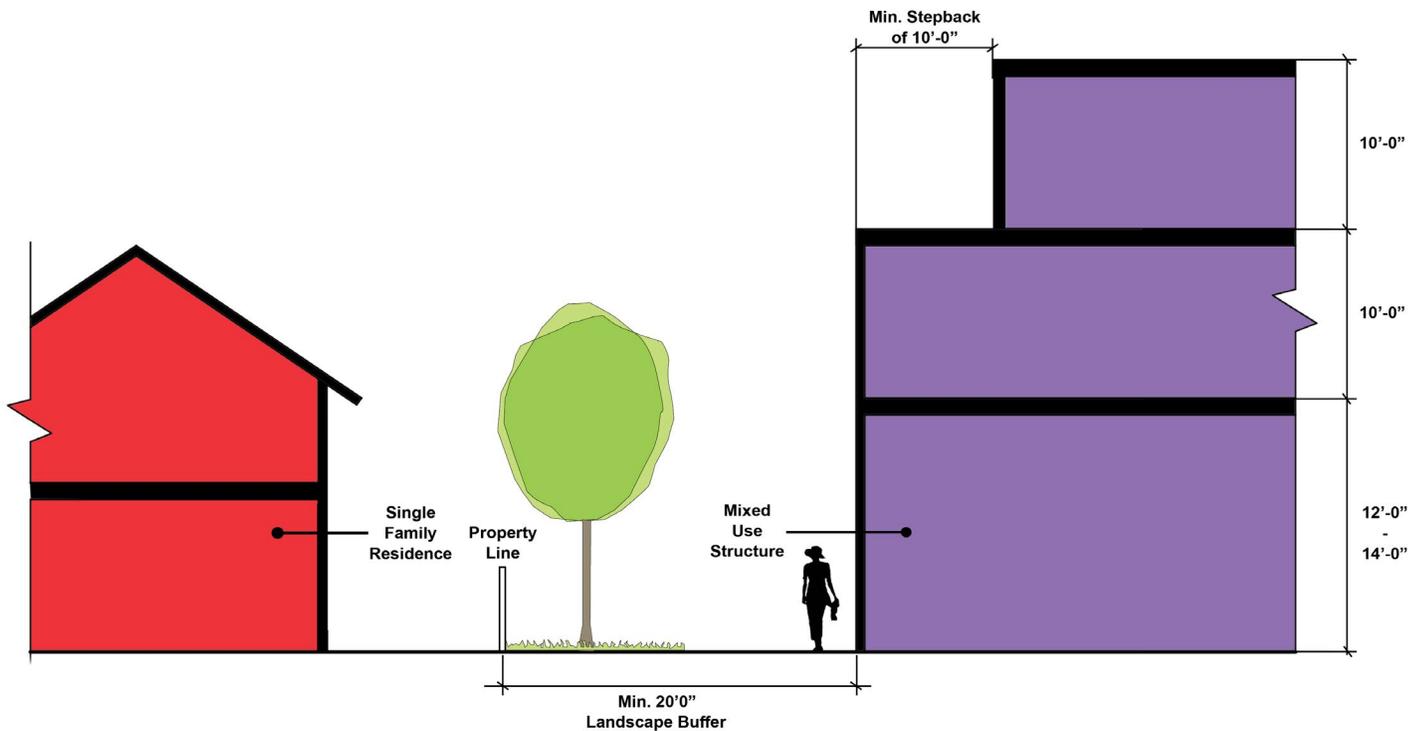
**TABLE 4.13: FRONTAGE CATEGORIES MXD-1 ZONE**

| Frontage Type | Vermont Avenue | Western Avenue | Imperial Highway |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Shopfront     | Permitted      | Permitted      | Permitted        |
| Forecourt     | Permitted      | Permitted      | Permitted        |
| Terrace       | Permitted      | Permitted      | Permitted        |
| Stoop         | Not permitted  | Permitted      | Permitted        |

Notes: See Section 5.3 for building frontage design standards and guidelines.

**Built Form & Landscaping**

- When sharing a property line with an existing single-family zone, the following requirements, illustrated in Figure 4.9, shall apply:
  - » Windows, balconies, or similar openings shall be oriented so as to minimize any direct line-of-sight into adjacent units or onto private patios or backyards adjoining the property line.
  - » The third floor shall be stepped back by a minimum of 10 ft.
  - » A minimum 20 feet landscape buffer shall be installed along the inside property line of the mixed use development to provide a visual and aesthetic buffer.
- Any development that includes dwelling units shall provide adequate private or common laundry facilities reserved for the exclusive use of the residents of the development.
- Any development that includes dwelling units shall be set back a minimum of 100 feet from Interstate 105.

**FIGURE 4.9: BUILDING HEIGHT AND STEPBACK REQUIREMENTS FOR MXD-1 ZONE**

### Façades

- Street wall façades shall be architecturally enhanced. This may be accomplished through the use of arcades, colonnades, recessed entrances, window details, bays, and variation in building materials, color, and other details. The maximum total blank wall area (without windows or entrances) shall not exceed 30 percent of the first-story wall for non-residential and 50 percent for residential.
- The façade detailing of mixed-use buildings shall visually differentiate ground-floor uses from upper-story uses. The base shall visibly anchor the building to the ground with a treatment of higher quality materials. The façade detailing of commercial or retail entries shall be differentiated from residential entries.

### Design Features

- Projecting features, such as balconies, porches, bays, and dormer windows, are encouraged to create distinction between units and to provide "eyes" on the street.
- Private balconies shall be screened by translucent materials that shield visibility of personal items from public view.
- All primary ground-floor common entries for individual dwelling unit or commercial entries fronting on streets shall be or oriented to the street, not to the interior or to a parking lot.

- Buildings having 100 feet or more of street frontage shall be designed to provide roofs of varying heights.
- All glass in windows or entrances on the first two stories shall be either clear or lightly tinted to maximize pedestrian visibility of building interiors from the sidewalk area. Mirrored, highly reflective, or densely tinted glass shall be prohibited for use in windows and entrances.
- Rough covered stucco is prohibited.

#### **Utility and Mechanical Equipment**

- All utility and mechanical equipment shall be placed in locations that are not exposed to view from the street or shall be screened from view. Satellite dishes shall be located away from public view.
- Screening elements shall be an integral part of the building's design.

#### **Required Residential Open Space**

- 100 SF per dwelling unit for common recreational-leisure areas, private areas, or a combination of both.
- Minimum dimension for private areas is 7 feet.
- Minimum dimension for common areas is 20 feet.
- Side and rear yards may be included in the calculation of open space, but not the required front yard setback area.
- Open space areas shall have no parking, driveway, or right-of-way encroachments.
- All common areas shall be improved as either active or passive facilities, with landscaping or hardscape elements designed to serve the residents of the project. All common areas shall be developed and professionally maintained in accordance with approved landscape and irrigation plans.
- Common recreational space shall be located on the same property as the residential use it serves and shall be available exclusively for the use of all residents of the development.
- Where a rooftop is used for common recreational space, the rooftop shall incorporate landscaping, decorative paving and materials, and amenities. Mechanical equipment storage areas shall not be counted toward meeting the requirement.
- Pedestrian walkways within a project shall be a minimum of four (4) feet in width.
- Private useable open space shall be contiguous to the residential units served and screened for privacy.
- Courtyard internal to a project, or enclosed on at least three (3) sides, shall have a minimum width of forty (40) feet.

**Required Non-Residential Open Space**

- 500 SF non-residential open space requirement for projects less than 2 acres.
- 2,500 SF non-residential open space requirement for projects greater than 2 acres.
- Non-residential open space requirement may be satisfied by outdoor dining areas, plazas, or other useable outdoor use as approved by the Director.
- Public plazas, urban pocket parks, outdoor dining, promenades, public art, and other outdoor public amenities shall be designed to activate ground-floor uses, engage residents and visitors.

Open spaces shall be appropriately landscaped and provide adequate shade through the placement of trees or other shade devices, including umbrellas, awnings, trellises, and canopies that are integrated into the building or over the open space.

**Circulation & Parking**

- Bicycle and pedestrian circulation facilities shall provide connections to surrounding uses and to existing/planned pedestrian and bicycle networks.
- Parking structures shall be architecturally integrated with the project design and shall be screened from view at street level by architectural detailing, façade treatment, artwork, landscaping, or similar visual features to enhance the street façade.

**Use Regulations for MXD-1 Zone**

The land use regulations define permitted, conditionally permitted, and prohibited uses in the Industrial Flex zone, as shown in Table 4.13, Use Regulations for MXD-1 Zone.

Accessory uses and structures are permitted when customarily associated with, and subordinate to, a permitted use on the same site, and would include:

- Administrative office
- Assembly/multi-purpose building
- Caretaker's quarter
- Enclosed, screened, outdoor storage
- Maintenance/storage facility and structure
- Patio cover/trellis
- Swimming pool, spa, jacuzzi
- Tennis court, basketball courts, and other multi-purpose courts, recreation and community buildings

**TABLE 4.14: USE REGULATIONS FOR MXD-1 ZONE**

| <b>Use</b>  | <b>Regulation</b> |
|---|-------------------|
| <b>Residential</b>  |                   |
| Multi-family dwelling unit  | Permitted         |
| <b>Public / Institutional</b>   |                   |
| Art and cultural facility   | Permitted         |
| Churches and other religious institution                              | Permitted         |
| Family care home, foster home, or group home for six or fewer persons | Conditional       |
| Fire station  | Conditional       |
| Park, open space, playground and accessory use                        | Permitted         |
| Residential care facility for six or fewer persons                    | Conditional       |
| School, private or public (K-12)                                      | Conditional       |
| <b>Service / Retail Commercial</b>                                    |                   |
| Acute care/rehabilitation uses  | Conditional       |
| Automobile service station  | Prohibited        |
| Automobile battery and repair shops                                   | Prohibited        |
| Amusement rides and devices   | Prohibited        |
| Bakery, coffee house/café, delicatessen/cafeteria                     | Permitted         |
| Bank and financial institution  | Permitted         |
| Childcare facility or nursery school                                  | Conditional       |
| Commercial recreational facility                                      | Permitted         |
| Grocery   | Permitted         |
| Health club   | Conditional       |
| Hotel   | Permitted         |
| Movie theater   | Permitted         |
| On-site alcoholic beverage sales establishment                        | Conditional       |
| Restaurant, family, specialty, food hall without drive-thru           | Permitted         |
| Theater, including live performance                                   | Permitted         |
| Tobacco shops   | Prohibited        |
| <b>Office</b>   |                   |
| General office  | Permitted         |
| Medical office  | Permitted         |
| Professional office   | Permitted         |
| Amusement rides and devices   | Prohibited        |



### Development Potential for MXD-2 Zone

- Total Developable Area: 23 acres
- Residential: 559 units
- Non-Residential: 1,217,935 sq. ft.

### Development Standards for MXD-2 Zone

The following development standards regulate new site and building development by establishing standards for intensity, building height, open space, and other elements. They have been developed to accommodate the mix of retail, office, restaurant, and residential uses anticipated. The standards are intended to encourage the development of high density housing and retail and service commercial uses to serve the needs of the West Athens-Westmont community. Development standards include street-based frontage standards regulating buildings frontages along existing and new streets to form adequate and pedestrian-friendly building faces. The following development standards apply in conjunction with Chapter 5, Design Guidelines, below.

**TABLE 4.15: SITE DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS FOR MXD-2 ZONE**

| Standard   | Minimum  | Maximum                  |
|--|----------|--------------------------|
| <b>Density</b>                                       |          |                          |
| Residential  | 31 du/ac | 60 du/ac                 |
| <b>Floor Area Ratio (FAR)</b>                        |          |                          |
| Residential and Non-Residential                      | 0.5      | 2.0                      |
| <b>Building Setback</b>                              |          |                          |
| Imperial Hwy.  | 10 ft.   | 25 ft.                   |
| Vermont Avenue                                       | 10 ft.   | 25 ft.                   |
| Western Avenue                                       | 10 ft.   | 25 ft.                   |
| Interior Yard Adjacent to Residential (Side or Rear) | 15 ft.   | None                     |
| <b>Building Height</b>                               |          |                          |
| Floors   | None     | 4/5 stories <sup>1</sup> |
| Building Height                                      | None     | 65 ft <sup>2</sup>       |

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Four stories maximum for stand-alone residential configuration, five stories allowed in a mixed use configuration.

<sup>2</sup> Height excludes signs, chimneys, and rooftop antennas.

## Frontages

Frontages dictate the relationship between the street (back of right-of-way) and the façade of the ground-floor of the building (see Section 5.4 for building frontage design standards and guidelines). All new development adjacent to a street with frontage requirements, as shown in Figure 5.1, Streets with Frontage Requirements, shall have a primary building façade and entry from the identified street and must adhere to the following building frontage requirements.

- Building orientation shall be determined by the location of the primary entrance, which shall indicate the front of the building.
- All building sides abutting major public rights-of-way shall require architectural treatment.
- Pedestrian access to public right-of-way is required either through common corridors or courtyards from buildings adjacent to the road.
- Open fencing is allowed, but a solid wall greater than three (3) feet high shall not be allowed.

**TABLE 4.16: FRONTAGE CATEGORIES MXD-2 ZONE**

| Frontage Type    | Vermont Avenue | Western Avenue | Imperial Highway |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| <b>Shopfront</b> | Permitted      | Permitted      | Permitted        |
| <b>Forecourt</b> | Permitted      | Permitted      | Permitted        |
| <b>Terrace</b>   | Permitted      | Permitted      | Permitted        |
| <b>Stoop</b>     | Not permitted  | Not permitted  | Not permitted    |

Notes: See Section 5.3 for building frontage design standards and guidelines.

## Built Form & Landscaping

- When sharing a property line with an existing single-family zone, the following requirements shall apply:
  - » Windows, balconies, or similar openings shall be oriented so as to minimize any direct line-of-sight into adjacent units or onto private patios or backyards adjoining the property line.
  - » The third floor shall be stepped back by a minimum of 10 ft.
  - » A minimum 20 feet landscape buffer shall be installed along the inside property line of the mixed use development to provide a visual and aesthetic buffer.
- Development at the corner of the intersections of Vermont Avenue and Imperial Highway and Western Avenue and Imperial Highway must provide the following:

- » A corner entrance or an entrance oriented toward each street.
- » Architectural style and detail of buildings that create interest, including display windows, façade materials, colors, art features, rooftop elements, and stepbacks.
- Any development that includes dwelling units shall provide adequate private or common laundry facilities reserved for the exclusive use of the residents of the development.

### **Façades**

- Street wall façades shall be architecturally enhanced. This may be accomplished through the use of arcades, colonnades, recessed entrances, window details, bays, and variation in building materials, color, and other details. The maximum total blank wall area (without windows or entrances) shall not exceed 30 percent of the first story wall for non-residential and 50 percent for residential.
- The façade detailing of mixed-use buildings shall visually differentiate ground-floor uses from upper-story uses. The base shall visibly anchor the building to the ground with a treatment of higher quality materials. The façade detailing of commercial or retail entries shall be differentiated from residential entries.

### **Design Features**

- Projecting features, such as balconies, porches, bays, and dormer windows shall be used to create distinction between units and provide “eyes” on the street.
- Private balconies shall be screened by translucent materials that shield visibility of personal items from public view.
- All primary ground-floor common entries or individual dwelling unit or commercial entries fronting on streets shall be oriented to the street, not to the interior or to a parking lot.
- Buildings having 100 feet or more of street frontage shall be designed to provide façade articulation and roofs of varying heights.
- All glass in windows or entrances on the first two stories shall be either clear or lightly tinted to maximize pedestrian visibility of building interiors from the sidewalk area. Mirrored, highly reflective, or densely tinted glass shall be prohibited for use in windows and entrances.

### **Utility and Mechanical Equipment**

- All utility and mechanical equipment shall be placed in locations that are not exposed to view from the street or shall be screened from view. Satellite dishes shall be located away from public view.

- Screening elements shall be an integral part of the building's design.

**Required Residential Open Space**

- 100 sf/du per dwelling unit for common recreational-leisure areas, private areas, or a combination of both.
- Minimum dimension for private areas is 7 feet.
- Minimum dimension for common areas is 20 feet.
- Side and rear yards may be included in the calculation of open space, but not the required front-yard setback area.
- Open space areas shall have no parking, driveway, or right-of-way encroachments.
- All common areas shall be improved as either active or passive facilities, with landscaping or hardscape elements designed to serve the residents of the project. All common areas shall be developed and professionally maintained in accordance with approved landscape and irrigation plans.
- Common recreational space shall be located on the same property as the residential it serves and shall be available exclusively for the use of all residents of the development.
- Where a rooftop is used for common recreational space, the rooftop shall incorporate landscaping, decorative paving and materials, and amenities. Mechanical equipment storage areas shall not be counted toward meeting the requirement.
- Pedestrian walkways within a project shall be a minimum of four (4) feet in width.
- Private useable open space shall be contiguous to the residential units served and screened for privacy.
- Courtyard internal to a project, or enclosed on at least three (3) sides, shall have a minimum of width of forty (40) feet.

**Required Non-Residential Open Space**

- 500 SF non-residential open space requirement for projects less than 2 acres.
- 2,500 SF non-residential open space requirement for projects greater than 2 acres.
- Non-residential open space requirement may be satisfied by outdoor dining areas, plazas, or other useable outdoor use, as approved by the Director.
- Public plazas, urban pocket parks, outdoor dining, promenades, public art, and other outdoor public amenities shall be designed to activate ground-floor uses, engage residents and visitors.

Open spaces shall be appropriately landscaped and provide adequate shade through the placement of trees or other shade devices, including umbrellas, awnings, trellises, and canopies that are integrated into the building or over the open space.

**Circulation & Parking**

- Bicycle and pedestrian circulation facilities shall provide connections to surrounding uses and to existing/planned pedestrian and bicycle networks.
- Parking structures shall be architecturally integrated with the project design and shall be screened from view at street level by architectural detailing, façade treatment, artwork, landscaping, or similar visual features to enhance the street façade.

**Use Regulations for MXD-2 Zone**

The land use regulations define permitted uses within the MXD-2 zone, as shown in Table 4.16, Use Regulations for MXD-2 Zone.

**TABLE 4.17: USE REGULATIONS FOR MXD-2 ZONE**

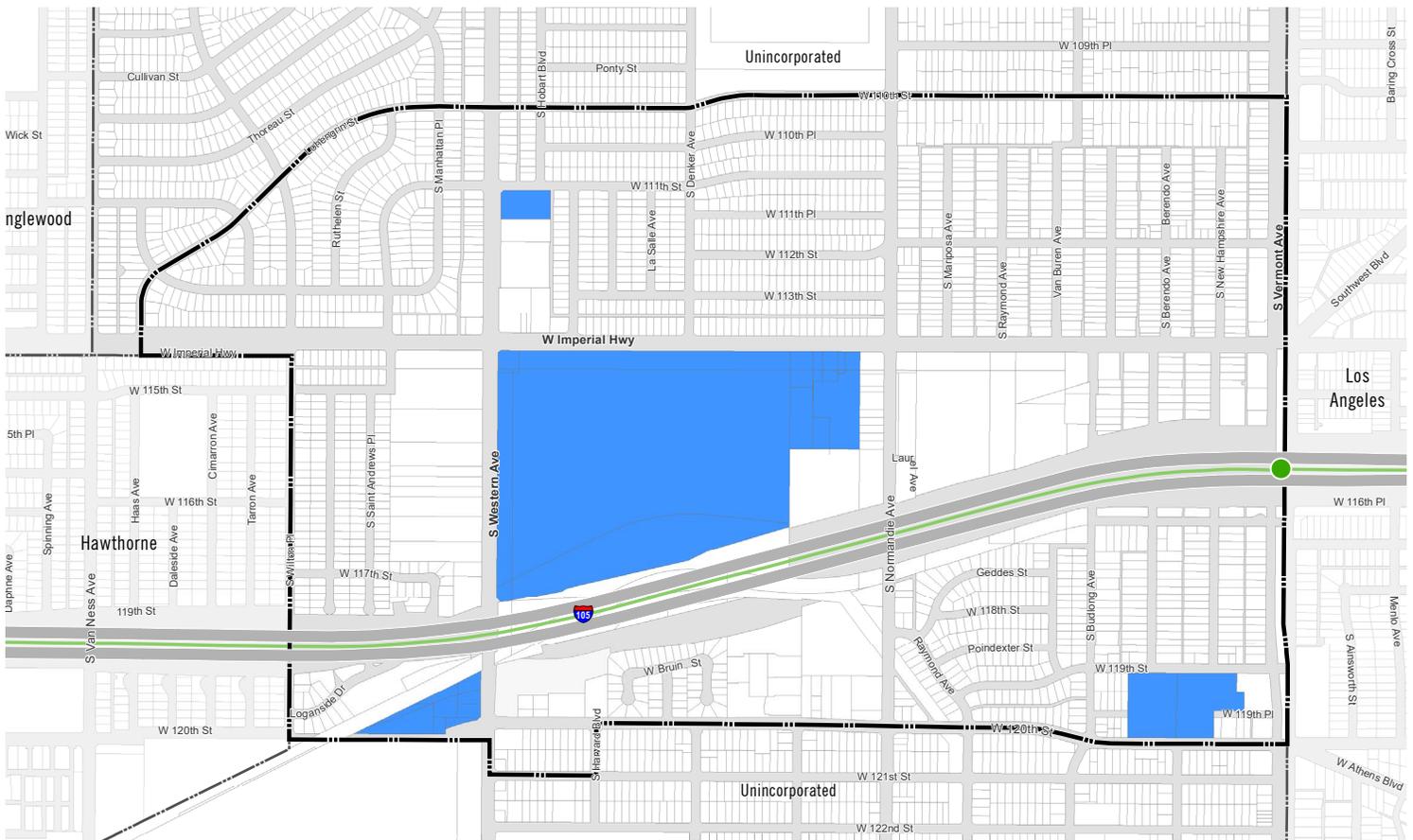
| Use  | Regulation  |
|--|-------------|
| <b>Residential</b>   |             |
| Multi-family dwelling unit   | Permitted   |
| Patio home   | Prohibited  |
| Single-family dwelling unit attached/<br>detached                        | Prohibited  |
| <b>Public / Institutional</b>  |             |
| Art and cultural facility  | Permitted   |
| Churches and other religious institution                                 | Permitted   |
| Family care home, foster home, or group<br>home for six or fewer persons | Conditional |
| Fire station   | Conditional |
| Park, open space, playground and<br>accessory use                        | Permitted   |
| Residential care facility for six or fewer<br>persons                    | Conditional |
| School, private or public  | Conditional |
| <b>Service / Retail Commercial</b>                                       |             |
| Acute care/rehabilitation uses   | Conditional |
| Automobile service station   | Prohibited  |
| Automobile battery and repair shops                                      | Prohibited  |
| Amusement rides and devices  | Prohibited  |

| Use  | Regulation  |
|--|-------------|
| Bakery, coffee house/café, delicatessen/<br>cafeteria          | Permitted   |
| Bank and financial institution                                 | Permitted   |
| Childcare facility or nursery school                           | Conditional |
| Commercial recreational facility                               | Permitted   |
| Grocery  | Permitted   |
| Health club  | Conditional |
| Hotel  | Permitted   |
| Movie theater  | Permitted   |
| On-site alcoholic beverage sales<br>establishment              | Conditional |
| Restaurant, family, specialty, food hall<br>without drive-thru | Permitted   |
| Theater, including live performance                            | Permitted   |
| Tobacco shops  | Prohibited  |
| <b>Office</b>  |             |
| Corporate headquarters   | Permitted   |
| General office   | Permitted   |
| Medical office   | Permitted   |

### 4.3.13 PUBLIC INSTITUTIONAL (IT) ZONE

The Public-Institutional (IT) zone provides for established public uses including schools, parks, and other public uses. This designation is intended to promote the use of publicly-owned land for the purposes of community open space, recreation, sense of identity, and safe connections to points of destination.

FIGURE 4.11: IT ZONE MAP





View of public space and building at LASC.

### Development Potential for IT Zone

- Total Developable Area: 83 acres
- Residential: None
- Non-Residential: 786,925 sq. ft.

### Development Standards for IT Zone

The development standards in Table 4.17, Site Configuration Regulations For IT Zone, regulate new site development by establishing standards for intensity, open space, and other elements. The development standards for the Public Institutional Zone have been tailored to its future use as additional recreational opportunities in the community occur and should be used in conjunction with Chapter 5, Design Guidelines, below.

**TABLE 4.18: SITE DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS FOR IT ZONE**

| Standard                      | Minimum | Maximum   |
|-------------------------------|---------|-----------|
| <b>Floor Area Ratio (FAR)</b> |         |           |
| All Buildings                 | None    | 3.0       |
| <b>Building Setback</b>       |         |           |
| Front                         | None    | 15 ft.    |
| Rear                          | 10 ft.  | None      |
| Side                          | 10 ft.  | None      |
| <b>Building Height</b>        |         |           |
| Floors                        | None    | 6 stories |
| Building Height               | None    | 80 ft     |

### Use Regulations for IT Zone

The land use regulations define permitted uses within the Public Institutional Zone, as shown in Table 4.18, Use Regulations For IT Zone.

**TABLE 4.19: USE REGULATIONS FOR IT ZONE**

| Use  | Regulation  |
|--|-------------|
| <b>Public / Institutional</b>                  |             |
| Park, open space, playground and accessory use | Permitted   |
| School, private or public                      | Conditional |

Notes: This table only reflects uses that are different from Section 22.26.020 of Title 22.

### 4.3.14 BUFFER ZONE (B-1)

#### Purpose and Intent

The B-1 Zone provides a buffer from the I-105 freeway in the Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan study area. Allowed uses in this zone include passive recreation, landscaping, and parking lots. Buildings or permanent structures are not permitted under this category.

FIGURE 4.12: B-1 ZONE MAP



### Development Potential for B-1 Zone

- Total Developable Area: None
- Residential: None
- Non-Residential: None

### Development Standards for B-1 Zone

Standards for the B-1 Zone shall remain consistent with Chapter 22.32.330, B-1 Zone, of the Los Angeles County Code.

### Use Regulations for B-1 Zone

The land use regulations that define permitted, conditionally permitted, and prohibited uses within the Buffer Zone shall remain consistent with Chapter 22.32.330.

**TABLE 4.20: USE REGULATIONS FOR B-1 ZONE**

| Use  | Regulation    |
|--|---------------|
| <b>Public / Institutional</b>                  |               |
| Buildings or permanent structures              | Not Permitted |
| Park, open space, playground and accessory use | Permitted     |
| Wholesale Nursery                              | Permitted     |
| Parking Lot                                    | Permitted     |

Notes: This table only reflects uses that are different from Section 22.20.050 of Title 22.

## **4.4 GENERAL USE REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS**

The following general use regulations and standards shall apply to new development and the reuse of existing structures and facilities, unless specific exceptions are described elsewhere in the Specific Plan.

### **4.4.1 USE REGULATIONS**

#### **Alcohol Beverage Sales**

The County of Los Angeles established standards for all on- and off-site alcoholic beverage sales establishments to promote and protect the public health, safety, and general welfare and preserve and enhance the quality of the community. Applicants shall refer to County Code Section 22.56.195, Alcohol Beverage Sales and Consumption, for standards and guidelines relating to establishments that include the sales of alcoholic beverages for on- and off-site consumption. Alcohol beverage sales require a conditional use permit, as identified in the use regulations of the zone in which the establishment is located.

#### **Outside Storage**

All uses shall be conducted within a completely enclosed building, except for off-street parking, loading, approved nursery accessory uses, approved temporary uses, and any outdoor dining specifically permitted in conjunction with eating establishments. Minor ancillary outdoor storage (service vehicle parking, materials storage, or limited equipment assembly associated with a permitted use) may be located outside a building in certain planning areas as an accessory use, provided that there is solid screening and no negative noise or aesthetic impacts on adjacent properties.

#### **Interim and Temporary Uses**

Interim uses on County-owned properties shall be permitted in all areas subject to a license agreement. Other interim uses on private property shall require approval of a temporary use permit pursuant to the Los Angeles County Code, as applicable.

Temporary uses shall be regulated pursuant to the Los Angeles County Code, as applicable.

## 4.4.2 UTILITIES

All utility lines serving a new development, with the exception of interim uses, shall be placed underground by the developer in accordance with the County's policies for locating utilities underground.

- Existing utility lines shall also be placed underground with development, where feasible and as required by Los Angeles County.
- No structures shall be permitted to be developed over active pipelines, abandoned lines, or utility easements, except where approved by County Engineer.
- All utility line and connection costs to the backbone infrastructure/utility system (water supply, sanitary sewer facilities, reclaimed water supply, storm drainage, and other utilities) needed to serve individual projects shall be the responsibility of the new user/owner, or as otherwise determined as a result of a negotiated development agreement or lease.
- All water supply, sanitary sewer facilities, reclaimed water supply, storm drainage, and other facilities shall be provided in accordance with adopted master plans of the respective service providers. Costs shall be assigned to each development lot or parcel in accordance with a cost-benefit formula established by the LRA, based on estimated engineering construction costs, or as otherwise determined as a result of a negotiated development agreement.

### **Mechanical Equipment**

Compressors, air conditioning units, vents, exhausts, or similar mechanical equipment located outside a building shall comply with the following:

- All such equipment shall be screened from view from any abutting street or adjacent use. Screening shall be an integral part of the overall architectural design of the project. The top of any screening shall be a minimum of six inches above the top of any mechanical equipment.
- All mechanical equipment shall be maintained in a clean and proper condition to prevent breakdown that might release noxious or toxic materials or create excessive noise, and to avoid accumulation of litter, filth, and materials that would be noxious or unsafe.

### **Roof-Mounted Solar Collector Panels**

- Roof-mounted solar collector panels shall be mounted flush with the surface where possible and painted to match roof surface color. Where panels cannot effectively perform if flush mounted, justification in the form of efficiency calculations may be submitted to the Department of Regional Planning for consideration of alternative mounting configurations.

### **Refuse Collection Facilities**

- All outdoor refuse collection facilities shall be screened visually from streets and highways. Collection areas shall be shielded from view in all directions, either within a building or within a solid masonry wall of sufficient height to conceal materials temporarily accumulated for collection. The enclosure shall be designed to complement the main building materials.

## **4.4.3 ENCROACHMENTS AND SITE DEVELOPMENT**

### **Encroachments**

The following encroachments into setback areas are allowed, subject to the California Building Code:

- Architectural features
- Eaves
- Fireplaces
- Mechanical equipment
- Steps and staircases (open)
- Covered patio trellis or canopies, unenclosed on at least two sides, may encroach into the required side- or rear-yard setback provided they do not cover more than 50 percent of the private yard or open space area on a residential property and comply with the California Building Code related to distance requirements between adjacent structures.

### **Park Provisions**

- Requirements and standards in the Los Angeles County Subdivision Ordinance, Title 21, will be utilized in reviewing public or private park proposals per parkland dedication requirement.

## 4.4.4 BIKE PARKING AND RELATED FACILITIES

### Definitions

Bike parking and related facilities shall follow the LA County Zoning Ordinance Section 22.52.1225. A summary of the County's requirements are show below.

- "Bicycle parking space" means an area at least six feet in length by at least two feet in width to accommodate secured storage for one bicycle;
- "Bicycle rack" means a fixture on which one or more bicycles can be secured;
- "Long-term bicycle parking" means bicycle parking intended for a period of two hours or longer, appropriate for residents, employees, transit users, and visitors to hotels in the nearby area; and
- "Short-term bicycle parking" means bicycle parking intended for a period of two hours or less, appropriate for persons making short visits to commercial establishments such as grocery and convenience stores, restaurants, coffee shops, bars and clubs, and offices such as medical, dental, and post offices.

### Number of Bicycle Parking Spaces Required

The minimum number of bicycle parking spaces for a particular use shall be provided in accordance with the chart below. For a combination of uses on a single lot, the number of required bicycle parking spaces shall be equal to the combined total of the required bicycle parking spaces for each of the individual uses.

**TABLE 4.21: NUMBER OF BICYCLE PARKING SPACES REQUIRED**

| Use  | Short-term   | Long-term   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Residential</b>   |  |   |
| Multi-family residential including apartments, attached condominiums, and townhouses (five dwelling units or more) | One space per each 10 dwelling units (two space minimum)                     | One space per each two dwelling units   |
| <b>Commercial</b>  |  |   |
| General retail, including restaurants  | One space per each 5,000 square feet of gross floor area (two space minimum) | One space per each 12,000 square feet of gross floor area (two space minimum) |

| Use   | Short-term  | Long-term  |
|---|---|--|
| Office  | One space per each 20,000 square feet of gross floor area (two space minimum)   | One space per each 10,000 square feet of gross floor area (two space minimum)  |
| <b>Industrial/Institutional</b>   |   |  |
| Institutional uses, including hospitals, convalescent hospitals, adult residential facilities, and group homes for children | One space per each 20,000 square feet of gross floor area (two space minimum)   | One space per each 10,000 square feet of gross floor area (two space minimum)  |
| Schools, including trade schools, colleges, universities, and private elementary, middle, and high schools                  | Four spaces per each classroom (four space minimum)   | One space per each 10 classrooms (two space minimum)   |
| Churches, temples, and other places of worship  | One space for each 50 intended visitors based on occupant load of largest assembly area within the facility (two space minimum) | One space for each 100 intended visitors based on occupant load of largest assembly area within the facility (two space minimum) |

### Showers and Changing Facilities

Showers and changing facilities of a size and at a location deemed appropriate by the Director, shall be provided in all new commercial buildings with 75,000 or more square feet of gross floor area and shall, at a minimum, be accessible to employees.

### Development Standards for Bicycle Parking Spaces

#### General Requirements

All bicycle parking spaces shall be:

- Directly adjacent to a bicycle rack or within a secure, single bicycle locker and shall allow for convenient, unobstructed access to such bicycle rack or locker; and
- Located so as to not block pedestrian entrances, walkways, or circulation patterns in or around nearby facilities or structures;

#### Bicycle Racks

When using bicycle racks, they shall be:

- Located and installed to support an entire bicycle, including its frame and wheels, so that the frame and wheels can be locked without damage when using a customary, heavy-duty cable or u-shaped bicycle lock
- Securely anchored to a permanent surface; and
- Installed to allow bicycles to remain upright when locked, without the use of a kickstand;

### **Bicycle Lockers**

When using bicycle lockers, they shall be:

- Of sufficient size to hold an entire bicycle; and
- Securely anchored to a permanent surface;

### **Location of Bicycle Parking Spaces.**

Short-term bicycle parking spaces. Short-term bicycle parking spaces shall be:

- Located to be visible from public areas such as public streets, store fronts, sidewalks and plazas, and to be convenient to the target users of the bicycle parking to the maximum extent feasible;
  - Installed as close to a structure's main entrance as feasible;
  - Separated with a barrier from areas where vehicles park, such as with a curb or wheel stop; and
  - Located in a well-luminated area.
- Long-term bicycle parking. Long-term bicycle parking shall be:
- Located in a well-luminated, secure, and covered area;
  - Accessible to and from nearby public streets and sidewalks for the target users of the bicycle parking, who may or may not include the general public;
  - Located at surface levels near main pedestrian entrance(s) to nearby facilities or structures, or in the parking garages of such facilities or structures;
  - Accessible only to residents and owners, operators, and managers of a residential facility when the involved use is residential; and
  - Accessible only to employees, tenants, and owners of a commercial structure or facility when the involved use is commercial.

### **Signage**

For projects that include long-term bicycle parking, signage identifying the location of such bicycle parking shall be included in the project design. Preferred signage locations for this purpose shall be building access ways, street and sidewalk approaches, and nearby bicycle paths or facilities.

## 4.4.5 SUSTAINABILITY AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION

### Site Design

- Irrigation systems shall incorporate water conserving methods and water efficient technologies such as drip emitters, evapotranspiration controllers, and moisture sensors. Explore opportunities to reuse rain water and/or gray water for irrigation.
- Irrigation systems shall be designed to apply water slowly, allowing plants to be deep watered and reducing runoff. Low-volume irrigation drip systems should be used in all areas except turf irrigation and small ornamental planting. Each street tree should be watered by at least two deep watering bubblers separate from all other irrigation.



*Illustrative photo of permeable paving to facilitate ground water recharge.*

### Building Design

- Buildings and development projects within the Specific Plan area shall be designed and constructed using sustainable, energy efficient materials and incorporate strategies for the conservation of water, energy, and other natural resources.
- Drainage shall be directed to permeable areas to minimize discharge to the storm drain system. Use pervious or open grid paving for parking areas whenever possible to reduce the negative effects of storm water runoff and to facilitate groundwater recharge.
- Energy-efficient and natural lighting shall be used in buildings and new developments.



*Illustrative photo of trees providing shading along street.*

## **CHAPTER 5 – DESIGN GUIDELINES**

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The design guidelines contained in this section are intended to promote aesthetically pleasing and viable, site-compatible development within the Specific Plan area that supports its vision and guiding principles of the Specific Plan. These design guidelines are meant to enhance the built environment by guiding the aesthetic appearance for existing and new developments. The design guidelines are intended to be flexible to allow architects and designers to be creative in the design of specific element while still meeting the intent of a guideline. Design Guidelines provide a framework for property owners, architects, and County staff to follow when planning and reviewing development projects.

These guidelines are established to create a distinct character for the West Athens-Westmont community and to ensure that new development is designed with a pedestrian emphasis that will cultivate a vital and active street life along major streets while creating an overall positive community aesthetic.

## 5.2 SITE DESIGN

Site design is an important process critical to any development that may occur in the Connect South West LA Specific Plan area. The resulting outcome, conveyed in a projects' site plan, will determine how buildings are placed on a site, where access will occur, and how structures and spaces are located in relation to each other and to adjacent off-site uses. The following standards and guidelines shall be integrated in the site design of all new projects. Alternatives will be permitted only if the intent of the design standard is met.

### 5.2.1 BUILDING PLACEMENT & ORIENTATION

- » Buildings should be oriented toward public streets, pedestrian pathways, or public open spaces to create a strong presence and encourage pedestrian activity along the street frontage and invigorate the public realm.
- » Buildings should be oriented for energy efficiency (e.g., to capture day lighting, minimize heat gain, take advantage of prevailing breezes, and for natural ventilation).



*Illustrative photo showing a collection of buildings that create a pedestrian-oriented environment.*



*Illustrative photo showing how buildings are oriented towards public streets.*



*Illustrative photo showing strong pedestrian presence.*

- » Multiple buildings on the same site should be designed and grouped, to the extent possible, to provide a cohesive, visual relationship among buildings, while at the same time provide for pedestrian plazas, open space, and views.
- » New development should be oriented to frame entry courts, courtyards, paseos, and similar spaces that create inviting and useful outdoor spaces where residents can safely experience and enjoy the outdoors.
- » Buildings should be designed to provide edges or enclosure to streets and open space, create linkages and gateways, as well as create gathering nodes in areas of attraction.
- » When configuring the site, the impact of shade and shadow, lighting, noise, and other elements should be considered and minimized, particularly when projects are adjacent to existing single-family residential uses.
- » Landscaping should be used at the edges of paths, plazas, and seating areas as appropriate to help define the spatial organization of the site while avoiding the obstruction of visibility.

## 5.2.2 VEHICULAR CIRCULATION AND ACCESS

- » Vehicular access points should be designed to minimize conflicts with pedestrians through the consideration of curb-cut locations and widths, sight lines, and lighting. Entrance and exit points should be well marked and lit.
- » To slow traffic and enhance the overall site design, site entry and edge design features should be incorporated, such as colored or textured paving treatments, landscaping, signage, and monuments.
- » Areas between buildings and open spaces should be linked to and connected by safe, convenient, and accessible pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
- » Nonresidential uses—especially multi-building development projects—should use shared driveways to reduce conflicts with pedestrians.
- » There should be an accessible, well-marked, and well-lit travel path of a minimum of four feet in width provided between parking, buildings, and sidewalks.



*Illustrative photo showing distinguishable vehicular access.*

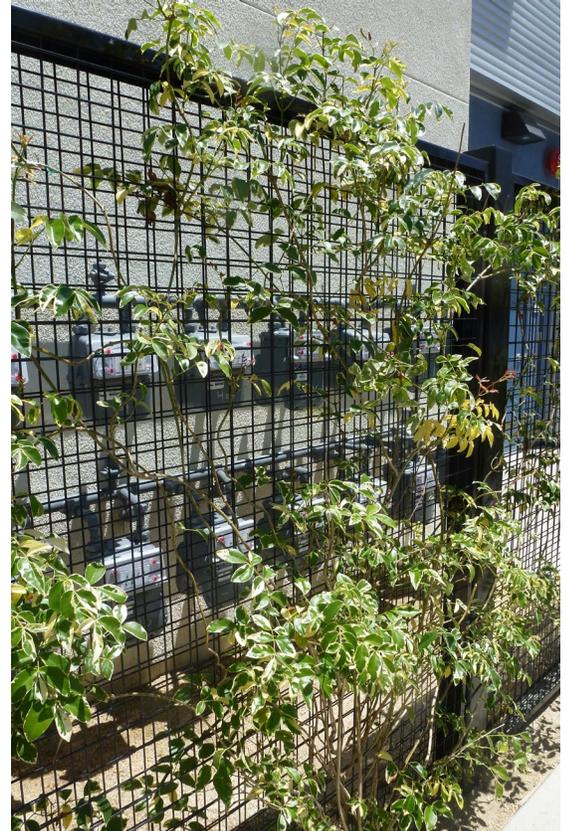


*Illustrative photo of entry paving treatments.*

- » Buildings and development projects should be designed to minimize vehicle traffic and emphasize walking, biking, and other forms of non-motorized active transportation for access and internal circulation.
- » Safe, convenient, and accessible non-motorized access and circulation, including bicycle and pedestrian routes and connections to transit should be prioritized within the specific plan area.
- » Buildings and open spaces within a development should be linked to and connected by highly visible sidewalks, bike and pedestrian paths, and public rights-of-way.
- » Large development projects and owners should develop and utilize shared driveways wherever possible.
- » Wide, accessible, safe, and convenient sidewalks and bike and pedestrian paths should be provided to connect multiple buildings and open spaces within a development.
- » Colored, textured, and/or permeable paving treatments should be used for entry drives.

### **5.2.3 UTILITY, SERVICE, STORAGE AND RECYCLING AREAS**

- » Where feasible, access to service and loading areas should be provided from a secondary or service road.
- » Service and loading areas should be located behind primary structures or properly shielded through fences, gates, landscaping, berms, etc.
- » Access to service and loading areas shall be clearly marked and shall not block adjacent vehicular or pedestrian circulation.
- » To consider noise impacts on adjacent properties, service and loading areas should be located away from residential properties or have restricted hours of use.
- » Loading and service access areas should be located on the rear portion of a lot or development, screened from the public right-of-way, open space, or adjacent properties. Loading and service areas should not be a hazard to or conflict with the movement of pedestrians or bicycles.



*Illustrative photo of landscape screening.*



*Illustrative photo of service areas shielded by landscaping.*

- » Utilities shall be located away from the public right-of-way either within a building recess or landscaped or gated area. Where feasible, utility lines should be undergrounded.
- » Utilities, trash and recycling receptacles, and mechanical equipment shall be screened by landscaping or site-appropriate materials and shall not be located within any front setback areas, any public right-of-way or private street or pedestrian/bicycle path, or within 50 feet of a corner.



*Illustrative photo of service areas screened from public right-of-way.*

## 5.2.4 FENCES, WALLS AND HEDGES

- » If fencing is required for security reasons, wrought-iron-style fences that do not obscure views are encouraged.
- » The use of barbed wire, electrified fence, and chain-link fence in conjunction with any fence, wall, roof, or hedge is prohibited unless required by any law or regulation of the County of Los Angeles, federal government, or agency thereof, as applicable.
- » Walls and fences shall be constructed of durable materials and designed to complement the surrounding architecture.
- » Landscaping, including street trees, planters, and other forms of vegetation, should be used to frame the streetscape, provide a physical barrier between automobile traffic and pedestrians, and be utilized to maximize the cohesiveness of each block and to develop a unifying pattern throughout the Specific Plan area.



*Illustrative photo of landscape barrier framing streetscape.*

## 5.2.5 OPEN SPACE

- » Open space areas should have no parking, driveway, or right-of-way encroachments.
- » Private useable open space should be contiguous to the residential units served and screened for privacy.
- » Open spaces should be appropriately landscaped and provide adequate shade through the placement of trees or other shade devices, including umbrellas, awnings, trellises, and canopies that are integrated into the building or over the open space.
- » Non-residential open space requirement may be satisfied by outdoor dining areas, plazas, or other useable outdoor use, as approved by the Director.
- » Buildings should be oriented in a manner to provide a landscape or open space buffer to increase yard areas next to adjacent residential properties.
- » The design of plazas, with seating and landscape elements, at the corners of buildings adjacent to transit station areas is encouraged to provide public open space for residents, visitors, and transit users.
- » Public plazas, urban pocket parks, outdoor dining, promenades, public art, and other outdoor public amenities should be designed to activate ground-floor uses, engage residents and visitors.



*Illustrative photo showing distinguishable vehicular access.*



*Illustrative photo of entry paving treatments.*



*Illustrative photo of festive lighting, area and pedestrian realm activation.*



*Illustrative photo of lighting enhancing street and sidewalk experience.*

- » Common and/or public open space shall be designed to respect and not negatively impact adjacent residential uses.
- » Public open spaces should be designed and programmed to serve residents, employees, and visitors with a variety of needs, age groups, and interests, including the incorporation of space for physical activity and recreation, relaxation, and socialization.
- » Open spaces, including plazas, forecourts, courtyards, and paseos, should be framed by buildings and streetscape edges to create inviting and useful spaces.
- » Larger projects shall contribute to and connect with a comprehensive network of integrated open spaces throughout the Specific Plan area
- » Open spaces shall be designed for day and evening use by providing shade and sunlight during the day, while providing lighting fixtures and safety systems at night.
- » Public open spaces should be directly accessible from the public right-of-way, private streets, and surrounding buildings.
- » Outdoor dining areas are encouraged to activate the pedestrian realm.
- » Buildings, signs, landscaping, and outdoor furniture should work together to create a pleasant pedestrian environment. Trees that provide shade are especially important and should be incorporated in public outdoor spaces.
- » Recreational amenities should provide activity options for various age groups. Spaces could include areas for physical activity, community gardens, and community gathering space.

## 5.2.6 OUTDOOR LIGHTING

- » Light fixtures installed in the public right-of-way, in parking areas, along pedestrian or bicycle paths, and elsewhere in the interior of a building or development project shall be pedestrian-scaled and directed towards the ground to avoid light pollution and spill-over to surrounding residential areas.
- » Enhanced pedestrian lighting shall be incorporated into the design of new projects.

## 5.3 BUILDING DESIGN

The guidelines for building design address the elements of a building that help create an interesting public realm, including building frontage treatment, facade design and composition, colors and materials, windows, doors, and roofs. New buildings should contribute to defining the character of the street and should represent a single architectural style that all materials and details are true to. Architects are encouraged to innovate, but with full awareness of and respect for appropriate height, massing, variety, and quality of materials that result in a building with architectural integrity.

### 5.3.1 FRONTAGE TYPES

This Specific Plan identifies permitted ground-floor frontage types per applicable streets in the specific plan area including Vermont Avenue, Imperial Highway, Western Avenue, and Normandie Avenue. This section provides design standards for each frontage type to ensure that proposed development relates to the street and meets community design objectives. Frontages dictate the relationship between the street (back of right-of-way) and the façade of the ground floor of the building. Along each applicable roadway, buildings shall be designed with at least one of the permitted frontage types based on the street it fronts, per Table 5.1 through Table 5.4, and, Figure 5.1, Streets with Frontage Requirements. Frontage types include the following:

- Shopfront. A shopfront is a frontage wherein the building façade and entrance are at sidewalk grade and close to the pedestrian zone.
- Forecourt. A forecourt is a frontage wherein a portion of the building façade is recessed from the primary building façade.
- Terrace. A terrace is a frontage wherein the building façade is set back from the street, paseo, or open space, by an elevated open area that is paved or planted.
- Stoop. A stoop is a frontage wherein the building façade is separated from the street, a courtyard, or open space by an entrance to the elevated ground floor of the building.

All new development adjacent to a street with frontage requirements, shall have a primary building façade and entry from the identified street and must adhere to the following building frontage standards. These frontage standards shall be used along with other development and design standards

herein. While this Specific Plan provides for a variety of frontage types, the actual choice, design, and architectural style are the decision of the property owner based on the proposed uses, site plan, and building design.

Guidelines for all frontage types are provided below. Tables 5.6 to 5.9 on the following pages describe the intent of each frontage type and provide guidelines for application to the building façade and street front.

- Primary building façades shall align with the right-of-way, property lines, or easement line unless setbacks are allowed.
- Non-primary building walls should be consistent in design with the primary building front to the extent possible. Non-primary building walls are not required to use frontage types provided in this Specific Plan.
- The term “clear” means that the identified area is free of encroachments.
- Building orientation should be determined by the location of the primary entrance, which should indicate the front of the building.
- Modification of design standards due to site specific, utility conflicts, or other unforeseen factors should require approval from the Director.

**FIGURE 5.1: STREETS WITH FRONTAGE REQUIREMENTS**



## Shopfront Frontage Type

A shopfront is a frontage wherein the building façade and entrance are at sidewalk grade and close to the pedestrian zone. Shopfronts include large areas of transparent openings and doors and are commonly equipped with cantilevered roof(s) or awning(s). Shopfronts typically provide access directly from sidewalks and are oriented to display ground-level commercial uses.

This frontage type is conventional for commercial use. This frontage type can be used in conjunction with terrace and/or forecourt to create a more engaging street.

**TABLE 5.1: SHOPFRONT FRONTAGE TYPE**

| <b>Description</b>   |
|--|
| <p>A shopfront is a frontage wherein the building façade and entrance are at sidewalk grade and close to the pedestrian zone. Shopfronts include large areas of transparent openings and doors and are commonly equipped with cantilevered roof(s) or awning(s). Shopfronts typically provide access directly from sidewalks and are oriented to display ground-level commercial uses.</p> <p>This frontage type is conventional for commercial use. This frontage type can be used in conjunction with terrace and/or forecourt to create a more engaging street.</p>   |
| <b>Guidelines</b>  |
| <p>A great variety of shopfront designs are possible, but the following should apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Desirable shopfront façade area is at least 15 feet tall, as measured from the adjacent walk, and minimum 10 feet wide.</li> <li>b. Shopfronts may be recessed from the primary building façade by up to five feet.</li> <li>c. The shopfront should provide clear views of merchandise displays.</li> <li>d. A base of similar or visually “heavier” materials than the walls is recommended below display windows.</li> <li>e. Doors should be substantial, well detailed, and match the materials, design, and character of the display windows.</li> <li>f. Canopies and awnings should be integrated to shopfront openings.</li> <li>g. Remaining open areas within the frontage zone shall be landscaped per Section 5.2.5, Open Space.</li> </ol> |

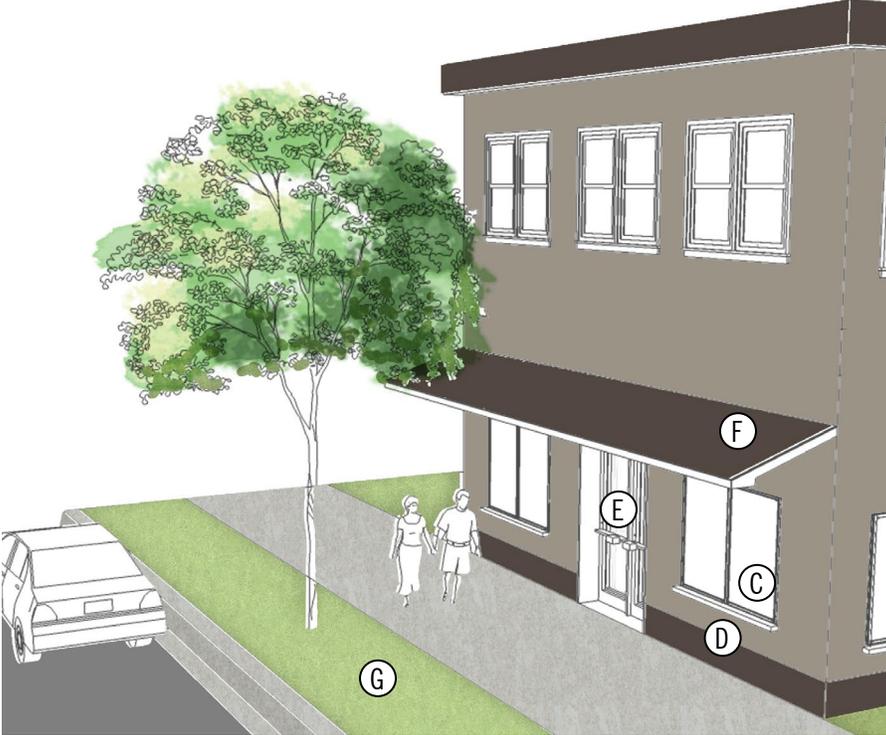
**FIGURE 5.2: SHOPFRONT FRONTAGE TYPE**



Example photo of shopfront type.



Example photo of shopfront type.



Images for illustrative purposes only.

**TABLE 5.2: FORECOURT FRONTAGE TYPE**

| <b>Description</b>  |
|---|
| <p>A forecourt is a frontage wherein a portion of the building façade is recessed from the primary building façade. The forecourt may be used as an entry court and open space for residential uses, or as additional shopping or seating areas for commercial uses. Forecourts with large trees and lush landscaping offer visual and environmental variety to the urban streetscape.</p>  |
| <p>This frontage type is appropriate for either residential and/or commercial uses. A combination of both uses can be achieved by using the forecourt as a residential entrance while commercial uses occupy street adjacent building space. This type can be used in conjunction with shopfronts and stoops as a transition into residential frontage.</p>   |
| <b>Guidelines</b>   |
| <p>A great variety of forecourt designs are possible, but the following should apply:</p>   |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A minimum of ten feet and maximum of 40 feet deep clear.</li> <li>b. A minimum of 20 feet and maximum of 50 feet wide or 50 percent of the lot width, whichever is less.</li> <li>c. One building entry must front onto the forecourt.</li> <li>d. The forecourt may also be raised from the sidewalk, creating a small retaining wall at the property line with entry steps to the forecourt, but shall not exceed three feet in height from the adjacent sidewalk grade.</li> <li>e. The proportions and solar orientation of the forecourt should be carefully considered for user comfort. Canopies of large trees placed within the forecourt may overhang into the pedestrian zone. (Not explicitly illustrated in Figure 5.3.)</li> <li>f. A fence or wall at the property line may be used to define the private space of the court and shall comply with per Section 5.2.4, Fences, Walls and Hedges. (Not explicitly illustrated in Figure 5.3.)</li> <li>g. Entrances and pedestrian “gateways” may be announced by posts or pilasters, and may be combined with trellises, special landscaping, decorative lighting, public art, or other special features. (Not explicitly illustrated in Figure 5.3.)</li> <li>h. Remaining open areas within the frontage zone shall be landscaped per Section 5.2.5, Open Space. (Not explicitly illustrated in Figure 5.3.)</li> </ol> |

**FIGURE 5.3: FORECOURT FRONTAGE TYPE**



Example photo of forecourt type.



Example photo of forecourt type.



Images for illustrative purposes only.

**TABLE 5.3: TERRACE FRONTAGE TYPE**

| <b>Description</b>  |
|---|
| <p>A terrace is a frontage wherein the building façade is set back from the street, paseo, or open space, by an elevated open area that is paved or planted. This frontage type can effectively buffer building uses from the sidewalk.</p> <p>This type is recommended for residential and commercial use as it allows for semi-private use of frontage areas.</p>   |
| <b>Guidelines</b>   |
| <p>A great variety of terrace designs are possible, but the following should apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="66 653 950 800">a. A minimum of five feet to maximum of eight feet deep clear. Terrace design should take into consideration landscape areas, where adjacent to public landscape easement, to the extent possible.</li><li data-bbox="66 800 950 989">b. Terraces should be raised to transition into the building. Terraces should not be raised more than three feet from the adjacent grade of the pedestrian zone. A retaining wall may be built around the terrace per Section 5.2.4, Fences, Walls and Hedges.</li><li data-bbox="66 989 950 1041">c. A minimum of six feet wide clear for entry landing.</li><li data-bbox="66 1041 950 1188">d. Fences defining the terrace should not exceed three feet in height from the highest adjacent grade of the terrace and comply with Section 5.2.4, Fences, Walls and Hedges.</li><li data-bbox="66 1188 950 1299">e. Planted terraces and remaining open areas within the frontage zone shall be landscaped per Section 5.2.5, Open Space.</li></ol> |

**FIGURE 5.4: TERRACE FRONTAGE TYPE**



Example photo of terrace type.



Example photo of terrace type.



**TABLE 5.4: STOOP FRONTAGE TYPE**

| <b>Description</b>   |
|--|
| <p>A stoop is a frontage wherein the building façade is separated from the street, paseo, or open space by an entrance to the elevated ground floor of the building. The entrance is usually an exterior stair and landing and may be covered.</p>   |
| <p>This type is recommended for ground-floor residential use as it facilitates a transition onto more residential frontage.</p>  |
| <b>Guidelines</b>  |
| <p>A great variety of stoop designs are possible, but the following should apply:</p>  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A minimum of three feet and maximum of five feet deep clear.</li> <li>b. Fences or walls defining the stoop should not exceed three feet from the highest adjacent grade of the stoop and shall comply with Section 5.2.4, Fences, Walls and Hedges.</li> <li>c. Stoops should be raised to transition into the building. The ground-story entry should not be elevated more than 3 feet above the adjacent sidewalk.</li> <li>d. Stoops should correspond directly with the building entry(s) and be at least three feet wide (perpendicular to or parallel with the adjacent walk).</li> <li>e. Building façade may be set back the depth of the entry stair from the sidewalk.</li> <li>f. The stoop may include a covered roof, awning, or door inset within the building front.</li> <li>g. Remaining open areas within the frontage zone shall be landscaped per Section 5.2.5, Open Space.</li> </ol> |

**FIGURE 5.5: STOOP FRONTAGE TYPE**



Example photo of stoop type.



Example photo of stoop type.



Example photo of stoop type.



Images for illustrative purposes only.

### 5.3.2 SCALE AND MASSING

Building massing refers to how the development program is shaped into a structure that gives a building its architectural form. For example, a building can have a higher mass in one wing, step down in another wing, and have a tower that emphasizes its entrance—all of which is achieved by modeling its massing. Building massing can be used to frame public spaces, step down to adjacent uses, and provide architectural variety. It is generally more interesting to see multiple buildings with a variety of heights and massing rather than a uniform large building block.

- » Massing breaks, such as entry courts and stepped-back corners, are encouraged to promote more visibility into a building
- » Buildings shall reflect a pedestrian emphasis with appropriately scaled architectural details both vertically and horizontally using inset windows, prominent rooflines, articulation, and highlighted entryways.
- » A variety of roof forms and heights can be used to alleviate the overall mass of buildings and add to its aesthetic quality. Roof forms shall match the overall architectural style of the building.
- » Building masses shall be designed in a scale proportional to adjacent and fronting buildings.
- » The use of primary building entryways, balconies, projecting bays, and/or landscaping shall be utilized to break up the mass of larger buildings.
- » Large development projects shall be designed to appear as a collection of appropriately scaled buildings to create a pedestrian-oriented environment, and should integrate public open space, including paseos, plazas, and pocket parks.
- » New development shall respect the scale and character of existing neighborhoods by providing appropriate height, mass, and setbacks and by limiting the general scale of development near existing residences.



*Illustrative photo showing strong pedestrian scale presence.*



*Illustrative photo showing a collection of human scaled buildings.*

### 5.3.3 BUILDING MODULATION/ARTICULATION AND DETAILING

- » Upper levels of buildings shall be configured to allow solar access, light, and air to circulate to adjacent structures, open spaces, adjoining land uses and the ground floor.
- » Vertical and horizontal articulation, including variations of, massing, fenestration, stepbacks, materials, color, and detail shall be integrated into the design of a building or structure to reduce the perception of large-scale, monotonous development.
- » Changes in façade materials, textures, colors, and window patterns shall be used to enhance visual interest and encourage pedestrian activity. Blank face walls should be used as opportunities for public art.
- » Encourage buildings to express a variety of architectural styles, and compliment height, mass, articulation, and materials of the older buildings that surround them.
- » Architectural style and use of quality materials should be consistent throughout an entire mixed-use project; however, variations in materials and details may be used to differentiate between the residential and commercial portions of the project.
- » Streetwalls should be consistent along Vermont and Imperial Highway with articulation used primarily for entrances and outdoor dining areas.
- » Building façades shall include three-dimensional detailing such as cornices, belt courses, window moldings, bay windows, and reveals to create shadows and facade relief and, articulated doors and windows create visual interest and allow one to see inside.



*Illustrative photo of building modulation and articulation.*



*Illustrative photo showing awareness of height, mass, and articulation.*



*Illustrative photo showing differentiation between residential and commercial uses.*

### 5.3.4 BUILDING ENTRANCES

- » Building orientation shall be determined by the location of the primary entrance, which should indicate the front of the building.
- » Primary building entrances shall be located along major corridors and corners (Imperial Hwy, Western Ave., Normandie Ave, and Vermont Ave.)
- » Secondary building entrances shall be treated similarly in style and material as primary entrances to the extent possible.
- » Each individual storefront entrance should be clearly defined and distinct from others.
- » In mixed-use buildings, entrances to residential units shall use a separate main entrance located on the primary street.
- » Residential uses shall have secured entrance areas that are separate from non-residential uses, but accessible from pedestrian pathways and residential parking areas.
- » Primary, non-residential entrances should be visible from and connected to the public right-of-way and other streetscape, and not through a vehicle parking area.
- » Pedestrian and bicycle amenities should be located near building entrances to promote the visibility and safety of people and property.
- » Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) design measures to design safer environments in all new development. Physically intimidating security measures such as window grills or spiked gates are prohibited; security concerns should be addressed by creating well-lit, well-used streets and active residential frontages.



*Illustrative photo of secure bike parking visible from building.*

### 5.3.5 FENESTRATION

- » At least 30 percent of the ground floor of nonresidential buildings façade of buildings fronting a public or private street, pedestrian path or public open space shall consist of transparent, non-reflective windows or doors allowing for a direct visual connection between pedestrians outside and activities occurring inside the buildings.
- » For residential buildings, windows shall be of high quality and afford a shadow line as well as depth. This can be achieved through inset windows with an integral frame or inseting the window into the exterior wall.
- » Non-reflective coatings, low-emissivity glass, and external shade devices should be used to control heat and glare.
- » Windows and doors should be incorporated strategically throughout the building façade to provide visual interest from the exterior and to take advantage of daylight on the interior.
- » Windows should be staggered from fronting windows in neighboring residential buildings, particularly in the case of bedrooms.
- » “Eyes on the street” along major corridors should be emphasized by placing balconies and bay windows along upper stories.
- » Clear glass shall be used on the ground floor of nonresidential buildings. Windows on the ground floor facing streets should constitute a minimum of 30% of the building façade, with minimal obstruction from signs or interior displays to ensure views into the space.



*Illustrative photo of window staggering.*

### 5.3.6 ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

- » Building façades shall be well defined with a distinct base, body, and roof or parapet that allow adjacent buildings to relate to each other.
- » Façade elements such as materials, textures, patterns, colors, and detailing should be used to lessen the perceived mass of larger buildings.
- » The highest level of architectural detailing and quality shall be focused at the ground floor and areas visible from the public realm.
- » Buildings shall be constructed of high quality, durable and environmentally sustainable materials to develop long-lasting buildings that can be adaptively reused over time.
- » Buildings and development shall be designed to respect, enhance, and be compatible with existing adjacent and surrounding development, while also introducing innovative architectural design into the area.
- » Roofs should be designed and considered as an integral part of the overall building design and should add visual interest and diversity among buildings while also contributing to sustainable design strategies.
- » Existing buildings in good condition should be adaptively reused to preserve their unique aesthetic and significance to the community.
- » Building façades and roofs visible from adjacent properties shall be designed and constructed with the same quality and detail as those elements visible from the public right-of-way.



*Illustrative photo of architecturally compatible lighting.*

### 5.3.7 ARCHITECTURAL LIGHTING

- » Lighting shall enhance a building's form and enhance the pedestrian experience at night.
- » Lighting shall not aim directly at the open sky or project off-site or onto adjacent uses.
- » Architectural lighting shall highlight main building entrances and special architectural elements along the building façade.
- » Internal and external storefront lighting shall be designed for ground-floor retail and restaurant spaces to augment the pedestrian space.
- » Blinking, flashing, and oscillating lights are prohibited. Use warm white light where possible, and colored lights should only be used if they are part of the architectural theme of commercial areas or establishments.
- » Lighting shall be located at all building entryways, parking areas, seating areas, transit stops, open space areas, and pedestrian paths.
- » Lighting fixtures shall be compatible with the architectural style of surrounding buildings to reflect the character of the area.
- » Lighting must be provided at intervals adequate for safety, while minimizing light spillage and glare onto adjacent uses and the night sky.
- » Light fixtures shall provide a warm light and use energy-efficient technology, such as solar-powered lighting.
- » Use of natural light shall be maximized, to limit the use of and reliance on artificial light sources. Artificial lighting shall consist solely of energy efficient fixtures.
- » Pocket lighting shall be incorporated into walls, stairs, or bollards as appropriate.

### 5.3.8 PARKING FACILITIES

- » New developments should provide accessible, well-lit, and secure bicycle parking visible from buildings, right-of-way, or public open spaces.
- » Above-ground parking structures shall be internalized, screened, or wrapped with other active ground-floor uses (e.g., retail, office, or residential) along public streets so they are only visible at access points for vehicles and less visible from major streets.
- » The façades of parking structures that are not lined with active uses shall be screened using compatible architectural solutions and/or landscaping that is integrated into the structure's design (e.g., perforated panels, landscape/vine screens, columnar trees, or public art elements).
- » Parking structures shall be designed with materials, color, and detail compatible with the principal building and surrounding buildings.
- » Night lighting shall avoid uplighting, spillover, and glare on nearby properties.
- » Parking structures should incorporate usage technology to assist visitors and minimize the time spent searching for a space.
- » Parking should be located behind, at the side, or at the rear of buildings (away from the street) and can be provided in underground garages, above-ground garages, or interior parking courts.
- » The perimeter of parking areas and driveways adjacent to streets and pedestrian pathways should be screened from street views with a low street wall, berms, fences, or landscaping. Screening should be low enough to not be hidden from passerby views.
- » Surface parking lots should take advantage of adjacent building shade where feasible, or provide sufficient tree coverage to reduce the urban heat island effect and provide shade for vehicles and pedestrians.
- » The façade of parking structures should include vertical features to break up those façades and horizontal features to separate each floor.
- » Projecting elements, awnings, lighting, signs, or other features should be used to highlight pedestrian entrances into parking structures.



*Illustrative photo of parking lot tree coverage.*

- » Subterranean parking facilities may extend to all property lines.
- » For mixed-use developments, shared parking structures should be used for both retail and residential uses, utilizing secure access for residential tenants.

## 5.4 PUBLIC REALM

The public realm is essential to the Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan because it helps facilitate the creation of places beyond an individual building. The sidewalks, streets, medians, and associated amenities, such as trees, lighting, street furniture, public art, are all important components that can help create a safe, comfortable, accessible, and inviting place to be.

### 5.4.1 PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

- » Buildings shall be oriented toward public streets, pedestrian pathways, or public open spaces to create a strong presence and encourage activity along the street frontage.
- » Areas between buildings and open spaces shall be linked to and connected by safe, convenient, and accessible pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
- » Ground floor spaces of commercial and mixed-use buildings shall consist of street-activating commercial uses that embrace the public right-of-way and provide an engaging and interesting pedestrian experience.
- » Pedestrian amenities, such as special paving materials, landscaping, pedestrian-scaled lighting, water fountains, shade, trash and recycling receptacles, and street furniture shall be provided along sidewalks and bike and pedestrian paths.
- » New development shall include safe, convenient, and accessible pedestrian and bicycle connections to key destinations and amenities within the development to adjacent and surrounding neighborhoods.
- » There should be an accessible, well-marked, and well-lit travel path of a minimum of four feet in width provided between parking, buildings, and sidewalks.
- » The selected plant species and design and placement of landscaping shall provide for natural surveillance of pedestrian areas and should avoid the creation of hiding places.
- » Provide distinguishable walking paths as part of a wayfinding system targeted to pedestrians.
- » Transit amenities such as bus stops, seating, bike racks, bike storage, and showers shall be integrated into new projects.



*Illustrative photo of wide sidewalks and pedestrian spaces.*



*Illustrative photo of identifiable crossings.*

- » Create a buffer separating pedestrians from moving vehicles using street furniture, trees, and other sidewalk infrastructure.

## 5.4.2 PUBLIC ART

- » Public art should provide visual interest to the pedestrian realm and enrich the pedestrian experience in the Specific Plan area.
- » Public art should be incorporated early during the design process, and be located in a location that maximizes the number of tenants, visitors, and other passerby to enjoy it.
- » Public art should be incorporated into blank walls and buildings in the form of murals and other installations, as well as in streetscape elements.
- » The design and placement of public art should not disrupt vehicle, bicycle, or pedestrian movement or safety.
- » Where the option of public art placement exists, art should be in spaces that allow for the largest segment of the public and community enjoyment.
- » Walls are encouraged to incorporate art work and other surface articulation to add visual interest to the streetscape.



*Illustrative photo of public art integration.*



*Illustrative photo of public art as urban element.*

### 5.4.3 SUSTAINABILITY & RESOURCE CONSERVATION

- » Trees shall be planted to provide shade along streets, open spaces, and in parking lots, and to shade east and west walls of nearby buildings to help reduce the need for building cooling.
- » Buildings should be oriented for energy efficiency (e.g., to capture day lighting, minimize heat gain, take advantage of prevailing breezes, and for natural ventilation).
- » Parking structures should have shaded structures preferably photovoltaic arrays on the top deck to reduce heat island effects.
- » The use of materials that reduce heat transfer into and out of buildings is encouraged.
- » Recycled-content materials should be prioritized in the design and construction of buildings.



*Illustrative photo of trees providing shading along street.*



*Illustrative photo of permeable paving to facilitate ground water recharge.*



*Illustrative photo of interesting streetscape.*



*Illustrative photo of street furniture.*

## 5.4.4 STREETScape DESIGN

- » In partnership with façade modulation, the colors and materials of buildings should effectively create a streetscape of interest.
- » The streetscape shall be designed to enhance the pedestrian experience and encourage walking as a form of transportation and leisure. Special features should be used to increase safety for the pedestrian, such as raised or textured pavement, curb extensions, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and shade
- » Sidewalks and pedestrian pathways shall include a clear zone allowing for the safe and uninterrupted passage of pedestrians between a building façade and curb.
- » A variety of special colored, textured, and/or permeable paving or surface treatments should be used to delineate areas for pedestrians and other non-motorists within the street-scape.
- » Street furniture should serve a variety of purposes and uses, be of a consistent design character, and should not be in areas that conflict with pedestrian and bicyclist movement.

## 5.4.5 STREET TREES

In general, coordinated planting along the streets can provide shade, introduce seasonal color, define the street edge, and invite pedestrian activity.

The following recommendations for the landscape and planting design palette, show in Figure 5.6, are based on the Department of Public Works' Tree Selection Catalog, LA County's Drought Tolerant Plant List. The landscape recommendations in this Specific Plan are conceptual only on a case by-case basis.

- » Major streets will be composed signature plantings from the plant palette to create clearly defined identities unique to each street to improve wayfinding and announce arrival into the West Athens-Westmont communities.
- » Formal plantings will be arranged along parkways and landscape easements at intervals appropriate with street scale and canopy cover in order to provide a sense of rhythm and movement within the streetscape.
- » Flowering trees and trees with seasonal color to provide a dynamic color palette which denotes the passing of time and creates visual interest.
- » The plant palette incorporates deciduous plant material to provide shade canopies during the warm season while allowing penetration of sunlight during the cooler months.
- » The placement of trees and portions of planted parkways will provide greater separation for pedestrians from the vehicle traffic, promoting the use of sidewalks by creating a more comfortable experience for pedestrians.

**FIGURE 5.6: LANDSCAPE AND PLANTING DESIGN PALETTE**



**Pink Trumpet Tree**



**Australian Flame Tree**



**London Plane Tree**



**Tipu Tree**



**Golden Rain Tree**



**Golden Trumpet Tree**



**Purple Leaf Plum Thundercloud**



**New Zealand Christmas Tree**



**Arizona Ash**



**Elegant Water Gum**



**Coast Live Oak**



**Marina Strawberry Tree**



**African Tulip Tree**



**Australian Willow**



**Desert Willow**



**Chinese Pistache**

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**CHAPTER 6 – MOBILITY & PUBLIC REALM**

## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The Mobility Strategy for the Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan describes the circulation improvements needed to support transit oriented development within the Specific Plan area. A key component of the Specific Plan is the transformation of the current circulation network, which largely supports vehicular travel, to a network that places a higher priority on the principles of complete streets and multi-modal design. The strategies set forth in this document are intended to provide a framework for establishing and maintaining a sustainable circulation network that supports both motorized and non-motorized modes of transportation together in an integrated system.

## 6.2 MOBILITY STRATEGIES

The following mobility recommendations provide direction for future decision-making and development activities in the Specific Plan area. The strategies were developed from input received from community members, stakeholders, and County staff during the community engagement process and County Task Force meetings.

**Strategy 1:** Improve accessibility to transit through the provision of streetscape improvements, high quality bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, wayfinding signage, and other enhancements consistent with Metro's First and Last Mile Strategic Plan.

- » Improve visibility and access to the Metro Green Line Station through increased lighting, signage, and improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.
- » Design streetscapes that provide a comfortable buffer or sense of separation from vehicular traffic.
- » Reallocate excess portions of right-of-way, such as overly wide vehicular travel lanes, to design sidewalks and bicycle facilities that are comfortable and safe for people to enjoy.
- » Utilize wayfinding, signage, and other amenities that allow pedestrian, bicycle, and transit routes to be easily identifiable.
- » Design streetscapes that are attractive and inviting by incorporating sufficient lighting, street trees, landscaping, benches, and other amenities that are pleasant, offer visual stimulation, and promote activity.



Wayfinding & Information Kiosk Example

- » Support walking and biking as first – last mile solutions to transit through the provision of amenities such as bicycle parking, bike racks, street lights, seating, and wayfinding maps and signage.

**Strategy 2:** Design streets to facilitate safe, accessible, connections between major destinations for multiple modes of transportation.

- » Implement complete streets designs that promotes a multi-modal network of streets and prioritizes safety.
- » Provide safe and comfortable pedestrian and bicycle connections between the Metro Green Line and the Los Angeles Southwest College (LASC).
- » Create safe, comfortable, and accessible transit waiting areas through the provision of transit amenities such as shelters, benches, shade structures, lighting, system maps, and transit timetables.
- » Incorporate streetscape improvements as well as bicycle and pedestrian facilities that support transit operations, such as bus pads, wider sidewalks, buffered bike lanes, bike racks, and traffic control devices that prioritize transit vehicles and facilitate pedestrian circulation.
- » Locate transit stops in areas that are active and visible to maximize personal security and safety of waiting transit riders.
- » Prioritize roadway improvement projects that improve access to transit and the Metro Green Line Station.

**Strategy 3:** Develop and incorporate parking management strategies that encourage efficient use of parking resources and support programs that can reduce the parking supply needed.

- » Implement parking policies that encourage travel by public transit and other sustainable modes of transportation, such as priced parking, parking time limits, or prohibited on-street parking.
- » Implement more accurate and flexible parking standards that reflect the parking demand for the area.
- » Support land uses and infrastructure improvements that can reduce the need for parking and promote alternative modes of transportation, such as transit, walking, or biking.



Complete Street Example

## 6.3 STREET NETWORK

The Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan provides a comprehensive and context sensitive street network to connect the West Athens–Westmont community. The existing street network is illustrated in Figure 6.1. Much of the street network within the Specific Plan area will remain the same in order to support new development and growth within the area, however some streetscape improvements are proposed along key arterials within the Specific Plan area. These improvements are intended to transform the existing auto-oriented streetscape into a more sustainable multi-modal design. The Specific Plan's roadway and circulation network plans are described below.

### 6.3.1 IMPERIAL HIGHWAY

#### Existing Conditions

Imperial Highway is classified as a Major Highway on the County Highway Plan and runs east and west within the Specific Plan boundary. The corridor currently meets the minimum width right-of-way standards for a Major Highway classification as set forth in the Los Angeles County General Plan, which is 100 feet. The corridor is surrounded by a variety of land uses including residential, commercial, and open space. The posted speed limit is 35 miles per hour. Within the project area, the roadway consists of three travel lanes in each direction with a raised median in the center. On-street parking is permitted along the corridor, but is limited in some areas within the project area. Metro and the City of Gardena operate bus lines along the corridor.

#### Vision

Imperial Highway serves as a primary corridor within West Athens for vehicles, transit, and pedestrians. Pedestrian amenities, such as improved landscaping, would enhance the safety and overall pedestrian environment along Imperial Highway, ultimately improving the sense of walkability to bus transit connections as well.

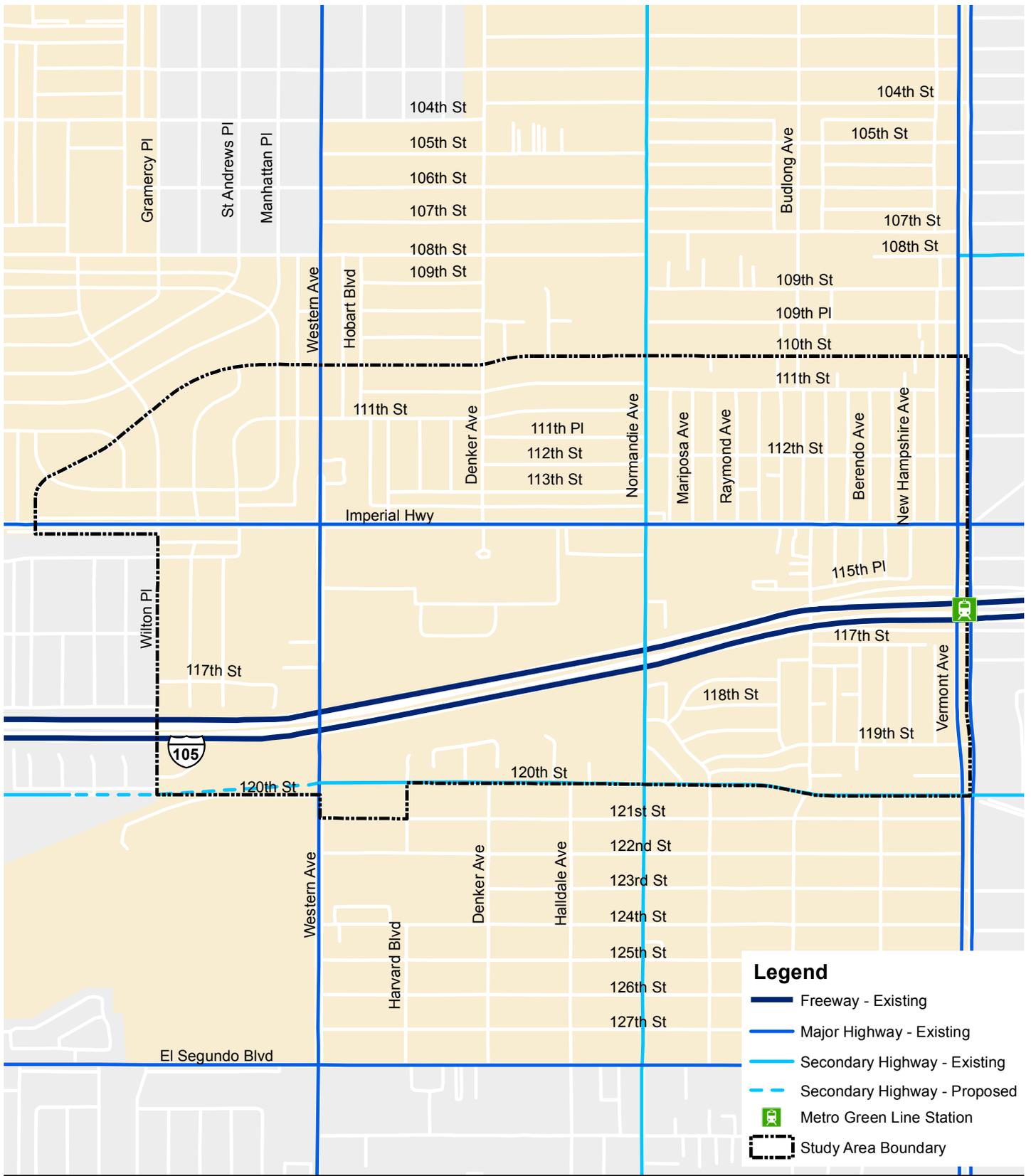
#### Plan Strategy

The Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan proposes additional landscaping to provide a buffer between the sidewalk and the busy corridor. Improved pedestrian amenities would encourage more pedestrian activity and social interactions among the various residential and



*Existing Imperial Highway*

**FIGURE 6.1: WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT STREET NETWORK**



commercial land uses on Imperial Highway, as well as proposed mixed use on the eastern end of the Specific Plan area both north and south of Imperial Highway.

### 6.3.2 VERMONT AVENUE

#### Existing Conditions

Vermont Avenue is classified as a Major Highway on the County Highway Plan and runs north and south within the Specific Plan boundary. The corridor currently meets the minimum width right-of-way standards for a Major Highway classification as set forth in the Los Angeles County General Plan, which is 100 feet. The corridor is surrounded by primarily commercial land use. The posted speed limit is 35 miles per hour and 25 miles per hour in school zones when children are present. Within the project area, the roadway consists of three travel lanes in each direction with a wide raised median in the center. Class II striped bike lanes also exist in each direction within the project area. On-street parking is permitted along much, but not all of the corridor within the project area. Metro and the City of Gardena operate bus lines along the corridor.



Existing Vermont Avenue

#### Vision

As Vermont Avenue is a key transit corridor with multiple bus routes from various local transit agencies traversing through the corridor. With the successful passage of Measure M, Metro plans to implement bus rapid transit (BRT) along Vermont Avenue and link up to four rail lines along its route between the Sunset/Vermont Red Line station to 120<sup>th</sup> Street, near the I-110 and I105 freeway interchange. The planned BRT service would also serve the existing Vermont Green Line station located within the Specific Plan area. The Specific Plan's vision for Vermont Avenue highlights the corridor's role in connecting people to transit by expanding the pedestrian environment with wider sidewalks and reduced vehicle travel lane widths. Additionally, pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure should include improved landscaping and buffered bike lanes to improve accessibility to the area's rich transit network

#### Plan Strategy

The Specific Plan proposes widening the existing sidewalk on the overpass as well as north of the overpass. As the northern portion of Vermont Avenue currently includes a bike lane on one side of the street, the Specific Plan proposes extending the bike lane to the rest of the corridor on both sides and introduces striped buffers on either side of the lanes for visibility

and safety. To accommodate for these additions, travel lanes on each side along the length of the corridor should be reduced in width to slow down vehicle traffic and create an enhanced multi-modal environment along proposed mixed use to the west of Vermont Avenue. Improved landscaping helps to further promote pedestrian activity to transit connections.

### 6.3.3 NORMANDIE AVENUE

#### Existing Conditions

Normandie Avenue is classified as a Secondary Highway on the County Master Plan and runs north and south within the Specific Plan boundary. The corridor currently meets the minimum width right-of-way standards for a Secondary Highway classification as set forth in the Los Angeles County General Plan, which is 80 feet. The segment of Normandie Avenue between 110<sup>th</sup> Street to 120<sup>th</sup> Street lies within the TOD boundary. The corridor is surrounded by a variety of land uses including residential and commercial land uses. The posted speed limit is 40 miles per hour north of Imperial Highway and 45 miles per hour south of Imperial Highway. Within the project area, the roadway on-street parking is permitted along a portion, but not all of the corridor within the project area. Metro operates bus lines along the corridor.

#### Vision

Normandie Avenue is a major roadway connector throughout the Specific Plan area as well as throughout the local region. As it is located in the middle of the Specific Plan area, pedestrian connectivity to adjacent corridors should be reinforced through the provision of streetscape improvements to enhance the safety and overall pedestrian environment.

#### Plan Strategy

Normandie Avenue connects 120<sup>th</sup> Street to Imperial Highway and a mix of institutional, commercial, and residential uses. As such, the Specific Plan proposes introducing pedestrian amenities along Normandie Avenue by improving landscaping with the addition of street trees on each side of the corridor.



Existing Normandie Avenue

## 6.3.4 WESTERN AVENUE

### Existing Conditions

Western Avenue is classified as a Major Highway on the County Master Plan and runs north and south within the Specific Plan boundary. The corridor currently meets the minimum width right-of-way standards for a Major Highway classification as set forth in the Los Angeles County General Plan, which is 100 feet. The corridor is surrounded by a variety of land uses including residential, commercial, and open space. The posted speed limit is 40 miles per hour and 25 miles per hour in school zones when children are present. Within the project area, the roadway consists of two travel lanes in each direction with a center two-way left turn lane. On-street-parking is permitted along a portion, but not all of the corridor within the project area. Metro and the City of Gardena operates bus lines along the corridor.



*Existing Western Avenue*

### Vision

Western Avenue currently functions differently north of Imperial Highway as compared to south of Imperial Highway in terms of on-street parking and separation of bike lanes. The vision for Western Avenue is to ensure consistency along the corridor by improving the portion north of Imperial Highway with a more multi-modal design.

### Plan Strategy

As a Major Highway, Western Avenue connects the southern portion of the Specific Plan area with the northern portion, with Los Angeles Southwest College to the east of the corridor and mixed use and neighborhood commercial to the west. The Specific Plan proposes continuing the buffered bike lanes that currently exist south of Imperial Highway onto the northern portion of Western Avenue. This includes reducing travel and turn lane widths in order to accommodate for bike lanes as well as slow down vehicle traffic. Along with improved landscaping, this ensures a safer infrastructure for bicyclists and a less auto-oriented corridor.

## 6.3.5 120<sup>TH</sup> STREET

### Existing Conditions

120<sup>th</sup> street is classified as a Secondary Highway on the County Master Plan and runs east and west within the Specific Plan boundary. The corridor currently meets the minimum width right-of-way standards for a Secondary Highway classification

as set forth in the Los Angeles County General Plan, which is 80 feet. The corridor is surrounded by a variety of land uses including residential and commercial land use. The posted speed limit is 35 miles per hour and 25 miles per hour in school zones when children are present. Within the project area, the roadway consists of two travel lanes in each direction with a striped center line. On-street parking is permitted along much, but not all of the corridor within the project area.

### **Vision**

The vision for 120<sup>th</sup> Street consists of a road diet in order to achieve consistency with the portion of 120<sup>th</sup> Street east of Vermont Avenue. Improved landscaping and buffered bike lanes should be implemented to enhance the safety and overall pedestrian environment along the southern section of the Specific Plan area.

### **Plan Strategy**

120<sup>th</sup> Street is located just south of West Athens Elementary School and west of Vermont Avenue. A road diet would help to slow vehicle traffic in the area and improve safety for students walking or biking to school. To implement a road diet along this corridor, travel lanes should be reduced to one travel lane in each direction with a turn lane in the center. The Specific Plan also introduces buffered bike lanes on each side of the corridor to further enhance safety measures along 120<sup>th</sup> Street.

## **6.4 PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION**

First-and-last mile connections to transit depend in large part on the pedestrian environment. The quality of pedestrian infrastructure surrounding transit stops often impacts an individual's decision to utilize transit. Adequate pedestrian infrastructure, together with appropriate land use designations, can help to activate corridors and promote pedestrian activity. This section discusses some of the existing opportunities to improve the pedestrian environment within the West Athens–Westmont community and to reinforce the area as a TOD district.

### **6.4.1 SIDEWALK HIERARCHY**

Sidewalks must be recognized not as a pedestrian amenity, but as the back bone of West Athens–Westmont's pedestrian network. Sidewalks present inventive opportunities to transform streets into public spaces. In order to create a vibrant walking

environment that encourages pedestrian activity, sidewalks need to be safe, connected, comfortable, accessible, and attractive.

Although sidewalks exist along major corridors within the Specific Plan area, most sidewalks are narrow in width and do not support high levels of pedestrian activity. The Specific Plan proposes a sidewalk hierarchy to establish a physical framework for sidewalk design. The sidewalk hierarchy is intended to facilitate the most appropriate allocation of space that encourages people to walk as a part of their everyday routine.

The sidewalk hierarchy is composed of three levels: Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3. Each level varies in their allocation of space amongst the frontage zone, pedestrian zone, furniture zone, and curb zone, which are defined as follows:

- **Frontage Zone:** The frontage zone encompasses the area of the sidewalk that separates pedestrians from the property line or building/store fronts. The frontages zone typically provides space for outdoor seating, store entrances, street vendors, and provides a buffer for pedestrians from opening doors and other architectural elements.
- **Pedestrian Zone:** The pedestrian zone is the area of the sidewalk that is specifically reserved for pedestrian travel. It should be free of obstacles, well-lit, and functional in all weather conditions. Street furniture, plantings, outdoor seating, utility boxes, and other elements should not protrude into the pedestrian zone. Additionally, the surface quality of the pedestrian zone is of key importance and should be smooth, stable, and slip resistant, with minimal gaps and rough surfaces.
- **Furniture Zone:** The furniture zone is the area of the sidewalk between the pedestrian zone and the street curb. The furniture zone provides space for utilities, such as traffic poles and fire hydrants, as well as amenities, such as benches, bus shelters, and street trees. Items placed in this zone must be strategically located so not to obstruct sight lines, prevent damage from vehicles on the street, and to allow for access to and from parked cars.
- **Curb Zone:** The curb zone is the first six inches of sidewalk area immediately adjacent to the roadway. The curb zone discourages motor vehicles from driving onto the sidewalk, prevents excess water from collecting onto the sidewalk, and provides a valuable cue that separates the sidewalk from the roadway and vehicular traffic.



*Example Sidewalk*

Each level within the hierarchy is designed to support varying levels of pedestrian activity. Locations of each level corresponds with the locations of the various pathways in the Metro Pathways hierarchy. For instance, Level 1 sidewalks, which are the widest sidewalks, should be located along pathway arterials to accommodate high levels of pedestrian activity. Level 2 sidewalks should be located along pathway collectors to accommodate moderate levels of pedestrian activity, while Level 3 sidewalks should be reserved for low-density residential streets. The various levels of the sidewalk hierarchy are defined as follows:

- Level 1: Level 1 sidewalks are the widest sidewalks within the hierarchy and should have a minimum width of ten feet in order to support high pedestrian volumes and to accommodate the street trees, benches, outdoor seating, and other amenities. Level 1 sidewalks should be located along pathway arterials and areas with higher density, mixed-use, or commercial land use development. Space allocation for Level 1 sidewalks should favor the pedestrian and frontage zone to provide adequate passing space between pedestrians and to accommodate for store-front amenities such as outdoor seating within commercial or mixed-use zones.
- Level 2: Level 2 sidewalks are slightly narrower in width than Level 1 sidewalks and should have a minimum width of seven feet in order to accommodate moderate levels of pedestrian activity and to accommodate some pedestrian amenities. Level 2 sidewalks should be located along pathway collectors. Space allocation for Level 2 sidewalks should favor the pedestrian and furniture zone.
- Level 3: Level 3 sidewalks are the narrowest sidewalks within the hierarchy and should be located along low-density residential streets that do not carry high volumes of traffic or pedestrian activity. They should have a minimum width of five feet in order to meet American Disability Act (ADA) standards and be accessible for all pedestrians regardless of ability. Due to its minimal width, space allocation of Level 3 sidewalks should favor the pedestrian zone.

Figure 6.2 illustrates the suggested locations of the various sidewalk levels. The Specific Plan, however, recognizes that sidewalk design and construction often occurs under constrained conditions, such as narrow right-of-ways, utilities, grading, and topography. These are all key factors to consider when designing and constructing accessible sidewalks.

## 6.4.2 PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

A safe and comprehensive pedestrian network requires the ability to complete two important functions: walking along streets and crossing streets safely. Several tools exist to enhance the overall pedestrian experience and to help make crossing streets easier and safer for pedestrians. The Specific Plan recommends that the following design guidelines to facilitate safe pedestrian crossing:

1. **Marked Crosswalks** - Marked crosswalks are a key element in providing safe pedestrian crossings. Crosswalks help to guide pedestrians and identify locations where it is safe to cross, as well as inform drivers of pedestrian movements. Crosswalks can be located at intersections, mid-block crossings, or uncontrolled crossings. Crosswalks shall meet basic requirements for visibility and shall follow guidelines set forth in the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). The Specific Plan recommends that crosswalks be in place at the following locations whenever possible:
  - » All signalized intersections
  - » Near key transit stops and stations
  - » Locations with heavy pedestrian volumes
  - » Along school walking routes
  - » Trail crossings



Existing Pedestrian Crossing

The Specific Plan proposes the following crosswalk improvements to improve pedestrian safety and crossing:

| LOCATION                                  | CORNER/LEG           | PROJECT DESCRIPTION                      |
|---|----------------------|--|
| Western Ave/110th Street                  | East/West leg        | Stripe continental crosswalk             |
| Western Ave/111th Street                  | All legs             | Restripe as continental crosswalk        |
| Western Ave/Imperial Hwy                  | All legs             | Restripe as continental school crosswalk |
| Western Ave/LA Southwest College          | North/East/West legs | Stripe as continental school crosswalk   |
| Vermont Ave/ Vermont-Athens Metro Station | Mid-block            | Stripe continental crosswalk             |
| Vermont Ave/ Vermont-Athens Metro Station | Mid-block            | Add pedestrian signage                   |

2. **Pedestrian Safety Islands** – Pedestrian safety islands provide pedestrians refuge and reduces the exposure time experienced at crossing wide intersections and should be installed at locations where pedestrians are required to cross three lanes of traffic in one direction.

- 3.** Curb Extensions – Curb extensions are traffic calming treatments that narrow the roadway to create safer and shorter crossing distance for pedestrians. They also help to improve the overall visibility of pedestrians by placing them in alignment with on-street parking. They should be placed on streets with high pedestrian volumes or along wide streets that are difficult to cross.
- 4.** Curb Ramps – Curb ramps are critical features to improve accessibility pedestrians with mobility limitations and visual impairments. They should be installed at all crosswalks to comply with ADA requirements.



5. Pedestrian Crossing Signage – Pedestrian crossing signage is used to alert motorists of the presence of pedestrians along roadways. They should be installed at uncontrolled crossings to alert motorists in advance.

### 6.4.3 PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES

The pedestrian network plays a key role in creating vibrant public spaces that encourage social activity, as well as a sense of place and community. Pedestrian friendly sidewalks should incorporate amenities that are attractive, pleasant, offer visual stimulation, promote activity. The Specific Plan recommends that the following design guidelines to guide the installation of pedestrian amenities:

1. Street Trees – Street trees serve a variety of urban design functions such as acting as a pedestrian buffer, accentuating spaces, creating a sense of enclosure, providing shade and filtered light, and improving visual aesthetics along a corridor. Street trees should be incorporated whenever possible, especially along pathway arterials. All street trees should be planted in accordance with established County planting standards.
2. Seating – Seating provides reprieve for pedestrians and provides a place to rest or wait. Providing comfortable places to sit can transform a sidewalk into a gathering place for social activity. Pedestrian seating and benches should be installed when feasible and should adhere to ADA standards and should not obstruct pedestrian pathways.
3. Street Lights – Street lights provide a sense of safety and security for pedestrians and waiting transit patrons, as well as facilitate the safe movement of vehicular traffic. Appropriate levels of street lighting should be installed to provide safe, consistent lighting along a corridor, while reducing energy consumption and costs.
4. Public Art – Public art features help provide visual stimulation and improve visual aesthetics along a corridor. They can help unify an area or district or help to identify a neighborhood gateway. Care should be given to the installation of public art to ensure that they do not obstruct pedestrian pathways and they adhere to ADA standards.



Seating Example



Pedestrian Street Light Example

## 6.5 BICYCLE CIRCULATION

Bicycling provides a sustainable solution for traveling the first and last mile to and from a transit station. While transit and bicycling are complementary modes, issues of infrastructure connectivity often impacts a person's decision to bike the first and last mile of their journey from transit. The following section describes improvements to bicycle network to promote bicycling within the Specific Plan area.

### 6.5.1 BICYCLE FACILITY TYPES

Bikeways are facilities that are designated primarily for bicycle travel. They are generally divided into three types: Class I, Class II, and Class III.

- Class I (Bike Path) – Provides a completely separated right-of-way (off-street) designated for the exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians with crossflow traffic minimized.
- Class II (Bike Lane) – Provides a restricted right-of-way (on-street) designated for the exclusive or semi-exclusive use of bicycles with through travel by motor vehicles or pedestrians prohibited, but with crossflows by pedestrians and motorists permitted. Vehicle parking can be allowed to the right of bike lane if sufficient right-of-way width exists.
- Class III (Bike Route) – Provides for shared use with pedestrians or motor vehicles and is (on-street) designated by signs or permanent markings.

### 6.5.2 BICYCLE NETWORK

Figure 6.3 illustrates the level of bicycle accessibility within a three mile radius of the Vermont Green Line station. Using the station as a starting point, all possibly bicycle routes were mapped based on the street grid and then consolidated into a larger catchment shape or bike shed. Although there are 42 miles of existing bikeways within the three mile radius of the Vermont Green Line station, there are only 0.5 miles of existing Class II bikeways located within the Specific Plan area itself. The existing bicycle network within the Specific Plan area provides limited accessibility and connectivity. One of the main constraints of the existing bicycle network is the limited facilities to the west of the Vermont-Athens Green Line station and limited north-south access.



*Class I (Bike Path) Example*



*Existing Class II (Bike Lane)*

**FIGURE 6.3: BICYCLE NETWORK MAP**



**Legend**

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|  Green Line Station  | <b>Existing Bikeways</b>  | <b>Proposed Bikeways</b>  |
|  Study Area Boundary |  Class I   |  Class I   |
|  3-Mile Buffer       |  Class II  |  Class II  |
|  3-Mile Bike Shed    |  Class III |  Class III |

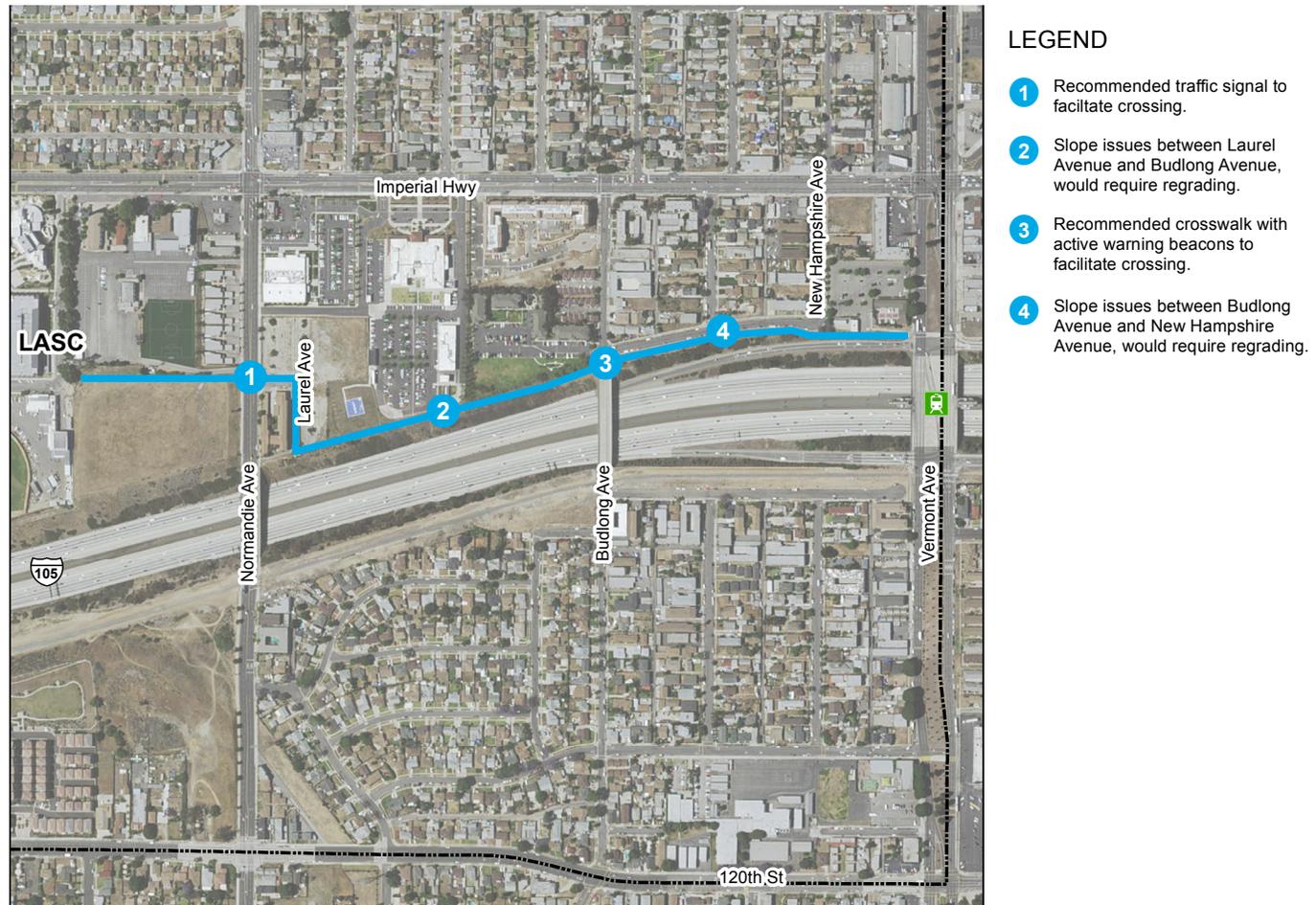
Note: there are no Class I bikeways within a 3-mile radius of the study area.

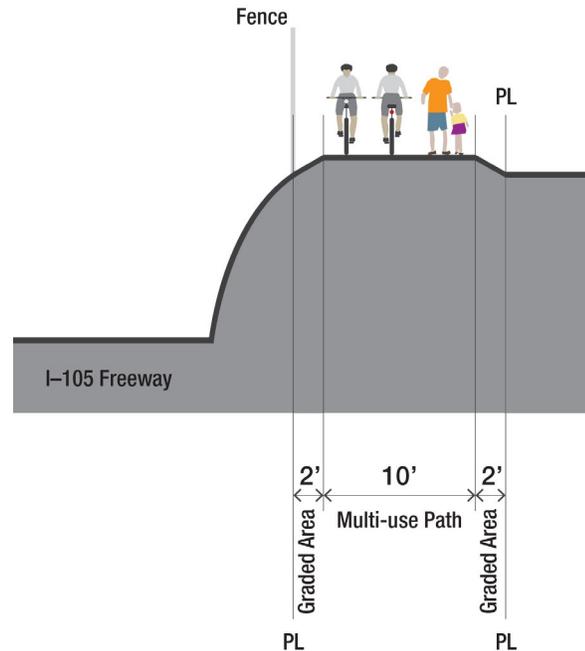
The Specific Plan proposes to add approximately 11 miles of bikeways to the existing network. These streets were selected based on the opportunities they presented to improve connectivity within West Athens–Westmont and the regional bikeway network of neighboring cities.

### 6.5.3 MULTI-USE PATH TO LASC

To address the connection between Los Angeles Southwest College and the region’s transit network, the Specific Plan proposes constructing a multi-use path from LASC to Vermont Avenue, as illustrated in Figure 6.4. Construction of this multi-use path would provide students with a safe path to access transit in the area. Because this path would be located along I-105, regrading is necessary for even sloping, as well as a fence to separate the path, as illustrated in Figure 6.5. Additionally, crosswalk and traffic signals should be added to facilitate crossing near major corridors. Construction of this multi-use path should follow Caltrans Design Guidelines for Class I bike lanes.

**FIGURE 6.4: FIRST-LAST MILE CONNECTION TO LASC**



**FIGURE 6.5: MULTI-USE PATH SECTION**

### 6.5.4 BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE AMENITIES

In addition to the provision of bikeways, the Specific Plan recommends the following design guidelines to guide the installation of bicycle infrastructure amenities:

1. **Bicycle Parking** – Providing ample, well-designed bicycle parking is a key component to increasing bicycling within an area. Bicycle parking consists of racks that supports the bicycle upright and provides a secure place to lock. Care should be given to their installation to ensure that they do not obstruct pedestrian pathways and they adhere to ADA standards.
2. **Bike Crossing Signals** – Bicycle signals facilitate safe intersection crossing by instructing bicyclists when they are able to enter an intersection and by restricting conflicting vehicular movement.
3. **Bicycle Wayfinding Signage** – Bicycle wayfinding systems typically consists of signs or pavement markings that indicate information regarding route, destinations, and directions. They help familiarize bicyclists with the bikeway network, identify best routes to destinations, and alert motorists of the presence of bicyclists. They should be placed along all streets that are part of the bikeway network.



Bike Parking

## 6.6 SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING

Signage and wayfinding provides critical information to pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders about the space that they are navigating. They help to assure safety and comfort as people traverse through unfamiliar neighborhoods and communities. Transit stops, such as the Athens/Vermont stop, should be identified with signage so that various user groups can recognize and navigate to its location. These signs should indicate the stop name and include appropriate directional signage to identify its location. They should ideally be located along pathway arterials and collectors. Figure 6.9 illustrates the locations of proposed wayfinding signage.

## 6.7 SAFETY AND COMFORT

A key element impacting the overall transit experience includes the safety and comfort of the transit stop environment. An individual's perception of safety and comfort walking to and from a transit station as well as waiting for transit will impact their decision to use public transit. Because the I-105 freeway lies within the Specific Plan boundary, freeway underpass and overpass enhancements are key in improving safety and comfort for the residents and visitors of the West Athens–Westmont community.

The Specific Plan recommends incorporating visually-engaging elements at freeway crossings to make a friendlier street and pull active transportation users along the Vermont Avenue pathway. Elements such as street trees or other landscaping features can help to beautify the area. Additionally, incorporating public art along the I-105 overpass or underpass can also help engage pedestrians and bicyclists by giving them compelling things to look at.

The pedestrian experience and safety along the overpass can also be improved by installing special paving and bollards along curb edges. These features help to improve safety for pedestrians with visual impairments and provide a valuable cue separating the sidewalk from the roadway and vehicular traffic.



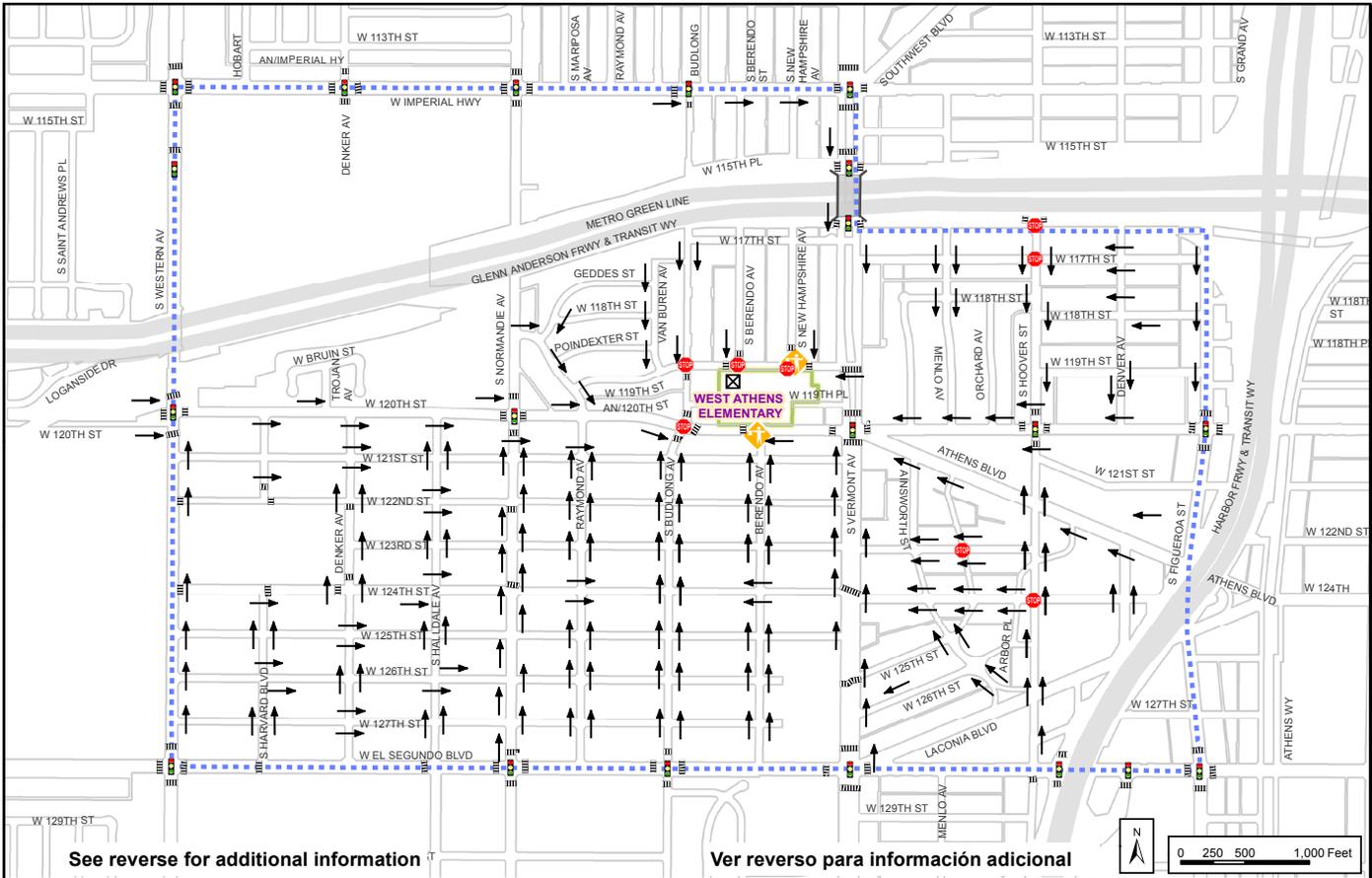
Wayfinding Example

## 6.8 SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a program that focuses on helping children get to school safely by walking and bicycling. The West Athens Elementary School lies within the Specific Plan area, creating the need to develop a safe network of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure for children to utilize. The Safe Routes to School plan for West Athens Elementary School as suggested by the County of Los Angeles Public Works Department is illustrated in Figure 6.6. The Specific Plan proposes the following design guidelines to promote safer routes to school:

1. Appropriate levels of street lighting should be installed on both sides of wide streets.
2. Appropriate traffic controls, such as marked crosswalks, traffic signals, and warning signs or flashers should be utilized at pedestrian crossing locations.
3. Curb ramps with warning strips, such as truncated domes, should be provided at pedestrian street crossings to facilitate the safe crossings of pedestrians with mobility or vision impairments.

**FIGURE 6.6: WEST ATHENS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL MAP**



See reverse for additional information

Ver reverso para información adicional



**Suggested Route to School Map**

**WEST ATHENS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

County of Los Angeles

|  |                |  |                            |
|--|----------------|--|----------------------------|
|  | Crossing Guard |  | School Entrance            |
|  | Crosswalk      |  | Suggested Route            |
|  | Traffic Signal |  | Pedestrian Bridge          |
|  | All Way Stop   |  | School Attendance Boundary |

## 6.9 TRANSIT CIRCULATION

Transit plays a substantial role within the West Athens–Westmont community. It serves as the primary mode of transportation for many who lack access to a private vehicle or are unable to drive independently. A key component of the Specific Plan is to improve accessibility to the existing transit system and the overall transit experience, which encompasses more than the transit ride itself, but also includes getting to and from transit and the rider’s experience waiting for transit.

### 6.9.1 LOCAL BUS SERVICES

The Specific Plan area has access to an extensive network of public transportation. The study area encompasses several local bus routes operated by Metro and the City of Gardena. The Specific Plan area is serviced by a total of eight local bus routes. Additionally, the Metro Green Line also operates within the study area and provides light rail services connecting the South Bay, Harbor Gateway, and Norwalk communities.

The Metro Green Line runs in the median of the Glenn Anderson Freeway (I-105) within the study area boundary. The existing Vermont/Athens Green Line Station is located underneath the Vermont Avenue overpass in the median of the I-105 freeway. It is accessible from Vermont Avenue via stairways and elevators. Although transit amenities exist at the station, such as benches, wayfinding maps, and shelter, the station lacks a sense of transparency, or the degree to which an individual can see or perceive what lies beyond the edge of a street or public space in order to feel safe.

Primary transit corridors within the study area boundary consists of Imperial Highway, Vermont Avenue, and Western Avenue. Seven bus routes travel along Imperial Highway (Metro bus routes 120, 206, 207, 209, 757, and City of Gardena bus route 2), five bus routes travel along Vermont Avenue (Metro bus routes 204, 206, 209, 754, and City of Gardena bus route 2), and three bus routes travel along Western Avenue (Metro bus routes 207, 209, and City of Gardena bus route 2).

The Specific Plan recommends coordinating operating schedules between local feeder bus routes and the Metro Green Line to improve the overall transit service and multi-operator transit trips. Schedule improvements, such as minimizing passenger wait times between transfers, can help improve efficiency and encourage more transit ridership.



*Station Entry Example*

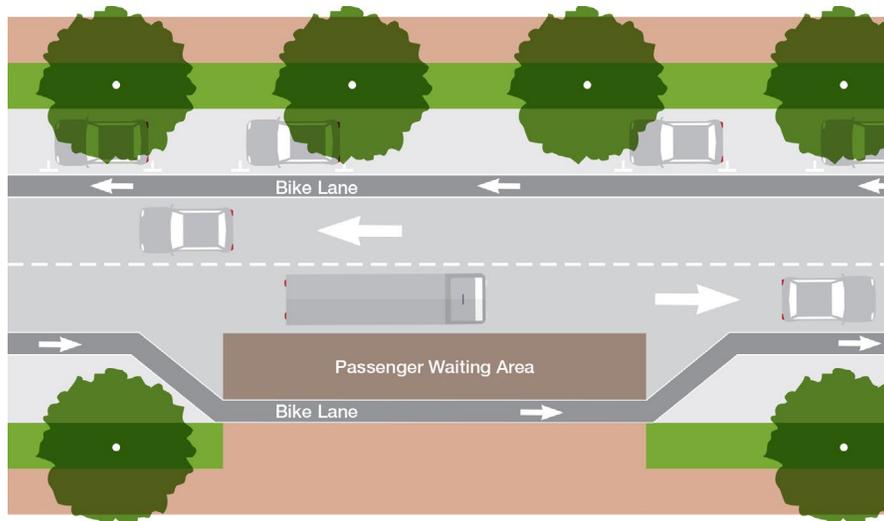


*Existing Bus Route Along Vermont*

## 6.9.2 BUS AND BIKE INTERFACE

The Specific Plan also acknowledges that alternative modes of transportation, such as transit and bicycling are complementary modes and must often interact with one another on urban and suburban streets. The coexistence between buses and bikes on roadways, however, can present significant challenges due to differences in size, average speed, and stopping patterns. Conflicts often arise as bicyclists must share the right-hand lane and curb with stopping buses. To minimize these types of conflicts, the Specific Plan encourages the exploration of alternative bus stop designs outside of the conventional curbside stops. One such design includes creating a short bike channel that diverts bicycle traffic behind transit stops as depicted in Figures 6.7 and 6.8. Additional analysis should be conducted in order to determine feasibility and evaluate effectiveness.

**FIGURE 6.8: FLOATING BUS STOP AND BIKE CHANNEL DESIGN**



**FIGURE 6.7: FLOATING BUS STOP AND BIKE CHANNEL IN SEATTLE**



Source: NACTO Urban Street Design Guide

### 6.9.3 TRANSIT ACCESS

A key element impacting the overall transit experience includes the safety and comfort of the transit stop environment. An individual's perception of safety and comfort walking to and from a transit station as well as waiting for transit will impact their decision to use public transit.

Currently, the Vermont Green Line station is located in the Specific Plan area on Vermont Avenue. Existing conditions along the corridor impact visibility of the station. Although existing sidewalks along the corridor are approximately ten feet wide, the number and width of vehicular travel lanes make the corridor feel unsafe for pedestrians and bicyclists. The Specific Plan proposes widening the sidewalk along the corridor, reducing the width of the travel lanes, adding buffered bike lanes, and introducing additional wayfinding to the station to improve visibility and encourage walking, biking, and transit use.

### 6.9.4 TRANSIT AMENITIES

Transit stop amenities work to improve operations, ridership levels, and the overall transit experience. Amenities can include shelters, benches, lighting, transit information, bicycle racks, and public art. Well-designed transit stops can improve patron comfort and convenience and attract new riders. Installation of transit stop amenities should be done in consultation with the local transit agencies servicing the area, which includes Metro, and Gardena Municipal.

Bus shelters play an important role in transit operations. They provide patrons shelter from varying weather conditions and provide a place to rest and wait. Bus shelters should provide other amenities such as benches, stop ID, route information, and lighting. Additionally, shelter placement should not obstruct the loading and unloading of passengers or the pedestrian pathway.

Transit information is also an important amenity at transit stops. Whenever possible, transit stops should include information on service routes and schedules, as well as local area maps and wayfinding information. Providing transit information at stops allow patrons to determine whether or not they are waiting at the correct stop and where they need to go once they arrive at their stop. Ideally, real-time arrival information should also be included whenever possible in order to improve transit reliability and encourage transit usage.



Transit Shelter Example

## 6.10 FIRST-LAST MILE STRATEGIES

In 2014, the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) approved its First Last Mile Strategic Plan, which identifies design strategies to improve active transportation access and connections to public transit. The Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan recognizes that station access is a key element in successful TOD station area planning and has identified strategies that focuses on improving accessibility during the first and last miles of a transit rider's journey. These strategies include streetscape improvements, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements, as well as signage and wayfinding improvements.

### 6.10.1 PATHWAYS

The Metro Pathways concept established in Metro's First and Last Mile Strategic Plan includes a hierarchy of pathways that extend to and from a transit station and is designed to support active modes of transportation. These pathways take into consideration the existing street network, key destinations, feeder transit services, existing and planned infrastructure, existing bike and pedestrian volumes, and surrounding land uses in order to design a physical active transportation network that improves transit station access. The Metro Pathways concept is comprised of two types of pathways, pathway arterials and pathway collectors. Pathway arterials serve as the main branches of the network, while pathway collectors serve as feeder routes. Figure 6.9 illustrates the Metro Pathway network surrounding the Athens/Vermont Green Line station and includes pathway arterials, pathway collectors, existing Metro bus stops, key destinations, and suggested areas for wayfinding signage.



*Example Pathway*

### 6.10.2 PATHWAY ARTERIALS

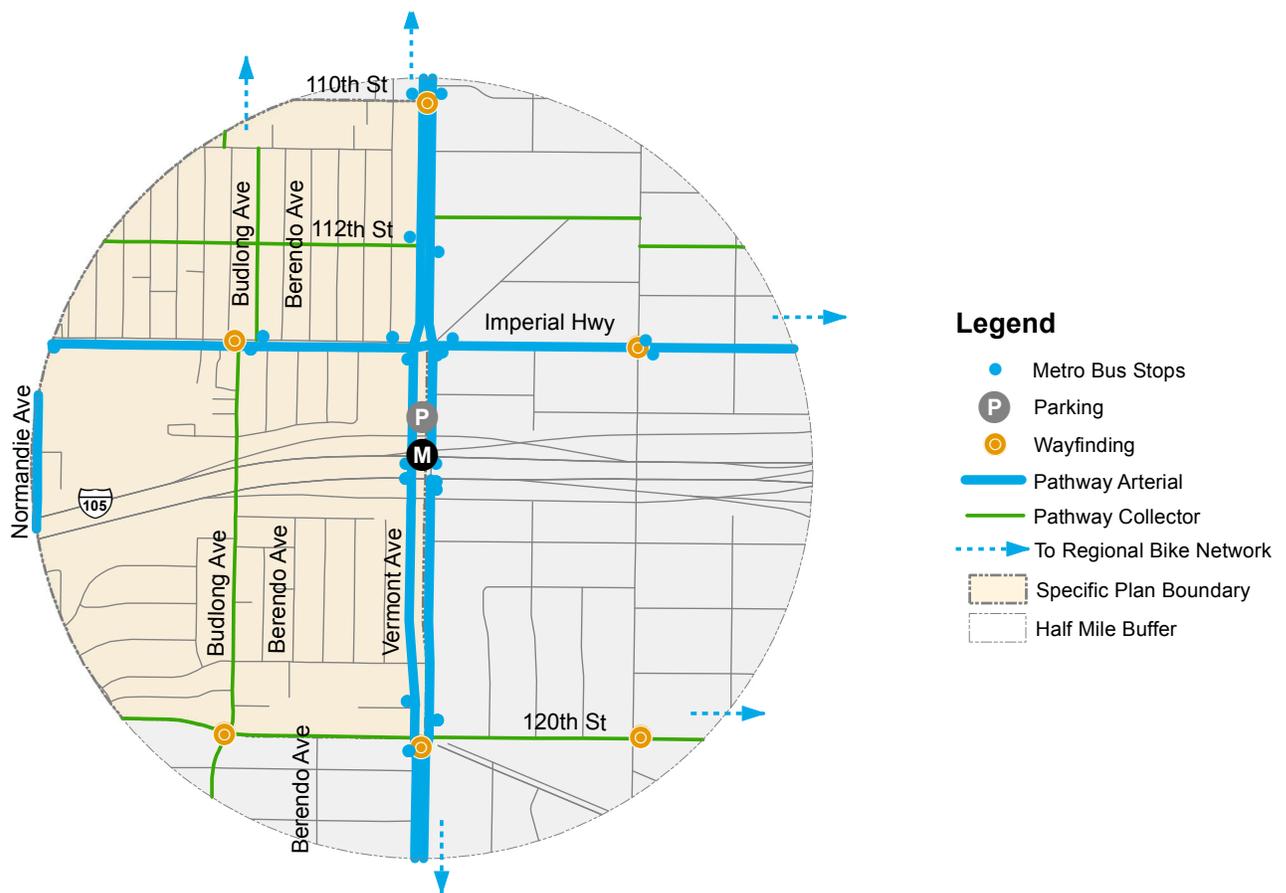
Pathway arterials are primary routes that extend from stations and support maximum throughput activity for active transportation users. They are designed to accommodate high levels of active transportation and a broad range of users. They typically include design treatments such as separated active transportation lanes, signal and crossing improvements, wayfinding, and plug-in components (i.e. bike share). Pathway arterials should typically radiate out from a station portal in at least four directions, and extend out at a minimum of one-half mile from the station to an upper limit of three miles from the station. Pathway arterials should also

integrate the regional bikeway network at opportune points beyond the one-half mile access shed.

### 6.10.3 PATHWAY COLLECTORS

Pathway collectors are routes within the station area that both feed into pathway arterials and support crossing movements and general station area permeability. They work to reduce travel distances for non-motorized users by focusing on the provision of efficient access to pathway arterials. Pathway collectors include streets and routes located within the one-half mile access shed of a transit station and streets that feed into the main branch lines or pathway arterials. They typically include design considerations that improve intersection and mid-block crossings.

**FIGURE 6.9: FIRST-AND-LAST MILE PATHWAY NETWORK**



## 6.11 PARKING

Parking policies play a significant role in the viability and success of TOD projects and districts. These policies can help to shape an area's travel behavior, community design, and local economic growth. The existing parking supply within the Specific Plan area is comprised of a combination of on-street and off-street parking resources. The County has expressed interest in the potential removal of on-street parking along major arterials throughout Los Angeles County and encouraging new development projects to provide sufficient parking on-site. The potential removal of on-street parking along major arterials provides additional opportunities for enhancing multimodal travel and improving the existing streetscapes.

The Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan provides modifications to the parking requirements contained in Chapter 22.52 Part 11 of Title 22. These modifications are intended to provide a parking supply that supports TOD districts and allows for greater flexibility in the provision of minimum parking spaces.

Table 6.1 provides off-street parking requirements for the Specific Plan area.



*Study Area On-Street Parking Example*

**TABLE 6.1: PARKING REQUIREMENTS**

| <b>Standard</b>           | <b>Minimum</b>               | <b>Maximum</b>              |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>R-1 / R-2 Zone</b>     |                              |                             |
| Single Family Residential | 2.0/DU                       | 2.0/DU                      |
| <b>R-3 Zone</b>           |                              |                             |
| Bachelor Apartment        | 0.60/DU                      | 1.0/DU                      |
| 1 Bedroom                 | 0.90/DU                      | 1.25/DU                     |
| 2 Bedroom                 | 1.20/DU                      | 2.0/DU                      |
| Guest                     | 0.15/DU                      | 0.25/DU                     |
| <b>RPD Zone</b>           |                              |                             |
| Single Family Residential | 2.0 / DU                     | 2.0 / DU                    |
| <b>MXD-1 Zone</b>         |                              |                             |
| Bachelor Apartment        | 0.60 / DU                    | 1.0 / DU                    |
| 1 Bedroom                 | 0.90 / DU                    | 1.25 / DU                   |
| 2 Bedroom                 | 1.20 / DU                    | 2.0 / DU                    |
| Guest                     | 0.15 / DU                    | 0.25 / DU                   |
| Office                    | 1.50 / 1,000 sf              | 2.0 / 1,000 sf              |
| Retail                    | 2.50 / 1,000 sf              | 3.5 / 1,000 sf              |
| Restaurant                | 7.00 / 1,000 sf              | 17.0 / 1,000 sf             |
| <b>MXD-2 Zone</b>         |                              |                             |
| Bachelor Apartment        | 0.60/DU                      | 1.0/DU                      |
| 1 Bedroom                 | 0.90/DU                      | 1.0/DU                      |
| 2 Bedroom                 | 1.20/DU                      | 2.0/DU                      |
| Guest                     | 0.15/DU                      | 0.25/DU                     |
| Office                    | 1.50 / 1,000 sf              | 2.0 / 1,000 sf              |
| Retail                    | 2.40 / 1,000 sf              | 3.0 / 1,000 sf              |
| Restaurant                | 6.80 / 1,000 sf              | 12.0 / 1,000 sf             |
| <b>C-2 Zone</b>           |                              |                             |
| Retail                    | 3.0 / 1,000 sf               | 3.5 / 1,000 sf              |
| <b>CC Zone</b>            |                              |                             |
| Office                    | 2.0 / 1,000 sf               | 2.0 / 1,000 sf              |
| <b>IT Zone</b>            |                              |                             |
| Schools                   | 0.18 / per school population | 0.2 / per school population |

## 6.12 STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

The Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan recognizes the role that the built environment and street design plays on a community's health and wellness. Well-designed streets can provide safer and more attractive settings for people to walk and bike, as well as to encourage more transit use. The Specific Plan focuses on laying the foundation for a more unified network of streets that promote multi-modal circulation as well as the safe and efficient movement of motorized and non-motorized modes of transportation. This section describes the proposed streetscape improvements within the West Athens-Westmont TOD Specific Plan area. To ensure adequate emergency access, future streetscape improvements are subject to approval from the County of Los Angeles Fire Department's Land Development Unit. The Specific Plan proposes the following streetscape improvements to promote more livable and sustainable streets.

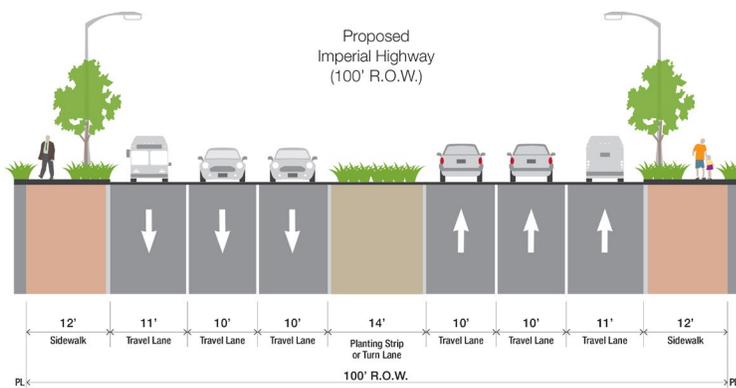


Complete Street Example

### 6.12.1 IMPERIAL HIGHWAY

Imperial Highway serves as both a major pathway arterial and transit corridor. Sidewalks along this corridor should be designed to support high levels of pedestrian activity. The Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan proposes maintaining existing sidewalk widths of 12 feet and the addition of more street trees along Imperial Highway. The additional landscaping should be placed to provide a buffer between the sidewalk and the busy corridor, as illustrated in Figure 6.10.

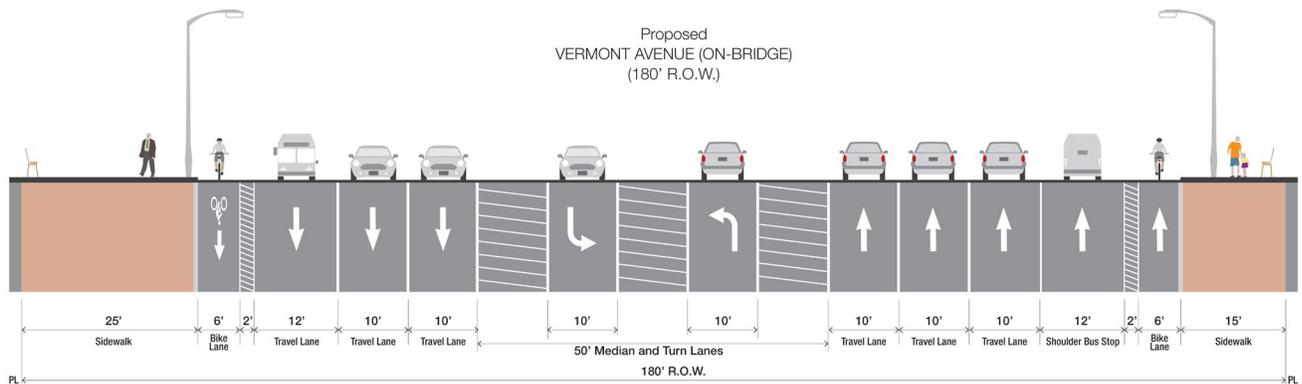
**FIGURE 6.10: PROPOSED IMPERIAL HIGHWAY STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS**



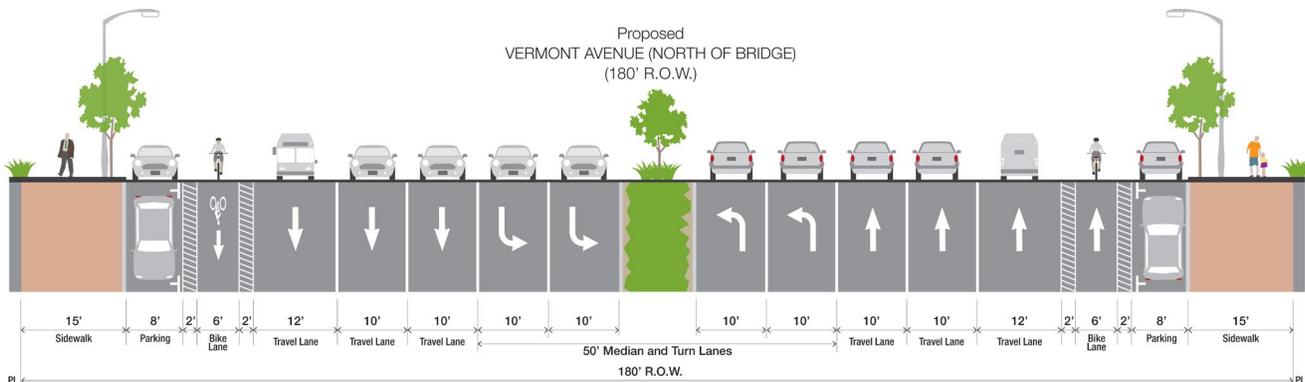
### 6.12.2 VERMONT AVENUE

As the I-105 overpass runs along the center of Vermont Avenue in the study area, the Specific Plan recognizes the corridor in three differing sections. Along the overpass portion of Vermont Avenue, the Specific Plan proposes widening the existing sidewalk to 25 feet on the western side of the right of way belonging the County of Los Angeles, as illustrated in Figure 6.11. The sidewalk on the opposite side as well as north of the overpass should be increased to a width of 15 feet. Widening the sidewalks along this segment of Vermont will not only support high levels of pedestrian activity, but will also increase visibility of the Vermont Green Line station. 6-foot bike lanes are proposed on each side of the corridor along its entire length, with 2-foot striped buffers. Travel lanes on each side of the corridor should be reduced in width to 10 feet while allowing 12 feet for shoulder bus lanes. Improved landscaping is recommended north of the overpass portion of Vermont Avenue, as illustrated in Figure 6.12, to enhance the streetscape and promote pedestrian activity. South of the overpass portion of Vermont Avenue, the Specific Plan also proposes a wider median and merges the existing parkway with the sidewalk on the eastern side of the corridor, as illustrated in Figure 6.13.

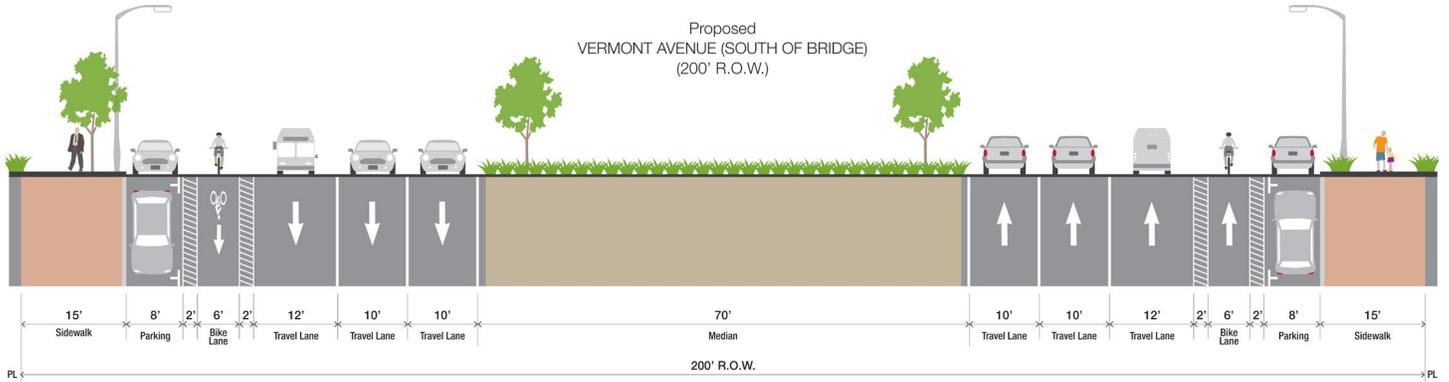
**FIGURE 6.11: PROPOSED VERMONT AVENUE STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS (OVERPASS)**



**FIGURE 6.12: PROPOSED VERMONT AVENUE STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS (NORTH OF OVERPASS)**



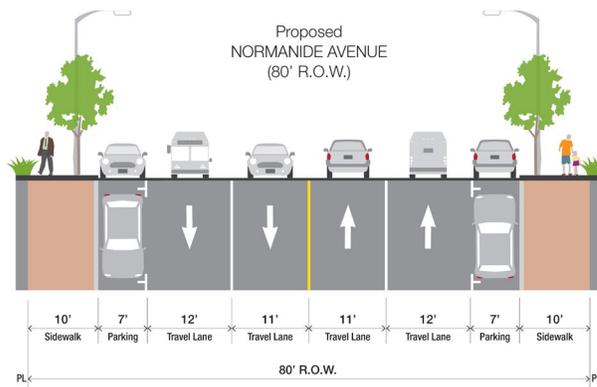
**FIGURE 6.13: PROPOSED VERMONT AVENUE STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS (SOUTH OF OVERPASS)**



**6.12.3 NORMANDIE AVENUE**

Normandie Avenue serves as a primary pathway arterial within the study area. In order to improve the pedestrian environment along this busy corridor, the Specific Plan proposes improving landscaping along the length of Normandie Avenue by adding street trees between the sidewalks and parking areas on each side of the corridor to enhance the pedestrian environment, as illustrated in Figure 6.14.

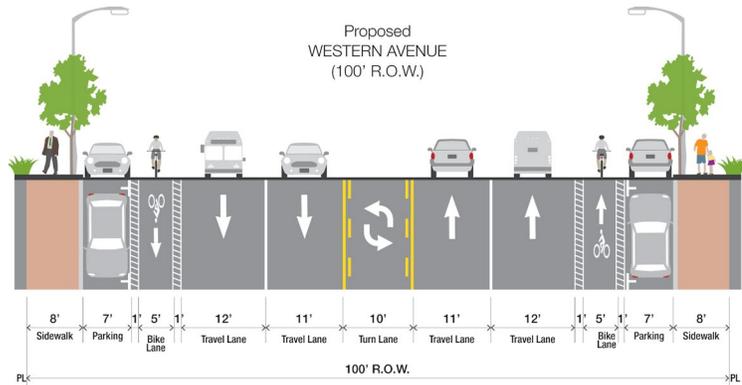
**FIGURE 6.14: PROPOSED NORMANDIE AVENUE STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS**



**6.12.4 WESTERN AVENUE**

Streetscape improvements proposed for Western Avenue are illustrated in Figure 6.15 and include continuing the buffered bike lanes that currently exist south of Imperial Highway onto the northern portion of Western Avenue, adjacent to the existing on-street parking on either side. This makes the streetscape on Western Avenue more consistent along the length of the corridor and includes reducing travel lane widths by 2 feet each while reducing the turn lane to 10 feet in width.

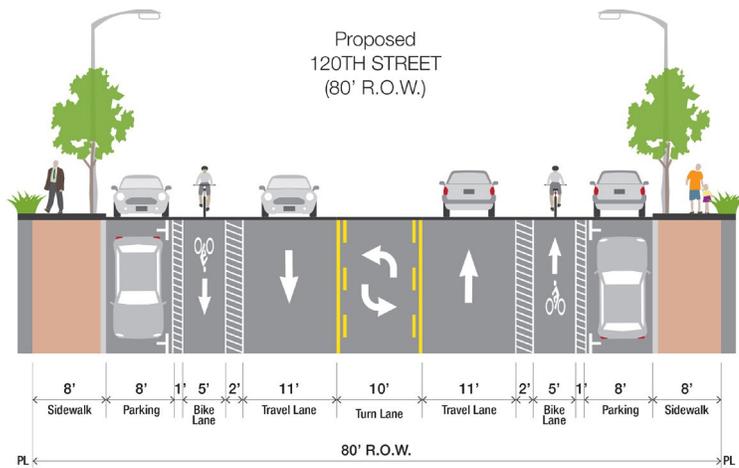
**FIGURE 6.15: PROPOSED WESTERN AVENUE STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS**



**6.12.5 120<sup>TH</sup> STREET**

A road diet is recommended for 120th Street in order to improve the pedestrian environment along the corridor. Streetscape improvements proposed for 120th Street are illustrated in Figure 6.16. Travel lanes should be reduced to one travel lane in each direction with a turn lane in the center. 5-foot bike lanes should be placed between the travel lanes and parking areas on each side of the corridor with striped buffers on each side for safety.

**FIGURE 6.16: PROPOSED 120TH STREET STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS**



## 6.13 NEW PARK OPPORTUNITIES

West Athens-Westmont is considered park poor with only one community park, Helen Keller Park, which is outside of the study area. It is located in the southeast corner of the community and only serves a very limited portion of residents. Parks outside of the community are not within close enough proximity to provide ample access. Today, only 18.7% of West Athens-Westmont's population can reach parks by foot. The remaining 81.3 percent of the population is not within a ½-mile walking distance.

Outside of County Parks, public accessible green space is extremely limited in West Athens-Westmont. The Chester Washington Golf Course is another public-owned green space; however, it is more of green amenity from the outside as it is only open to those who want to play golf at the course.

The open space at Southwest Community College offers informal gathering space around the campus and serves as a gathering space for young adults. There are school gardens at three public schools: Woodcrest Elementary School, Animo South Los Angeles Charter Middle School, and Washington High School. These gardens are intended exclusively for use by the students, parents, and teachers at these schools.

There are various informal green spaces running through the neighborhood, including a utility corridor in the southern part of the neighborhood. The corridor includes large electrical towers and above ground wires; however, the open space beneath the towers can be used for informal walking and exercise or gathering and garden spaces.

West Athens-Westmont would need several small parks to serve residents with open space and/or recreational facilities. This is especially the case above I-105 and Imperial Highway where residents have no benefits from open space and parks. Pedestrian route/paths to existing parks like Holly Park or planned parks above I-105 would have a positive impact on park accessibility for the residents of West Athens-Westmont.

A variety of open space opportunities, such as pocket parks and urban plazas could also be provided in this specific plan area. In Figure 6.17, a conceptual design for an improved median on Vermont Avenue directly south of I-105 would provide a much-needed public benefit to the community. This improved landscaped median would help to create



*Example Pocket Park*

more usable public open space and increase pedestrian connectivity.

In Figures 6.18 & 6.19, a concept design for a small park north of Imperial Highway would provide a new small community park space for residents with passive and active recreation. Each of these concepts shows the potential for passive and active recreation. The ultimate design and programming of these spaces should be designed with the input of neighborhood residents.

FIGURE 6.17: CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN FOR PARK SPACE



**FIGURE 6.18: CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN FOR POCKET PARK**



**FIGURE 6.19: CONCEPTUAL MASSING MODEL FOR POCKET PARK**



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# CHAPTER 7 – INFRASTRUCTURE

## **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

The infrastructure discussion provides an overview of existing and future conditions for water, sewer, and storm drain systems serving the Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan area. This section identifies the current conditions for these infrastructure systems, along with recommended upgrades to accommodate the levels of new development proposed as part of the Specific Plan land use concepts.

## **7.2 WATER**

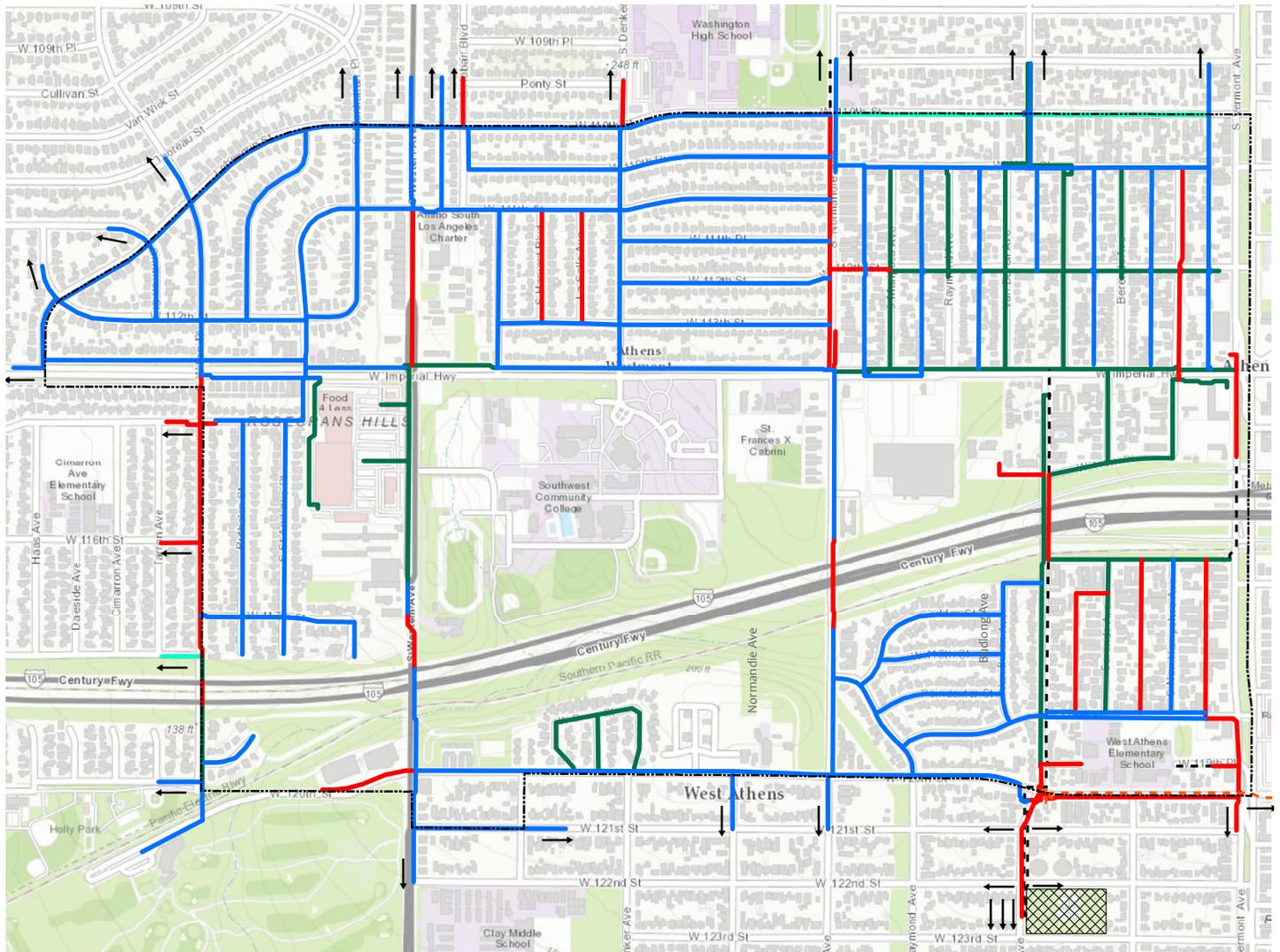
### **7.2.1 WATER SERVICES EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The Southwest District of the Golden State Water Company is the provider of potable water for the Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan area. Water service needs are met by a combination of local groundwater and surface water purchased from both the Central Basin and the West Basin of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

The Specific Plan area is serviced by pipe sizes varying from 2" connectors to 18" main lines. The vast majority of pipe is composed of one of two materials – cast iron and ductile iron. The largest pipe connects the Specific Plan area to the area south of the Interstate 105 (I-105) freeway via three pipes - an 18" water main, a 16" water main, and a 14" water main, which also connects the system to the Budlong plant. These branch off and distribute water to the majority of the Specific Plan area. The service network is composed of 12" - 8" pipes comprising of the main distribution trunks with 6" and 4" interconnectors. This web like connection allows for minimal headloss through parallel water flow. High flow is distributed through multiple pipes to reach its destination. The majority of distribution pipes off the main lines are 6" and 4" water lines. Figures 7.1 and 7.2 illustrate water pipe materials and size for the Specific Plan area.

Water supply requirements and flows were estimated using industry standards to determine capacities. The largest areas of water flow are located at the Los Angeles Southwest College (LASC) campus and the southeast region of the Specific Plan area. These two areas' proximity to the large trio of trunks as well as the interconnectivity of the pipe network allow adequate flow to meet the current demand.

**FIGURE 7.1: WATER SYSTEM PIPE MATERIAL MAP**

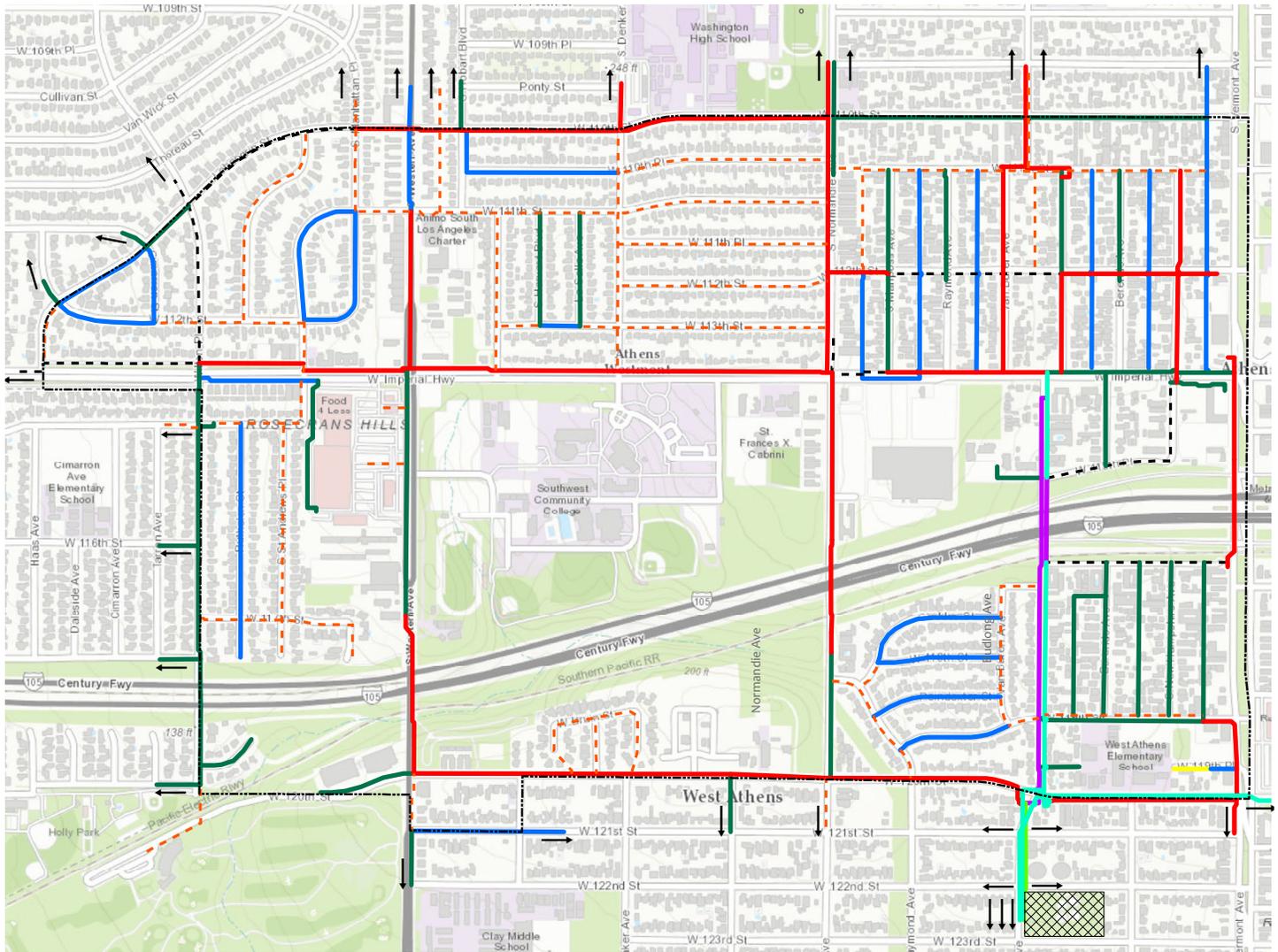


-  West Athens - Westmont TOD Boundary
-  Water Plant
-  Asbestos-Cement (AC)
-  Cast-Iron (CI)
-  Ductile-Iron (DI)
-  Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC)
-  Reinforced Concrete (RCP)
-  Steel (STL)
-  Continuation/Direction of Water Pipes Outside West Athens - Westmont TOD Boundary

0 250 500 1,000 Feet



**FIGURE 7.2: WATER SYSTEM PIPE SIZE**



- West Athens - Westmont TOD Boundary
- Water Plant
- 2" Pipe
- 4" Pipe
- 6" Pipe
- 8" Pipe
- 10" Pipe
- 12" Pipe
- 14" Pipe
- 16" Pipe
- 18" Pipe
- Continuation/Direction of Water Pipes Outside West Athens - Westmont TOD Boundary



Existing total flow of the Specific Plan area is capable of being carried via a single 16" line. Because the Specific Plan area contains multiple water line connections, the water demand to the area will increase due to demand from locations outside the Specific Plan area boundaries. Historic accounts from the water provider show the current infrastructure is adequate to provide the Specific Plan area with water.

The area is under continued upgrades from Golden State Water Company. The presence of cast iron and ductile iron pipe provide for extended useful life of existing pipes. These will require standard continued monitoring and maintenance from the water provider in order to identify leaks and pipe issues.

## **7.2.2 WATER SERVICES FUTURE CONDITIONS**

The Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan land use changes include a heavy influx of households and water flow in the northwest and southeast region of the Specific Plan area. The area was analyzed using a worst-case scenario for water demand following these guidelines:

- 300 gallons per day (GPD) per housing unit
- Demand for commercial space: 200 gallons/ 1000 square feet
- Demand for schools: 20 gallons per student, 50 gallons per teacher
- Maximum headloss in the pipe not to exceed 3.5 feet per 1000 feet of water pipeline

Using the estimated water demand guidelines noted above, the proposed land use changes would generate an increase in water flow into the Specific Plan area from 1.5 millions of gallons per day (MGD) to 2.5 MGD. Additionally, the proposed land use changes would generate a peak flow increase from 3.77 MGD to 6.25 MGD, which translates to a peak of 2,617 gallons per minute (gpm) and 4,337 gpm in the instantaneous flow to the area.

The Specific Plan area is analyzed in both pipeline flow capacity and storage capacity of existing water services. The Budlong water storage plant currently has a capacity of 1.5 million gallons. With the assumption that the plant is the primary provider to the Specific Plan area, this increase in flow would have to be addressed through increasing storage capacity at the plant.

Pipelines were analyzed with the primary metric being friction headloss through the pipe. With a 1,000 foot long pipe run, the headloss due to flow shall not exceed 3.5 feet. The two line flow to the majority of the plan area – 16" and 14" - provides adequate capacity to serve 4,337 gpm instantaneous peak flow through parallel flow without losing 3.5 feet of hydraulic head. Holistically, the Specific Plan area has distribution piping adequate for the total flow into the area. Each zone was analyzed in accordance to flow in that zone with the largest pipe in the area. The Specific Plan's network of piping allows for multiple pipe connections to transport water flow to the area. This allows the Specific Plan area to be served with minimal headloss through multiple parallel pipes.

An area of concern is the southwest corner of the Specific Plan area, which is bounded by Imperial Highway to the north and Western Avenue to the east. This area may be connected to another location capable of providing additional flow, but only has one 8" pipe connecting it to the Specific Plan area. The total flow to the area during peak withdrawal is 850 gpm, which creates a headloss of 13.3 feet per 1000 feet of pipe. There are existing connections west of the Specific Plan area which can help mitigate headloss from current connections, but existing flow capacity of the pipe would have to be expanded. A 12" pipe would provide the area with 1.93 feet of headloss.

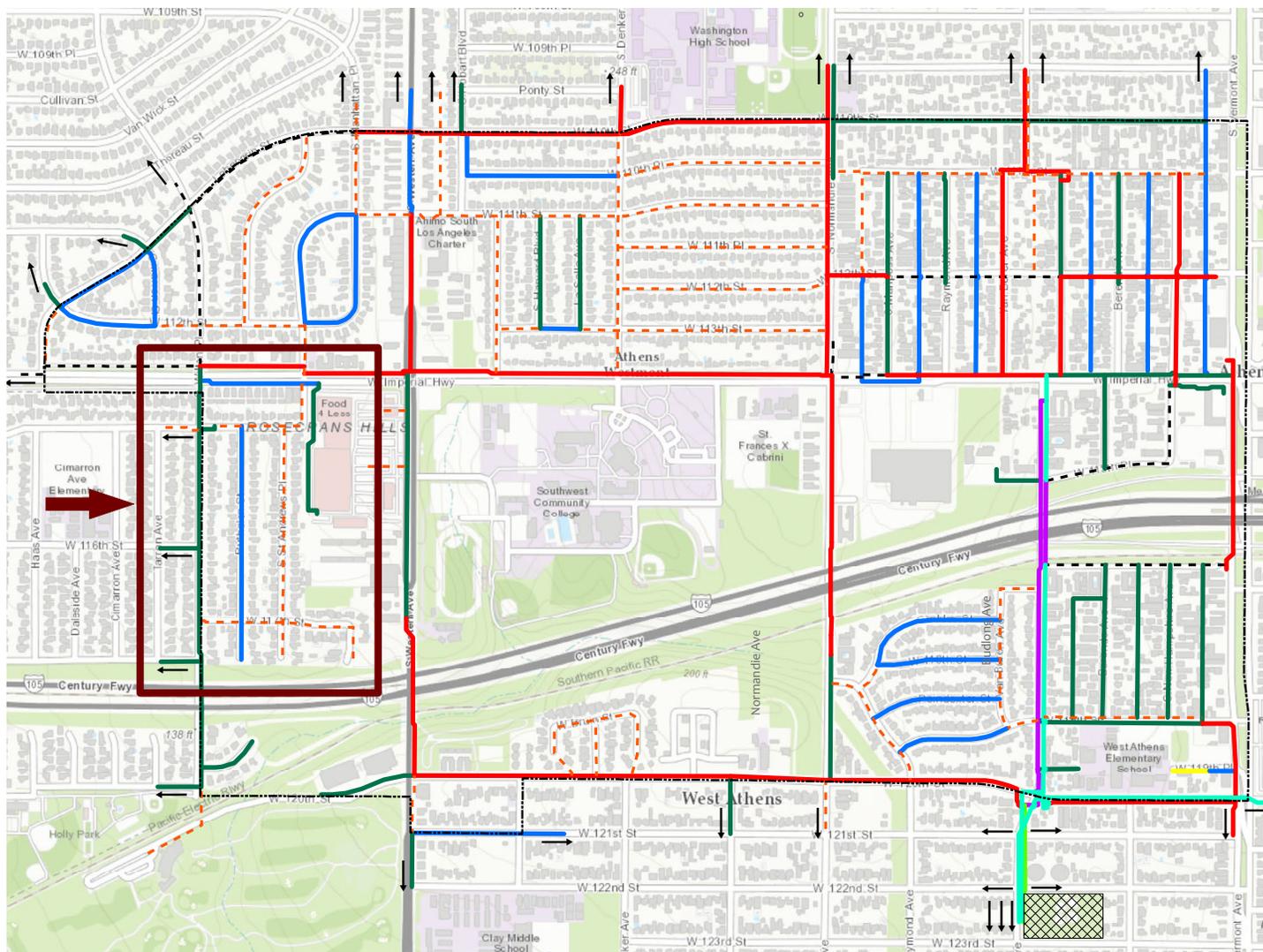
This analysis is based off an assumption of flow into the area that is independent of factors in the surrounding area. The water provider, Golden State Water Company, will have to perform a holistic analysis to confirm these recommendations. The area of concern is highlighted below in Figure 7.3.

## **7.3 SEWER SERVICES**

### **7.3.1 SEWER SERVICES EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Two sanitary systems exist within the Specific Plan area – local collection lines and trunk sewers. The local collection lines are a series of 8" gravity mains with laterals connecting to existing houses and buildings. All of these sewers are composed of Vitrified Clay Pipe (VCP), or Lined Clay Pipe (LCP, LVCP). All local sewer lines are owned and operated by the Los Angeles County Floor Control District (LACFCD).

**FIGURE 7.3: AREAS OF WATER SYSTEM IMPACT**



-  West Athens - Westmont TOD Boundary
-  Water Plant
-  2" Pipe
-  4" Pipe
-  6" Pipe
-  8" Pipe
-  10" Pipe
-  12" Pipe
-  14" Pipe
-  16" Pipe
-  18" Pipe
-  Continuation/Direction of Water Pipes Outside West Athens - Westmont TOD Boundary





In 2009, the sewers in the Specific Plan area were inspected using a CCTV inspection for both structural and maintenance defects. During the inspection, the sewers were rated using the following criteria:

- Excellent: Minor or no defects. Unlikely to fail in the foreseeable future.
- Good: Defects that have not begun to deteriorate. Estimated to fail in 20+ years.
- Fair: Moderate defects that will continue to deteriorate. Estimated to fail in 10-20 years.
- Poor: Sever defects that will become grade 5 defects in the foreseeable future. Estimated to fail in 5-10 years.
- Immediate Attention: Defects requiring immediate attention. Has failed or will fail within 5 years.

The Specific Plan area was rated on maintenance and structural defects using this scale. Structurally, 96% of pipe inspected was fair to excellent condition. Only 2% of pipes required immediate attention. After condition assessment, any areas in poor or worse condition were scheduled to be fixed within 24 months as part of an Accumulative Capital Outlay Project. Maintenance defects include grease build ups, line sags, etc., that do not structurally damage the pipe, but could potentially cause flow issues. During this inspection, 88% of the pipe was in fair to excellent condition with 2% needing immediate attention. The areas in question were added to a routine cleaning schedule.

One trunk sewer services the area. The sewer starts on Budlong Avenue, south of Imperial Highway, follows 115th Place before cutting across the I-105 freeway and following the Southern Pacific Railroad line out of the Specific Plan area. The trunk is a 12" VCP sewer which has a volumetric carrying capacity twice as high as a 2011 volumetric flow analysis. The Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts' (LACSD) rating system rates conditions of trunk sewers on a scale from 1 (poor) to 4 (excellent). All segments of this sewer in the Specific Plan area have a condition rating of 4. The trunk sewer is adequately sized for current flows. The 8" sanitary collection lines are sufficient size to collect sanitary waste from houses, industries, and shops in the area and transport them to the main collection trunks.

Figure 7.5 illustrates the various sewer lines for the Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan area.

### 7.3.2 SEWER SERVICES FUTURE CONDITIONS

Sewer services in the Specific Plan area would require updating in order to accommodate for the proposed land use buildout in Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan. The existing 12" trunk line servicing the Specific Plan area is only connected to a very small portion of the Los Angeles County collection lines highlighted in Figure 7.5 below.

The remaining lines are collected by trunks outside of the Specific Plan area. The northwest region of the Specific Plan area is collected by the Arlington Avenue trunk line, which travels down Van Ness Avenue. Because a majority of collection sewers are located within the Residential 1 Zone, which proposes little to no change, these sewers were determined to have adequate capacity support the proposed buildout.

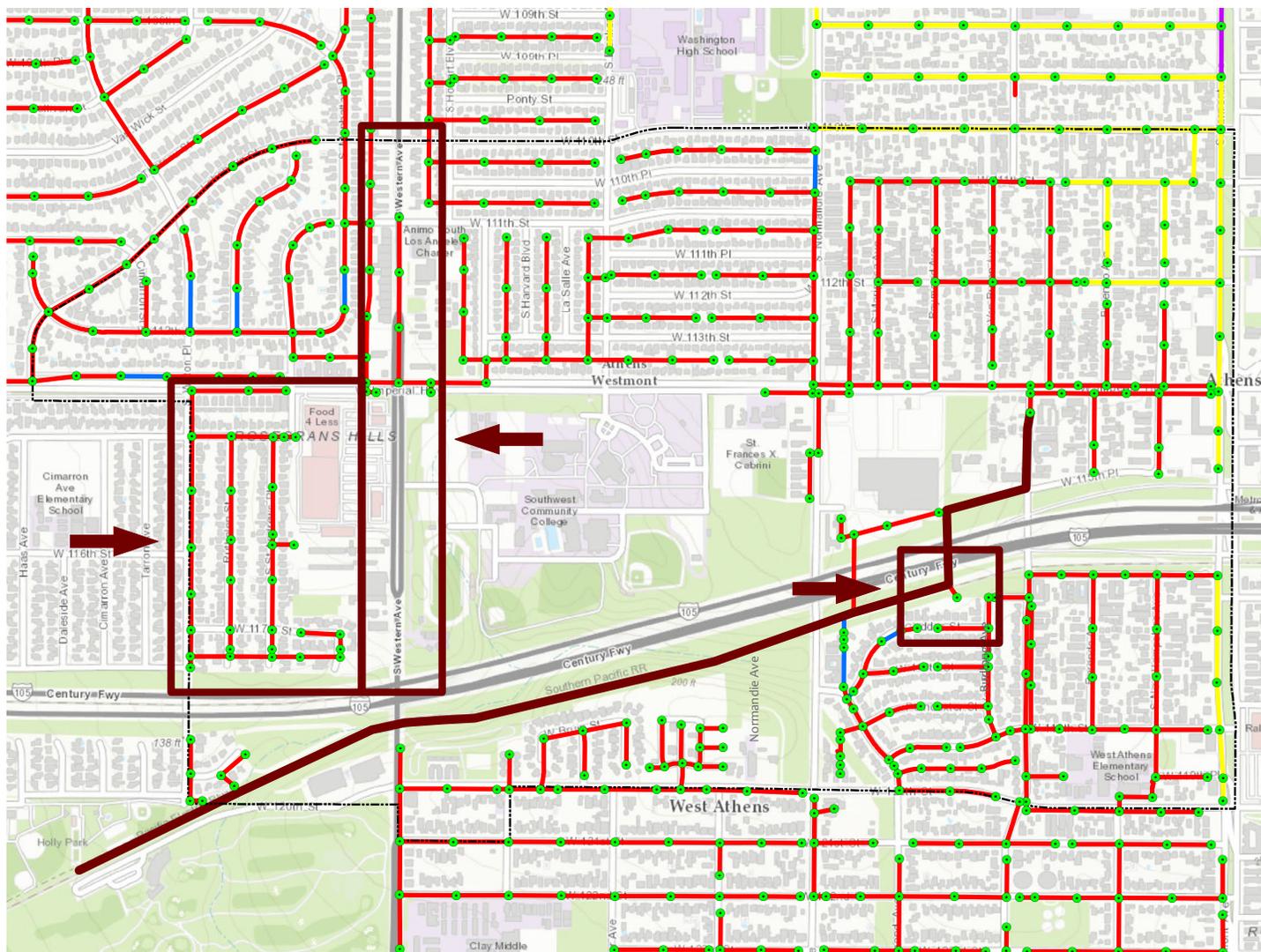
The collection lines were analyzed using a cubic foot per second flow which was analyzed using the flows shown below:

- 300 gallons per day (GPD) per housing unit
- Demand for commercial space: 200 gallons/ 1000 square feet
- Demand for schools: 20 gallons per student, 50 gallons per teacher
- Maximum headloss in the pipe not to exceed 3.5 feet per 1000 feet of water pipeline

Based on the sewer area study guidelines provided by LACFCD, the southeast corner of the Specific Plan area was identified as an area of concern. The proposed land use buildout would cause the southeast corner of the Specific Plan area to exceed the carrying capacity of the connection sewer line. Additional assessment by DPW should be conducted to identify the slope of the pipe.

The proposed mixed use and commercial corridor along Western Avenue, north of the I-105 freeway, was also identified as an area of concern. The proposed land use buildout, which includes the Mixed Use 2 Zone located in the southwest region of the Specific Plan area, would generate an increase in flow and would exceed the capacities of the 8" lines in the area. These sewer lines collect into varying collection lines and the increased flow due to the proposed development would require additional inspection and analysis depending on exact flows of businesses included in the area.

**FIGURE 7.5: AREAS OF SEWER SYSTEM IMPACT**



West Athens - Westmont  
TOD Boundary

Manholes

Sewer Trunk Line

**Mains**

10" VCP Gravity Lines

8" VCP Gravity Lines

8" LCP Gravity Lines

8" LVCP Gravity Lines

0 250 500 1,000  
Feet



Additionally, school owned sewers from the LASC campus collect into a 10" line which connects to the main trunk. These are adequate for the school's usage, though their collection area is not shown on the map. The areas of concern are highlighted in Figure 7.5.

## **7.4 STORM WATER**

### **7.4.1 STORM DRAINAGE EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Stormwater runoff in the Specific Plan area is collected and distributed through a series of gravity mains owned and operated by DPW and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The Specific Plan area is sloped towards the I-105 freeway, with the majority of the catch basins placed to capture runoff that drains into the freeway cutout. The catch basins and gravity mains along the freeway are maintained by Caltrans and are in good condition. The catch basins and gravity mains that are not located within the right-of-way of the railroad and freeway are maintained by DPW and are in good condition.

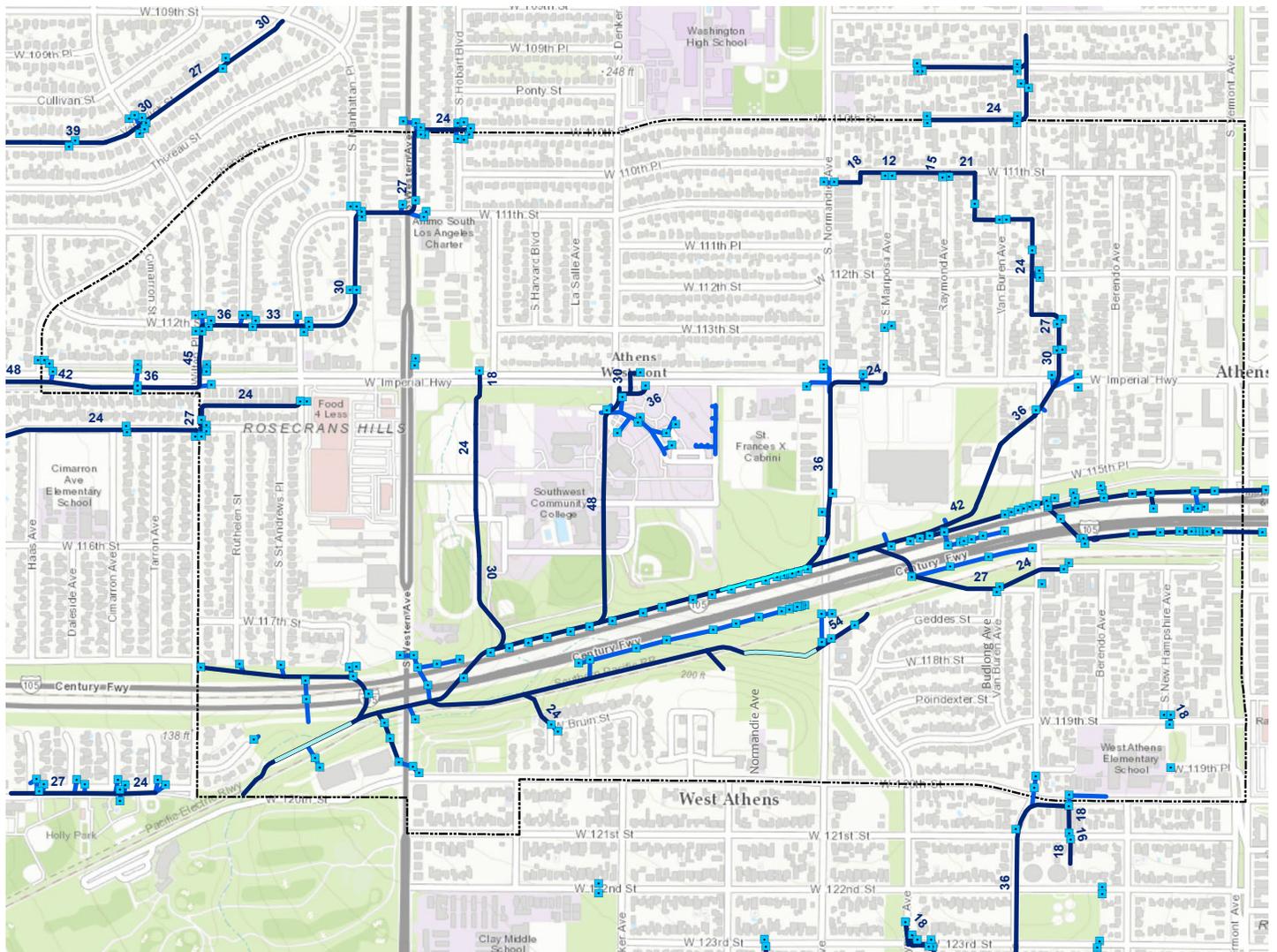
The storm drainage in the area primarily follows the I-105 freeway southwest before flowing out of the Specific Plan area. This gravity main and the mains in the northwest area of the Specific Plan drain to the Dominguez Channel, a 60' x 14' channel which transports the water south to the Port of Los Angeles. The northeast storm sewer drains to Compton Creek. The gravity mains are all reinforced pipe ranging from 18" to 48" in diameter.

The majority of the area is residential lots and open landscapes found at the schools. Because of this, stormwater runoff is partially captured by ground infiltration. The existing storm drainage network is shown in Figure 7.6.

### **7.4.2 STORM DRAINAGE FUTURE CONDITIONS**

Stormwater services in the Specific Plan area are connected to a large network of open channel drains, which are tied to a larger collection basin. Stormwater flow in these channels is greatly dependent on upstream and downstream flow. Buildout of the Specific Plan will generate little increase in runoff to the existing drainage system, since a majority of the area is completely developed, however, there are a few areas of concern as highlighted in Figure 7.7.

**FIGURE 7.6: STORM DRAIN SYSTEM MAP**



West Athens - Westmont  
TOD Boundary

Open Channel

Gravity Main

Lateral Line

Catch Basin



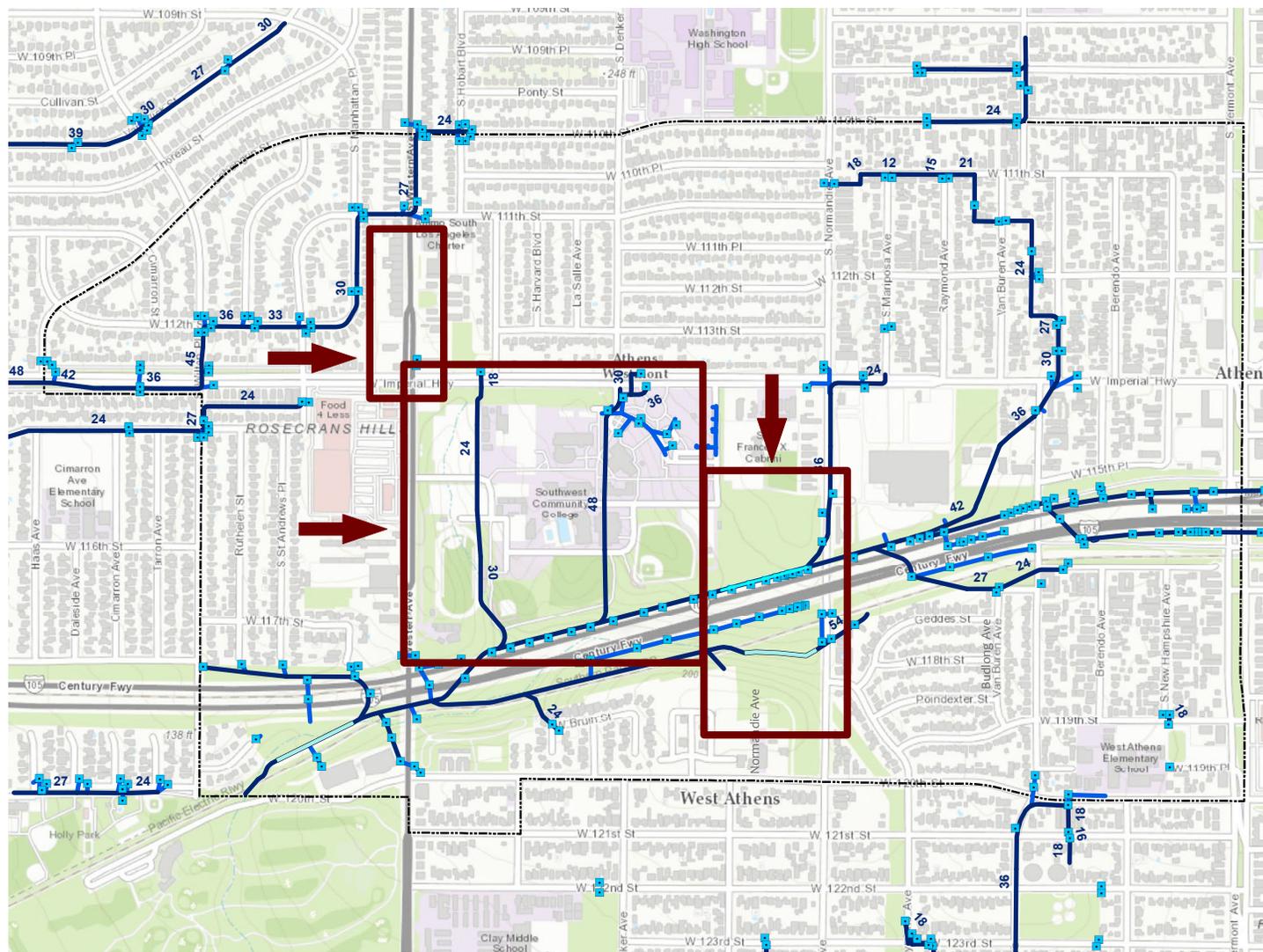
One area of concern is the existing vacant lots located along Western Avenue. Replacing these existing vacant lots with impervious surface and would increase stormwater runoff in the area unless stormwater management is in place. Stormwater management strategies such as additional catch basins in the area should be considered to help address the potential increase in runoff.

Additionally, attention is also required at the Normandie Avenue crossing of the I-105 freeway. The proposed buildout would remove fully pervious surfaces within the area, which could potentially increase stormwater runoff. Furthermore, there is an existing network of catch basins in this location, which would require additional analysis in order to identify capacity and mitigation measures needed to delay the peak runoff during major storm events.

A similar area of concern is located at the LASC campus. If the buildout were to remove any pervious surfaces, such as the sports fields, the catch basins would have to be analyzed after sub-watershed delineation.

Recent trends from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) indicate rainfall events increasing in intensity, but decreasing in duration. This increased intensity does not allow as much stormwater to be captured by pervious surfaces and increases instantaneous flow on impervious surfaces. This trend should be monitored by the county's stormwater management team for future development.

**FIGURE 7.7: STORM DRAINAGE AREAS OF CONCERN**



West Athens - Westmont  
TOD Boundary

Open Channel

Gravity Main

Lateral Line

Catch Basin

0 250 500 1,000  
Feet



## **7.5 GREEN STREET FEATURES**

As a part of the Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan, consideration should be given to incorporating green street features to improve the stormwater quality from streets. Stormwater runoff from impervious roadways frequently wash harmful pollutants into nearby water bodies, such as rivers, streams, and lakes. These harmful pollutants include substances commonly present on roadway surfaces, such as dirt, oil, grease, toxic chemicals, and trash.

Green street features include a variety of stormwater management and landscaping strategies intended to improve water quality and drainage, such as bioswales, sidewalk planters, street trees, and permeable pavement. These features not only improve stormwater runoff quality and drainage, but also help to improve mobility and the pedestrian environment.

DPW has developed Green Infrastructure Guidelines to guide new construction and reconstruction of road and flood projects. The goal of the guidelines is to incorporate sustainable practices into the design, construction, and operation of DPW's infrastructure. The guidelines provide low-impact development (LID) design options to consider during planning or designing of road and flood projects intended to manage stormwater runoff.

The Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan recommends all new development projects that involve the construction of new roadway projects conform to the Green Infrastructure Guidelines as set forth by DPW. The guidelines define roadway projects to include the new and reconstruction of public roads, maintenance access roads, road widening, medians, bike paths, sidewalks, parking lots, grade separation, etc. The Specific Plan recommends that all new development projects incorporate the following best management practices as identified by the Green Infrastructure Guidelines:

### **7.5.1 PERMEABLE SURFACES**

Permeable surfaces should be incorporated whenever feasible to allow infiltration of rainfall and to reduce the total volume of runoff, replenish groundwater, and improve water quality. The following lists some of the guidelines for the application of permeable surfaces from DPW's Green Infrastructure Guidelines.

1. Permeable sidewalks must adhere to existing Public Works standards for sidewalk design.
2. Permeable access roads are not recommended for roadways with high volume of equipment trucks, as they can cause damage to permeable surfaces.
3. Permeable pavement and underdrain systems for parking lots should be directed toward LID-type best management practices if needed to achieve the required volume reduction.
4. Permeable alleys are recommended for alleys that are less than 8 feet wide since they prevent access from heavy vehicles.

### **7.5.2 VEGETATION AND LANDSCAPING**

Vegetation and landscaping elements such as vegetated swales, vegetated buffers, planter/tree box filters, bioretention, and filter strips are intended to maximize available permeable space in an area to reduce pollutant concentrations in stormwater runoff and reduce runoff rates. The following lists some of the guidelines for the application of vegetation and landscaping from DPW's Green Infrastructure Guidelines:

1. Vegetated swales shall be designed in accordance with Chapter 3 of DPW's Best Management Practices Design and Maintenance Manual.
2. Vegetated swales are recommended in areas where slope is between 1 and 6 percent.
3. Plant species for vegetated swales shall be tolerant to both extreme wet and dry conditions. Refer to the vegetated swale plant list of DPW's Best Management Practices Design and Maintenance Manual.
4. Vegetated swales shall be greater than 100 linear feet in length and at least 12 inches in depth from the top of the sidewalk to the swale bottom.
5. Bioretention facilities shall be designed in accordance with Chapter 5 of DPW's Best Management Practices Design and Maintenance Manual.
6. Planting/tree box filter designs should typically incorporate a concrete vault filled with a bioretention soil mix and vegetation, and may contain an underdrain connected to an adjacent flood control conveyance.

## **7.6 SOLID WASTE**

The Connect Southwest LA TOD Specific Plan area utilizes the residential/commercial franchise system for solid waste collection services. Currently, Consolidated Disposal Services provides trash collection and recycling services to the unincorporated residents of West Athens-Westmont under an exclusive residential franchise agreement with the County.

Key issues surrounding waste management within the County include increasing volumes of waste being disposed and generated, lack of solid waste processing facilities to accommodate volumes of waste generated, and public opposition towards the construction of new solid waste management facilities. As available space for landfills becomes more limited, local jurisdictions must implement effective waste management strategies to reduce solid waste volumes.

In 2014, the County Board of Supervisors adopted a Roadmap to a Sustainable Waste Management Future. This roadmap outlines the process by which the County can implement strategies to reduce solid waste generation in unincorporated areas and with County operations. The West Athens-Westmont community is part of this program, which includes goals of reducing solid waste destined for landfills by 80 percent by 2030 and 95 percent by 2040.

## **7.7 ELECTRICAL SERVICES**

Electricity is provided to the Specific Plan Area by Southern California Edison (SCE), a private utility company. SCE sets its own service standards, with oversight from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), and facility improvement strategies. Electricity is transmitted by above-ground power lines that currently supply sufficient electrical service to the Specific Plan and have adequate capacity to serve the area with buildout of the Plan.

## **7.8 NATURAL GAS**

The Southern California Gas Company, a subsidiary of Sempra Utilities (The Gas Company), a private utility company, is the natural gas service provider for the Specific Plan area. Natural gas pipelines exist along all major street rights-of-way within the area.

The analysis and decision on capacity to meet future demand under buildout of the Specific Plan will be conducted by The Gas Company in coordination with the County at the time development occurs and building plans are submitted.

## **7.9 TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND CABLE**

AT&T and Time Warner, two separate private utility companies, both provide local and long distance telecommunications services in the Specific Plan area. Time Warner Cable provides cable and high-speed internet services. Various wireless carriers provide service within the Specific Plan area. Wireless communications facilities, either freestanding or attached to a building or structure, are required to comply with the design guidelines, as well as approval of a conditional use permit. Conditional use permits for wireless communications facilities shall expire ten years from the date of approval, unless amended or extended by the planning commission or hearing officer.

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**CHAPTER 8 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

## 8.1 INTRODUCTION

Facilitating economic growth within the Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan will require concrete and sustained public intervention over the near- and long-term. Economic development in the context of the Specific Plan refers to support for the success and proliferation of businesses within the Specific Plan area, as well as support for increased employment opportunities, household incomes, skills, and overall economic security for West Athens and Westmont residents. The purpose of the economic development strategy is to provide a framework for the practical implementation and realization of the Specific Plan's economic development objectives. Specific action items are identified for the County to take to achieve success in the Specific Plan area.

## 8.2 MARKET CONTEXT

Within the context of the West Athens and Westmont communities, there are several market issues that are anticipated to limit the near-term buildout of the Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan's development capacity, and any economic development initiatives are likely to require public support. Like much of South Los Angeles, West Athens and Westmont have experienced years of disinvestment, homelessness and high crime rates, as compared to the rest of the County. While there is a demonstrated demand for housing and related services, as shown in Table 8.1, commercial interest in the area is limited, and the resultant lower commercial and residential rents and sale prices, along with real and perceived safety concerns have limited market-rate private real estate investment. Although low housing costs in the area fill a much-needed gap in the local housing market, the lack of investment exacerbates a range of community stressors including overcrowding, homelessness and unemployment. There is a presence of national and regional retailers – i.e. Food 4 Less, HD Supply, and Carl's Jr., and some locally-owned businesses of moderate quality. However, until crime and safety issues are resolved, it is a challenge to attract credit-worthy tenants of the type who would support new commercial real estate development.

While this cycle of disinvestment has prevailed in the West Athens and Westmont communities for several decades, there are key community assets and opportunities within the Specific Plan area that can be leveraged to strengthen the neighborhood. The community's most important anchors,

Los Angeles Southwest College (“LASC”) and various County offices, are the largest employment centers in the Specific Plan area and have a vested interest in engaging the community and supporting increased quality of life. Numerous religious institutions, non-profit organizations and K-12 schools, including four public elementary schools (two charter and two public), all play an invaluable role within the neighborhood and can be engaged to support various economic development initiatives. The neighborhood also has connections to major employment centers; in addition to the existing Green Line light rail stop, LA County Metro is also planning a bus rapid transit line along Vermont Avenue that would terminate at the existing West Athens-Westmont station. In addition, future planned extensions of the Green Line to Torrance on the west and the Norwalk Metrolink station on the east, as well as a possible spur to LAX, would further increase the connectivity of West Athens and Westmont with regional employment centers. This Specific Plan, as well as future Vermont Avenue transit planning processes, presents an opportunity to align community anchors and implement an economic development strategy that will make the most of the community’s transit connections.

**TABLE 8.1: SUMMARY OF SPECIFIC PLAN AREA DEMAND (2016-2035)**

| <b>Housing</b>   | <b>Retail</b><br>(Viable Square Feet)   | <b>Office</b><br>(Viable Square Feet)                                       |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 270-815 Market Rate Units</li> <li>• 2,900 affordable units targeted for extremely low to low-income residents</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Merchandise (50,000 sq. ft.)</li> <li>• Sporting Goods (6,000 sq. ft.)</li> <li>• Miscellaneous Retailers (21,000 sq. ft.)</li> <li>• Full-Service Restaurants (6,000 sq. ft.)</li> <li>• Limited-Service Restaurants (3,000 sq. ft.)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35,000 - 60,000 sq. ft.</li> </ul> |

## 8.2.1 NEAR-TERM STRATEGIES (< 3-5 YEARS)

As noted above, several key quality of life issues must be resolved before the Specific Plan area can expect to see significant investment. The County should, in the near term, simultaneously expand existing initiatives and focus them on West Athens-Westmont to improve public safety and neighborhood desirability.

### Place-Based Initiatives

**The County's Planning and Public Works departments should prioritize the construction of Station Area bicycle, pedestrian, and placemaking infrastructure.** Improvements such as a safe pedestrian connections between the Station Area and LASC can have a catalytic impact by facilitating a direct connection between the largest economic and educational anchor with the transit stop. LA County Public Works should partner with local nonprofit organizations such as Investing in Place and community artists to design unique public spaces around the station and at other key nodes. In addition, the County Department of Public Health's PLACE program should be used to conduct an analysis of new investments that include pedestrian and bicycle improvements.

Once the Specific Plan is adopted, Public Works should use station area bicycle, pedestrian, and placemaking frameworks to apply for grant funding through the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program (AHSC). This program, which is administered by the California Strategic Growth Council (SGC), is funded by proceeds from the State's Cap and Trade Auction. The AHSC funds projects that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by shifting mode-share towards non-automotive transportation and encourage transit-adjacent housing and development in disadvantaged communities. In addition to funding affordable housing development and housing-related infrastructure, the program also funds sustainable transit infrastructure capital projects and transit-related amenities capital projects. Developments are awarded up to \$20 million dollars in improvements. The new Transformative Climate Communities Program (TCC) is another program funded by State cap and trade auction funds, can be used to fund projects and programs with the goal of encouraging economic development in low-income communities through projects that also reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide access to transit.

**The County's Community Development Commission ("CDC") should promote its Façade Improvement Program to reduce blighted commercial buildings through coordination with landowners.** This grant program is administered through the CDC as part of its Community Business Revitalization Program and is specifically targeted towards low-income, unincorporated areas of the County like West Athens and Westmont. The County should expand resources specifically within West Athens-Westmont to engage property owners directly to make them aware of the program and offer technical assistance. Initial façade improvements should be targeted towards existing streetfront retail near the key intersection of Western Avenue and Imperial Highway to encourage property owners to reinvest, bringing additional jobs and outside investment. This area has the strongest potential for commercial and residential development that serves both LASC and the community, in addition to the station area near Vermont Avenue and Imperial Highway.

**The County, through Public Works and the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC), should seek funds for the remediation process for the brownfield parcel located at the northwest corner of the Normandie Avenue and the Century Freeway (I-105).** The approximately 6-acre parcel next to LASC will be well connected to the transit stop via infrastructure improvements recommended in the Specific Plan, and could be an excellent location for mixed-use development with highway visibility. However, to take advantage of this site, the County should begin the evaluation process immediately so that clean-up and development can occur. LAEDC is a private, non-profit economic development agency that was founded by the County Board of Supervisors in 1981 to develop and implement initiatives to grow the regional economy. Through a real estate advisory initiative called "ActivateLA," LAEDC is well positioned to support the County in identifying financing and connecting private sector real estate developers and investors for the site, including funding through international EB-5 investors and low-interest loans from traditional banks to meet Community Reinvestment Act requirements.

The County can apply for funding through the US Environmental Protection Agency's ("EPA") Brownfield Grants Program which provides grants and low-interest loans for assessment, planning, and clean-up. EPA assessment grants provide funding to inventory, characterize, assess

and conduct planning and community involvement related to brownfield sites up to \$350,000. As part of a coalition with two other eligible entities, which could include LASC or other nonprofit organizations, the County can jointly apply for assessment grants up to \$1,000,000. In addition, area-wide planning grants can provide up to \$200,000 to research, plan, and develop implementation strategies which encourage clean-up, reuse, and area-wide revitalization. The California Environmental Protection Agency also offers low-interest financing, grants, and tax incentives for brownfield remediation.

### **Programmatic and Policy-Based Interventions**

**The County's Sheriff's Department, Department of Public Social Services and others should coordinate a community engagement strategy to prevent and deter crime in the TOD Specific Plan area.** Without a perception of safety near the transit station and along the key activity corridors of Imperial Highway, Vermont Avenue and Western Avenue, commercial tenants are unlikely to see the Specific Plan area as a desirable place to locate, limiting the provision of services and jobs within the community. The South L.A. Sheriff's Station, located roughly in the center of the Specific Plan area, already focuses attention on these issues, but should be given expanded resources to effectively address security and to deter crime. Collaboration should include representatives from existing programs, some of which already have a presence in the Specific Plan area, such as the Public Trust Partnership Program, Community Policing Teams, Community/Law Enforcement Partnership Program, and the Sheriff's Youth Foundation. Other key community members, specifically including business owners and employees, LASC representatives and nearby residents should be included. This effort should include organizations such as the West Athens Westmont Task Force and the Southwest Community Association.

**On its campus, Public Social Services and Consumer and Business Affairs should build partnerships with LASC and others to expand skills training and job readiness classes for residents to support community workforce development initiatives.** In addition to expanding specific educationally programming, LASC should provide space to nonprofits, and other groups to provide these services. The County should make funds available for this expanded programming and additional costs associated with making space available to outside

groups. LASC should partner with the County's Small Business Concierge (SBC), part of the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs, to create a more permanent presence on campus by co-locating a Small Business Development Center or an entrepreneurial incubator to support growth of local businesses.

The State of California Strategic Growth Council's Transformative Climate Communities Program is one funding option that provides funding for programs that provide access to quality local job opportunities and workforce training. Programs that apply as a collaboration between different community entities (which could include LASC, the County, and other nonprofit organizations) are preferred. In addition, the County and LASC could apply for the EPA's Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Grant to recruit, train, and place predominantly low-income, minority, unemployed, and underemployed workers in jobs pertaining to the cleanup and assessment of brownfield sites in the community.

**Military and Veterans Affairs and the CDC should partner to establish a “motel initiative” to provide homeless housing and stabilize the neighborhood.** In 2016, the City of LA launched such a program to convert low-quality motels, which are often correlated with illicit behavior, into housing for homeless veterans. The program is partially administered by the US Department of Veteran's Affairs, which financially supports the project through rental vouchers. The location of homeless housing should be carefully considered, as such developments require supportive resources and are not necessarily appropriate in low-density residential communities. In the City of Los Angeles, the motel conversion has been less controversial as many see it as a substantial upgrade from activity associated with the motels.

Funding for the program comes from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, whose vouchers for landlords cover the cost of rent plus other supportive services such as case management and counseling.

## **8.2.2 MEDIUM- AND LONG-TERM STRATEGIES (3-10 YEARS AND BEYOND)**

Assuming the successful completion of the near-term strategies within 3-5 years, the County should next focus on a series of place-based and programmatic interventions that will

bring additional affordable housing to the Specific Plan area and increase the skills of community members. Several of the strategies require effective partnership between the County and LASC to catalyze neighborhood change and prepare for additional transit infrastructure investments.

### **Place-Based Initiatives**

**LAEDC should share parking facilities and subsidize land costs where possible to catalyze private development by lowering certain fixed development costs.** Real estate development projects in West Athens and Westmont that include affordable housing, retail, and/or office will be difficult for private developers to finance in the near- to medium-term given the combination of land and development costs and low market rents. As one of the biggest landowners in the Specific Plan area, the County should look for opportunities to structure public-private partnerships that meet both public and private objectives. Stimulating private-sector development may require heavily discounted land and the shared use of parking at a County lot or facility. Relaxed parking requirements by the County's Department of Regional Planning for developments near the transit station would also help improve a developer's bottom line and therefore make a project in the Specific Plan area more viable.

The County, through LAEDC, should begin by identifying publicly-owned sites adjacent to potential development parcels where shared amenities such as a joint parking garage could feasibly serve a new residential and commercial base. In a second phase, the County and LASC should identify development sites and solicit developer interest through a public request for proposals process. The County should stipulate that any new developments incorporate shared community amenities (such as space for a library, workforce development center or health clinic) and commit to a certain level of residential affordability (if applicable) in exchange for substantially discounted land. Through the process, the County should support projects which plan to use Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) or New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC), two federal programs which use tax-credits to generate private sector equity investments for projects to benefit low-income residents and communities. While NMTC are intended to spur commercial development, they can include a significant residential component as part of a mixed-use development.

**LASC should pursue joint development opportunities on campus property to achieve college and community goals.** The northwest corner of LASC's campus is currently occupied by a fenced surface parking lot that separates the campus from the most commercially-active intersection in the Specific Plan area. The LA Community College District, of which the LASC is a member, has been active in joint development, including its current solicitation of a developer to build an office property on land next to West Los Angeles Community College. This project is expected to include community college facilities as part of a private office campus. A successful development at LASC could include student- and community-serving retail and restaurant spaces, flexible classroom or office space that could be used by an incubator or other entity, and potentially affordable housing units. This effort may require LASC to provide subsidized land, commitment to lease portions of the facilities, and access to other grants where appropriate.

### **Programmatic and Policy-Based Initiatives**

**Planning and Consumer and Business Affairs should encourage developers to partner with LASC to establish a programmatic off-campus presence in the community.**

Tutoring centers, job-preparedness centers, and incubators run by LASC and located off-campus can encourage economic development throughout the community. When located in streetfront retail spaces, these uses can also help to activate the streets in a positive way, would increase the college's visibility in the community and could help new real estate developments get financing by acting as an anchor tenant. The CDC's incubator program or Small Business Development Center could also be an appropriate off-campus partnership between LASC and the County. While the location of an incubator in West Athens/Westmont may not be viable now, as the neighborhood improves, such a program could bring highly skilled people to the neighborhood and college. Such a project could leverage the presence of higher-skilled industries along the western portion of the I-105 corridor, and would support LASC's commitment to equity as a core objective.

Both federal and state resources are available for workforce development programs in low-income communities. The Transformative Climate Communities program, for instance, provides a matching grant for programs that are run by multi-organization partnerships and expand economic opportunity, especially when those programs are located

near transit stations. The USDOT's Innovative Transit Workforce Development Program also provides funding to innovative workforce development programs that leverages investment in public transportation to increase employment opportunities in emerging fields as well as public transportation. LASC, Metro, and the non-profit organizations are all eligible applicants for this funding which pays for program operating costs and some student stipends.

**Consumer and Business Affairs should target small business incentives to encourage the location of retail- and office-using businesses in the Specific Plan area.** Currently, the SBC supports small businesses in opening locations in unincorporated parts of the County. This happens through individualized assistance, but the program currently lacks place-based financial incentives. Reserving incentive dollars for small business start-up and operating grants in low-income, unincorporated communities like West Athens and Westmont could attract companies which might have otherwise opened in neighboring municipalities.

While the County provides several low-interest loan programs for businesses, the most impactful incentives are reserved for manufacturing companies; there is no industrially-zoned land within the Specific Plan area for manufacturing. However, the County's Business Expansion Loan Program could be a viable tool to support new private businesses and should be expanded and advertised in relation to West Athens and Westmont. In addition, the County could use tax subvention agreements as a means of gap financing to incentivize larger businesses with a preference to locate along the I-105 Corridor.

**Planning and LASC should encourage a mix of job-providing tenants in new developments within the Specific Plan area, such as nonprofit organizations, health care clinics, and public services.** These community-focused tenants require lower costs and are committed to the mission of community revitalization. These tenants should be integrated into streetfront retail space in new affordable housing developments, as part of a general requirement for active streetfronts.

While affecting uses within private buildings is mostly out of the County's control, as highly credit-worthy tenants, the County and the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) can act as first movers to support projects financially

by leasing space within new developments for community-serving facilities such as health clinics, job training centers, or libraries. The Department of Regional Planning should encourage developers to include space for such uses, and the CDC should facilitate connections where possible. The County should encourage developers and community-driven organizations seeking to locate in the Specific Plan area to pursue a New Markets Tax Credit allocation to support project gap financing.

**The CDC should seek funding from the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Fund to support affordable housing development and preservation as well as housing-related infrastructure.** The AHSC can fund new construction, acquisition and substantial rehabilitation, or conversion of nonresidential structures to residential, within a ½ mile of a transit stop. The program also funds capital improvements required by a locality, transit agency, or special district as a condition to the approval of the affordable housing development, as well as projects that promote energy efficiency, low impact design, renewable energy or urban greening. The Specific Plan area would be very well-positioned to receive funds from the state given the program's mission to support affordable housing, to revitalize low-income communities, and to encourage sustainable forms of transportation.

**LAEDC should strategically evaluate real estate opportunities to facilitate private development that preserves long-term affordability within the neighborhood, partnering with the CDC to make funding available for nonprofits to implement.** Similar to a land banking strategy, the County could establish a quasi-public entity such as a County land banking authority, or engage a non-profit partner who could acquire vacant or underutilized parcels. These parcels could be assembled for redevelopment in line with market demand and sold to private developers with conditions that they provide certain community benefits. This could be particularly useful for smaller footprint commercial parcels along Vermont, Western, and Normandie where ownership is dispersed but where larger, mixed-use developments may be desirable in the long run. The County could also encourage land trusting. Land trusts are typically non-profit organizations that acquire property to become long-term owners of land and protectors of affordability. These organizations sell buildings at an affordable price and to income-qualified households and lease the land

at a very low cost to the homebuyer. There is currently one community land trust operating in South LA –T.R.U.S.T. South L.A. The County should begin discussions with T.R.U.S.T. South L.A. to better understand the viability of the model in West Athens/Westmont.

**TABLE 8.2: NEAR-TERM STRATEGIES**

|  |   | Responsible Parties | Funding Sources   |
|--|---|---------------------|---|
| <b>Place-Based Interventions</b>   |   |                     |   |
| Bicycle, pedestrian, and placemaking improvements                              | Planning & Public Works                       |                     | Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (CA), Transformative Climate Communities Program (CA), Measure M (LA County), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (US EPA) |
| Encourage Use of Facade Improvement Program                                    | CDC   |                     | Facade Improvement Program (LA County)  |
| Begin brownfield remediation process at Normandie and I-105                    | LAEDC & Public Works                          |                     | Brownfield Grants Program (US EPA), California Brownfields Program  |
| Implement Specific Plan design guidelines                                      | Planning                                      |                     |   |
| <b>Programmatic Interventions</b>  |   |                     |   |
| Launch community-driven initiative to improve safety in the Specific Plan area | Sheriff's Department & Public Social Services |                     |   |
| Expand skills training and job readiness courses at LASC                       | Consumer and Business Affairs                 |                     | Transformative Climate Communities Program (CA), Innovative Transit Workforce Development Programs (US DOT)   |
| Establish a homeless housing motel initiative                                  | Military and Veterans Affairs & CDC           |                     | US Department of Veterans Affairs   |

**TABLE 8.3: MEDIUM- AND LONG-TERM STRATEGIES (3-10 YEARS AND BEYOND)**

|  | Responsible Parties                            | Funding Sources   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Place-Based Interventions</b>   |  |   |
| Public development of joint amenities  | LAEDC  |   |
| LASC joint development   | LASC   |   |
| <b>Programmatic Interventions</b>  |  |   |
| County and LASC establish off-campus community programming and facilities                            | Planning, Consumer and Business Affairs & LASC | Transformative Climate Communities Program (CA), Innovative Transit Workforce Development Programs (US DOT) |
| Develop small business incentives  | Consumer & Business Affairs                    | Business Expansion Loan Program (LA County), Tax subvention agreements                                      |
| Encourage a mix of job-providing tenants   | Planning & LASC                                | New Markets Tax Credits, Low Income Housing Tax Credits   |
| Affordable housing development, preservation and rehabilitation and infrastructure near station area | CDC  | Affordable Housing & Sustainable Communities Program (CA)   |
| Establish a land banking and/or land trusting strategy for the neighborhood                          | LAEDC & CDC                                    |   |

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## **CHAPTER 9 – IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION**

## **9.1 ADMINISTRATION & IMPLEMENTATION**

### **9.1.1 SPECIFIC PLAN ADOPTION**

The Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan shall be adopted by ordinance according to the procedures established in Chapter 22.60 of the Los Angeles County Code.

### **9.1.2 AMENDMENT TO THE SPECIFIC PLAN**

A Specific Plan Amendment may be initiated by the Board of Supervisors, the Commission, or upon application by a property owner or their designated representative. An amendment to the Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan shall be processed in accordance with Chapter 22.60 of Title 22.

### **9.1.3 ENFORCEMENT**

The Director is responsible for the overall administration and enforcement of the provisions of this Specific Plan.

### **9.1.4 APPLICABILITY**

The Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan shall apply to all new development projects for which a complete application has been filed on or after the effective date of the ordinance containing these new or revised regulations. Complete applications that were filed before the effective date of this Specific Plan shall comply with the regulations and applicable Title 22 provisions that were in effect at the time that the respective complete applications were filed.

### **9.1.5 SEVERABILITY**

If any provision of this Specific Plan or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held to be invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity shall not affect the other Specific Plan provisions, clauses, or applications thereof which can be implemented without the invalid provision, clause, or application, and to this end the provisions and clauses of this Specific Plan are declared to be severable.

### **9.1.6 RELATIONSHIP TO TITLE 22**

The provisions contained in the Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan shall be considered to be in combination with the other applicable provisions of Title 22. Where provisions of this Specific Plan conflict with any other provision of Title 22, the Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan shall govern. Where

provisions of the Specific Plan are silent, the other applicable provisions of Title 22 shall govern.

### **9.1.7 INTERPRETATION**

The Director or designee has the authority to interpret the intent of this Specific Plan if ambiguity arises concerning the meaning or appropriate application of the provisions of the plan. In so doing, the Director shall consider the following factors:

- The case is similar to previous interpretations of similar provisions.
- The interpretation reflects satisfactorily the vision, intent, and purpose of the Specific Plan.
- The resulting project is consistent with the General Plan.
- The decision constitutes sound precedent for other similar situations.

Such interpretations may be appealed to the Commission and ultimately the Board of Supervisors in accordance with the appeal procedures of Chapter 22.60 of Title 22.

### **9.1.8 NONCONFORMITIES**

The nonconforming use and structure provisions in Section 22.16 of Title 22 shall apply to all uses and structures in the area governed by the Connect Southwest LA Specific Plan that were legally established or built prior to the effective date of this Specific Plan.

### **9.1.9 ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE**

The EIR is primarily a source of environmental information and disclosure for the County, the lead agency for the project. The EIR describes the potential impacts from the adoption of the Specific Plan. Subsequent development projects in the Specific Plan are anticipated as it builds out. The EIR has been prepared as a Program EIR (PEIR), as defined by Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines, and subsequent projects that are within the scope of this EIR may be subject to a more limited environmental review process, as guided by the provisions of CEQA.

Use of a PEIR provides the County with the opportunity to consider broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures. It provides the County with greater flexibility to address project-specific and cumulative environmental impacts on a comprehensive basis. Agencies

generally prepare PEIRs for programs or a series of related actions that are linked geographically; are logical parts of a chain of contemplated events, rules, regulations, or plans that govern the conduct of a continuing program; or are individual activities carried out under the same authority and having generally similar environmental effects that can be mitigated in similar ways.

This approach is consistent with the tiering provisions in California Public Resources Code Section 21083.3 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15183 for “Projects Consistent with a Community Plan, General Plan or Zoning.” This tiering opportunity is only available for plans (e.g., specific plan) for which an EIR has been prepared.

Note that tiering under these provisions will require environmental review and documentation to substantiate that a subsequent project does not result in any new potentially significant impacts. Such review (under 21083.3 / 15083) could be documented in the form of an Initial Study to ensure “topic by topic” review and substantiation. Once consistency has been substantiated and review shows that the project would not result in new significant impacts, neither a mitigated negative declaration nor an EIR would be required.

Additionally, nor formal public review would be required. Projects may also be exempt from CEQA review pursuant to other sections of CEQA (e.g., exemptions for residential infill projects statutory exemptions, or categorical exemptions) depending on the size of the project and type of development. The type of CEQA review needed for each project will be determined by County staff during their review of the type of project or the development proposed.

In addition to a more limited review process, infill and transit-oriented infill projects may qualify for streamlined environmental review. CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.3 allows eligible projects to streamline the environmental review process by limiting the topics subject to review at the project level. Public Resources Code Section 21099 and 21155.4 also limit review of environmental topics

### **9.1.10 SPECIFIC PLAN EIR MITIGATION MONITORING**

Pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 21091.6, a summary of conditions of a project approval shall be prepared to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment. The EIR for the Connect Southwest LA Specific

Plan includes a Mitigation Monitoring Report that will be completed prior to adoption of the Specific Plan.

### **9.1.11 TIERING FOR FUTURE PROJECTS CONSISTENT WITH THE SPECIFIC PLAN AND EIR**

2015 CEQA Guidelines § 15183 (excerpt):

(a) CEQA mandates that projects which are consistent with the development density established by existing zoning, community plan, or general plan policies for which an EIR was certified shall not require additional environmental review, except as might be necessary to examine whether there are project-specific significant effects which are peculiar to the project or its site. This streamlines the review of such projects and reduces the need to prepare repetitive environmental studies.

(b) In approving a project meeting the requirements of this section, a public agency shall limit its examination of environmental effects to those which the agency determines, in an initial study or other analysis:

(1) Are peculiar to the project or the parcel on which the project would be located,

(2) Were not analyzed as significant effects in a prior EIR on the zoning action, general plan, or community plan, with which the project is consistent,

(3) Are potentially significant off-site impacts and cumulative impacts which were not discussed in the prior EIR prepared for the general plan, community plan or zoning action, or

(4) Are previously identified significant effects which, as a result of substantial new information which was not known at the time the EIR was certified, are determined to have a more severe adverse impact than discussed in the prior EIR.

(c) If an impact is not peculiar to the parcel or to the project, has been addressed as a significant effect in the prior EIR, or can be substantially mitigated by the imposition of uniformly applied development policies or standards, as contemplated by subdivision (e) below, then an additional EIR need not be prepared for the project solely on the basis of that impact.

## **9.2 REVIEW & APPROVALS**

### **9.2.1 APPLICATIONS**

No new development or use shall be established under the Specific Plan, and no grading or building permits shall be issued for these uses, until an application has been approved for the required permit type listed in the Use Regulation tables in Chapter 4, Regulating Code, and pursuant to the applicable procedures set forth below.

### **9.2.2 MINISTERIAL SITE PLAN REVIEW**

- 1. Review Authority.** For uses that are permitted in the respective Use Regulation table, the Director shall have the authority to review projects subject to a Ministerial Site Plan Review for compliance with the Specific Plan and other provisions of Title 22 of the County Code.
- 2. Application Requirements.** A Ministerial Site Plan Review application shall include all information required by the form provided by the Department, and the payment of the required fee established in Title 22 of the County Code.
- 3. Determination.** If the project complies with the provisions of the Specific Plan and other applicable provisions of Title 22, the Director shall grant the Ministerial Site Plan Review approval. Otherwise, the Director shall deny the application for a Ministerial Site Plan approval.

### **9.2.3 MINOR MODIFICATIONS**

Minor modifications, as defined herein, shall not require a Specific Plan Amendment, but will be subject to the following "substantial conformance" determination.

- 1. Review Authority.** The Hearing Officer shall have the authority to review projects requesting a modification to the development standards identified in subsection 4 below, for substantial compliance with the applicable requirements of the Specific Plan and other provisions of Title 22 (Planning and Zoning) of the County Code.
- 2. Application Requirements.** A modification application shall include all information required by the form provided by the Department, and the payment of the required fee.
- 3. Procedures.** A modification request shall be subject to the public hearing procedures and requirements set forth in Title 22 (Planning and Zoning) of the county Code.

4. Determination. If the Hearing Officer determines that the request for a modification is consistent with the principles and standards of Section 22.56.1690 in Title 22 of the County Code, the Hearing Officer may approve the modification. Notwithstanding the foregoing, only the following development standards may be modified:

**TABLE 9.1: MODIFICATIONS**

| <b>Requirement</b>            | <b>Maximum Modifications</b> |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Setback                       | 10%                          |
| Building Height               | 10%                          |
| Building Size / Massing       | 15%                          |
| Open Space Area / Landscaping | 15%                          |
| Sign Height / Width / Area    | 10%                          |
| Parking Spaces                | 10%                          |
| Loading Areas                 | Ma be modified or waived     |

5. Appeals. The decision of the Hearing Officer may be appealed or called up for review pursuant to the procedures and requirements of Chapter 22.60, Part 5 of Title 22 in the County Code.
6. Revisions to Modification. Revisions to a modification grant may be approved by the Director if the revisions do not affect the intent of the original approval. Revisions that would deviate from the intent of the original approval shall require approval of a new modification.

### **9.2.4 SPECIFIC PLAN MODIFICATION REVIEW**

1. Review Authority. The Hearing Officer shall have the authority to review projects subject to a Specific Plan Modification Review for substantial compliance with the applicable standards and implementing options of this Specific Plan and other applicable provisions of Title 22 (Planning and Zoning) of the County Code.
2. Application Requirements. A Specific Plan Modification Review application shall include all information required by the form provided by the Department, and the payment of the fee set forth in Chapter 22.60, Part 2 in Title 22 of the County Code.
3. Procedures. A Specific Plan Modification Review shall be subject to the public hearing procedures and requirements set forth in Chapter 22.60, Part 4 in Title 22 of the County Code.

- 4. Burden of Proof.** The applicant shall substantiate to the satisfaction of the Hearing Officer that:
  - » Approval of the project conforms with the applicable provisions of this Specific Plan and other applicable provisions of Title 22 (Planning and Zoning) of the County Code.
  - » Approval of the project is in the interest of the public health, safety, and general welfare.
  - » Site layout, open space, orientation and location of buildings, vehicular access, circulation and parking, setbacks, heights, and walls and fences are designed to provide a desirable environment within a unifying context that encourages increased pedestrian activity and promotes compatibility among neighboring land uses.
  - » Architectural character, scale, quality of design, building materials, colors, screening of exterior appurtenances, and signs are designed to ensure compatibility of the development with the Specific Plan and the character of the neighborhood.
  - » Project landscaping, including its location, type, size, color, texture, and coverage of plant materials at the time of planting are designed and developed to provide visual interest, complement buildings and structures, and provide an attractive environment for the public. The project landscaping shall also include measures to provide for irrigation, maintenance, and protection of the landscaped areas.
  - » Parking areas are designed and developed to buffer surrounding land uses, complement pedestrian-oriented development, enhance the environmental quality of the site such as to minimize stormwater run-off and the heat-island effect, and achieve a safe, efficient, and harmonious development.
  - » Lighting and lighting fixtures are designed to complement buildings, are of appropriate scale, avoid creating glare, and provide adequate light over walkways and parking areas to foster pedestrian safety.
- 5. Appeals.** The decision of the Hearing Officer for the Substantial Conformance Review may be appealed or called up for review pursuant to the procedures and requirements of Chapter 22.60, Part 5 of Title 22 of the County Code.
- 6. Revisions to Specific Plan Modification Review.** Revisions to the Substantial Conformance Review may be approved by the Director if the revisions do not affect the intent of the original approval. Revisions that would deviate

from the intent of the original approval shall require the approval of a new Specific Plan Modification Review.

### **9.2.5 CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT**

When a conditional use permit is required under this Specific Plan or otherwise required under Title 22 (Planning and Zoning) of the County Code, the review procedures for a conditional use permit shall be the same as those prescribed in Chapter 22.56, Part 1 of Title 22 of the County Code.

## **9.3 GENERAL PLAN AND ZONING AMENDMENTS**

The California Government Code grants authority to cities and counties to adopt Specific Plans for purposes of implementing the goals and policies of a city's General Plan (Title 7, Division 1, Chapter 3, Article 8, Sections 65450 et seq.). The LA County code establishes the purpose and process for adoption of Specific Plans. As with general plans, the Regional Planning Commission must hold a public hearing to consider and provide a recommendation on the Specific Plan. With the adoption of this Specific Plan, LA County is requesting a General Plan Land Use Map designation of "Specific Plan" for the entire project area as well as a narrative amendment to the General Plan adding the Connect Southwest LA Plan to the list of approved Specific Plans.

## **9.4 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

There are a number of grant, loan, and value capture funding mechanisms that could finance the infrastructure and community benefits identified in this Specific Plan. These resources are detailed in this section.

### **9.4.1 LOCAL TAX INCREMENT AND ASSESSMENT DISTRICTS**

#### **Los Angeles Country Park Safe Neighborhood Parks Proposition of 1992, 1996, Proposition A**

The Safe, Clean Neighborhood Parks & Beaches Measure (Measure A) was approved by voters in November 2016. This measure will replace expiring, voter-approved funding with new funding for parks, beaches, recreation and open spaces; and generate approximately \$92.7 million per year. Funding from the measure will be used to upgrade playground equipment, parks, recreation centers and senior centers; provide

children in our community safe places to play and opportunities to participate in after school programs in parks and recreation centers; allow for implementation of drought-tolerant plants and use of recycled water and rainwater to reduce the amount of water wasted; and help protect and preserve undeveloped natural areas for future generations.

### **Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District**

The Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District (EIFD) is a new funding mechanism that was signed into law on September 2014. Its main purpose is to finance a wide array of infrastructure projects with “community-wide significance,” from parks and brownfield remediation to transit improvements and affordable housing.

An EIFD can be created by a city, county, or joint powers authority to fund specific infrastructure and economic development projects as outlined in the financing plan. EIFDs can also leverage multiple funding streams to achieve these goals—including tax increment (if approved by voters), assessment revenues, fees, and other sources such as state and federal grants.

EIFDs share a number of similarities to Community Revitalization Investment Authorities (CRIAs)—another funding mechanism recently passed in California to help carry out revitalization activities. However, a CRIA must operate within an investment area that meets the state’s criteria of a disadvantaged community (generally, the district must consist of households making no more than 80 percent of the state’s median household income).

Unlike a CRIA, however, an EIFD can be established without voter approval and does not require an affordable housing set-aside. EIFDs may not issue debt without a 55 percent vote of the district’s registered voters, nor can revenues be used to fund ongoing maintenance and operations. Because an EIFD’s strength lies in the power of tax increment financing, LASC’s tax exempt status would be a constraint because none of the assessed improvements associated with the campus could be applied toward the increment. Nonetheless, if the Specific Plan were to jumpstart a new wave of investment in the Specific Plan area, those revenues could be tapped for any number of improvements, including transit station improvements, water and sewer infrastructure, pedestrian connectivity, and other streetscape amenities.

### **Special Assessment Districts**

Special Assessment Districts can be used fund any improvement that provides a “direct and special” benefit to the assessed property. By this definition, improvements like the recommended medians, sidewalks, lighting, art, and benches that improve connectivity, as well as safety improvements like private security, can be funded via Special Assessment, while “general” benefits like schools may not.

There are two primary challenges in establishing Special Assessment Districts, particularly for those in already developed areas. The first is that total property taxes can only increase a certain amount before new development is disadvantaged relative to properties not subject to an assessment. The second challenge is that assessment districts require a majority vote of property owners weighted by property value to pass. All the affected properties must stand to benefit from that particular improvement, and no assessment can exceed the “reasonable cost” of its special benefit to that parcel. One benefit to forming a Special Assessment District in the case of West Athens-Westmont, however, is that nonprofit uses like LASC would not be exempt from paying dues, thereby substantially increasing the available revenue stream.

### **Business Improvement District**

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a common type of Special Assessment District that assesses business and/or property owners to fund maintenance, marketing, and other activities, including additional public services or improvements. If such a district were to be formed in West Athens-Westmont, funding could be applied toward enhanced sanitation and cleaning as well as other streetscape and pedestrian improvements.

The County would need to undertake extensive outreach to the property owners to educate them on the benefits and obtain majority support before moving forward with formation. If support can be obtained, a BID is a powerful tool for raising funds to provide enhancements to the area, but cannot be used to issue bonds.

Under the California Parking and Business Improvement Area Law of 1989 and Property and Business Improvement District Law of 1994, a district can be established via a County resolution of intent to form a BID. If a majority of property

owners do not protest the resolution during a subsequent public hearing, an advisory board would be appointed. Once formed, a special assessment can be charged to commercial property or business owners for an amount proportional to the benefits they will receive.\*

### **Landscape and Lighting District**

Like a BID, a Landscape and Lighting Assessment District (LLAD) is another type of Special Assessment District that could be applied in West Athens-Westmont to fund new street and pedestrian lights, landscaping, parkways, medians, and other amenities, and require benefits to accrue proportionately to the assessed properties. LLADs are more flexible than BIDs in that they can issue bonds and require a simple majority of property owners for formation. The Specific Plan area is already encompassed by one such LLAD that provides funding to maintain street lights. There have been no LLADs established by the County for amenities like pedestrian lighting; forming such a district in West Athens-Westmont would require creating a new Special Assessment District dedicated to that purpose.

Given the same barrier to entry as a BID, formation of an LLAD that can issue bonds for the commercial areas that are supported by and include the LASC is a better approach for raising local funds than the formation of a BID.

## **9.4.2 OTHER LOCAL SOURCES OF FUNDS**

### **Development Impact Fees**

Development impact fees are another potential funding source for affordable housing, parks, and recreational open space. These fees, paid by new residential and commercial development projects, must only be used to pay for improvements that can be demonstrated to serve new residents and businesses (from new development), but these fees can be combined with other funding sources to fund a project that serves both new and existing residents or businesses. A nexus study—which calculates the new increment of development, estimates the portion of an improvement project attributable to that increment of growth, and allocates the fee among the new development projects by land use—is required by state law for implementation. Additional impact fees, such as a transportation and traffic

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\* BID assessments cannot be charged to residential properties or land zoned for agriculture.

impact fee, could be considered as a means to fund additional improvements that enhance mobility.

### **Revenue Bonds**

Public activities that are revenue generating and create sufficient cash flow to cover operating costs and debt service can potentially issue tax-free municipal debt to cover the cost of capital improvements. A common example of this is revenue bonds for parking garage construction where there is pay parking.

### **General Obligation Bonds and Other Public Debt**

New commercial and lodging projects could generate significant new sales tax and transit occupancy (lodging) tax revenues that will flow into the County's General Fund. This new money could be used to finance debt service on tax-exempt debt obligations so that existing activities provided through the General Fund are not impacted. Such a General Obligation bond, however, requires a two-thirds vote of local residents (except for educational facilities) to approve. Alternatively, for facilities that can serve as collateral for debt, certificates of participation are a public finance technique that do not require voter approval.

In November 2016, Los Angeles County voters approved the Safe, Clean Neighborhood Parks and Beaches Protection Measure of 2016. The measure replaces funding under Proposition A (set to expire in 2019). The proposal is estimated to raise up to \$94 million annually. Such funding would be especially useful in West Athens-Westmont's case, given its pronounced lack of open space. According to the County's Parks & Recreation Needs Assessment, published in May 2016, West Athens-Westmont's "Park Need" category ranks "Very High," with one of the most acute shortages of park space in the County. With the passage of the funding measure, the County should prioritize West Athens-Westmont as an early recipient of program funds.

### **Los Angeles County Parkland Dedication (Quimby) Ordinance**

The County of Los Angeles adopted Sections 21.24.340 and 21.24.350 and Sections 21.28.120, 21.28.130, 21.28.140 of the Los Angeles County Code ("Parkland Dedication Ordinance"), consistent with, and as permitted by the State's Quimby Act. The ordinance requires that the subdivider of residential subdivision "provide local park space to serve the subdivision, pay a fee in lieu of the provisions of such park

land... provide local park space containing less than the required obligation but developed with amenities equal in value to the park fee, or do a combination of the above" (Los Angeles County Code, Section 21.24.340 et seq.). For the purpose of the County's Quimby Ordinance, the unincorporated areas are divided into 47 Park Planning Areas (PPAs), based on location and neighborhood characteristics. West Athens-Westmont is located in PAA #19.

### **9.4.3 REGIONAL AND STATE SOURCES OF FUNDS**

#### **Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities**

The 2006 Global Warming Solutions Acts (AB 32) established a cap and trade system in California. The system establishes quarterly auctions of carbon allowances, whose proceeds are deposited into a Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. Using revenue from this fund, the Strategic Growth Council administers the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities program, which funds land-use, housing, transportation, and land preservation projects to support infill and compact development that reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

Approximately \$320 million in AHSC funding was announced in FY 2015–16; recipients will be announced in September 2016. During the 2016–17 funding round, potential projects in West Athens-Westmont could include the acquisition and rehabilitation of affordable housing, or the conversion of nonresidential structures to residential dwelling units. Affordable housing developers, the LA County Housing Authority, and/or the County's Community Development Commission (Redevelopment successor agency) are all eligible applicants.

Projects that can show the Strategic Growth Council that they reduce vehicle miles traveled by locating near transit are most competitive for funds. However, the market for carbon emissions has shown itself to be relatively unstable. Rather than trading emission allowances, companies are reducing emissions. While this is certainly beneficial to the environment, it means that the future of this funding source is uncertain.

#### **Infrastructure State Revolving Loan Fund**

The California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (I-Bank) loans money for infrastructure projects around the state. The I-Bank is the state's general purpose financing authority that finances public infrastructure and private

development projects that promote economic development and revitalize communities.

Eligible project categories in West Athens-Westmont could include the rehabilitation of streets and highways, water supply and flood control, new parks and recreational facilities, expanded public transit, public safety features, and power and communications facilities.

Recent loan recipients in Southern California have included the City of San Gabriel, which borrowed \$3.8 million at 3.5 percent interest to upgrade, reconstruct, and rehabilitate its public streets.

### **Integrated Regional Water Management Grant**

Using funds from Proposition 1, the water bond passed by California voters in 2014, the California Department of Water Resources will award over \$510 million in Integrated Regional Water Management Grants for planning and implementation projects throughout the state, with \$98 million specifically allocated to the Los Angeles region starting in 2016. Projects can include stormwater capture, water reuse, and other green streets measures.

Grant applications for implementation will be solicited at a future date; eligible projects for West Carson could include stormwater capture, water reuse, providing new open space, and other green streets measures.

### **Caltrans Active Transportation Program**

Caltrans's Active Transportation Program (ATP) consolidates various state and federal transportation programs, including the federal Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA Set-Aside), Bicycle Transportation Account, and state Safe Routes to School. Funding is distributed to three categories: statewide competition (50 percent), MPO projects for regions with 200,000 or more residents (40 percent), and small urban and rural regions with populations of less than 200,000 (10 percent).

Although some programs request only state funds, most include a combination of funding from all available sources.

The goal of ATP is to encourage increased use of active modes of transportation, including walking and biking, as well as the safety and mobility of non-motorized users. Eligible projects in West Athens-Westmont could include developing new bike- and walkways, including a pedestrian bridge,

and adding new landscaping, traffic control devices, and enhanced street lighting.

Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) administers the regional portion of the ATP and relies on the California Transportation Commission's Call for Proposals process to select the capital projects to be funded through the regional program.

## **9.4.4 FEDERAL SOURCES**

### **Federal Transportation Sources**

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act was signed into law in December 2015, and authorizes federal funding for a wide array of transit improvements through fiscal year 2020. It includes a number of potential funding sources that could benefit the Specific Plan area, including Capital Investment Grants, Urbanized Area Formula Grants, and Surface Transportation Block Grant Programs. These funds are administered through Caltrans's ATP program, described above.

The FAST Act also established a new National Surface Transportation and Innovative Finance Bureau within the U.S. Department of Transportation to serve as a consolidated resource for providing local government agencies with federal funding, financing, and technical assistance.

### **Surface Transportation Block Grant Program**

The Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) is one of the primary flexible funding sources available for transit at the local level. These funds may be used for a wide array of transit corridor capital improvements, including public transportation capital improvements, fringe and corridor parking facilities, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and intercity or intracity bus terminals and bus facilities.

STBG funding is apportioned directly to SCAG by the Federal Highway Administration. The funding is allocated by the State of California, with a nonfederal funding match requirement of 11.47 percent.

With respect to planning, STBG funds can be used for surface transportation planning activities, wetland mitigation, transit research and development, and environmental analysis. Other eligible projects under STP include transit safety improvements and most transportation control measures. STP

funds are distributed in a state based on population and other programmatic categories.

### **Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside**

Within the STBG funding above is a set amount called the Transportation Alternatives "Set-Aside" (formerly Transportation Alternatives Program, or TAP). The TA Set-Aside finances projects defined as "transportation alternatives," including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational programs, infrastructure projects for improving "nondriver" access to public transportation, enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation. It also funds activities related to the former Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program, which helped fund the construction of infrastructure-related projects on public roads and bicycle-pedestrian pathways near schools. A funding commitment in the vicinity of West Athens Elementary School, for example, could finance sidewalk improvements, traffic calming and speed reduction improvements, pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements and bridges, on-street bicycle facilities, off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities, secure bicycle parking facilities, and traffic diversion improvements anywhere within two miles of the school.

State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) and MPOs are not eligible entities as defined under the statute, and therefore are not eligible project sponsors for TA Set-Aside funds. However, such agencies may partner with an eligible entity project sponsor to carry out a project.

### **Economic Adjustment/Revolving Loan Fund**

The Economic Development Administration, a bureau in the U.S. Department of Commerce, administers the Economic Adjustment/Revolving Loan Fund (RLF), which assists state and local entities in creating and implementing strategies to improve local economic conditions in areas that have experienced structural change in their economic bases.

The RLF provides capital to help small businesses and entrepreneurs expand production capabilities with gap financing. Maximum loans are \$650,000 per borrower with terms of seven years for working capital, 15 years for fixed assets, and 20 years for real estate.

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