



# CONNECT SOUTHWEST LA

A **TOD** SPECIFIC PLAN FOR  
WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT

*Final Draft: March 2019*

*Revised: May 2023*

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## **A TOD SPECIFIC PLAN FOR WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT**

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**FINAL DRAFT: March 2019**

**REVISED: MAY 2023**

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# 01



**CHAPTER 1**

# **INTRODUCTION**

# CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 OVERVIEW

The Los Angeles County General Plan 2035 (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 offer the 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*, also known as the “West Athens-Westmont TOD Specific Plan” and herein referenced as “Specific Plan,” is one of eleven TOD specific plan areas identified in the General Plan.

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

- Increase walking, bicycling, and transit ridership and reduce vehicle miles travelled (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.



Existing entrance into the Vermont/Athens Station.

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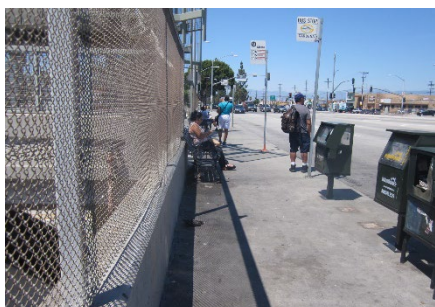
### WHAT IS A SPECIFIC PLAN?

The specific plan is one of several policy or regulatory tools used by local governments to guide community development. While the general plan sets forth goals, objectives, policies, and programs for the entire jurisdiction, the specific plan does so for a localized area and in greater detail. The authority for preparing a specific plan is in the California Government Code §§ 65450 through 65457. The law allows, but does not require, the planning agency to prepare and adopt specific plans for the systematic execution of the general plan. According to state law, all specific plans must be consistent with the adopted general plan, and all subdivision and development activity must be consistent with the specific plan.

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## 1.2 SPECIFIC PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Specific Plan includes the following topics:



Sidewalk adjacent to the existing entrance to the Vermont/Athens Station.



Terracina Apartments on Budlong Avenue at Imperial Highway.

**Chapter 1 – Introduction:** Defines 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. The chapter also provides guidance on the administration including development review and approvals procedures.

**Chapter 2 – Vision, Goals, and Policies:** Defines the vision for the Specific Plan area and the overarching goals and policies to achieve it.

**Chapter 3 – Land Use and Urban Design Framework:** Provides a land use and urban design framework for the Specific Plan area. This includes recommendations for subarea districts within the Specific Plan area and includes conceptual plans for opportunity areas for infill development and revitalization.

**Chapter 4 – Implementing Zones:** Describes the regulations for each of the Specific Plan Zones enumerated in the implementing ordinance located in Title 22 Planning and Zoning, Chapter 416.

**Chapter 5 – Design Guidelines:** Establishes design guidelines and best practices to promote aesthetically pleasing development that supports the vision, goals, and policies of the Specific Plan.

**Chapter 6 – Mobility:** Establishes a well-defined and safe network for cars, pedestrians, and bicyclists in the Specific Plan area. Topics covered in this section include access to the transit station, pedestrian and bicycle circulation, and parking.

**Chapter 7 – Infrastructure:** Provides an overview of existing infrastructure and projected needs in the Specific Plan area, including water, sewer, stormwater, solid waste, and public services.

**Chapter 8 – Implementation:** Identifies mechanisms for economic development in the Specific Plan area and associated community benefits.



## 1.3 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The Specific Plan guides development to implement the goals and policies of the General Plan TOD Program. It creates a more walkable, area with better access for transit, walking, and bicycling. It integrates opportunities for new, compact development that is sensitive to the existing development character to provide new housing opportunities and employment-generating uses in proximity to transit. This achieves several important regional and State goals including increasing housing near transit, increasing transit ridership, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The Specific Plan includes policies, design guidelines, and an implementing ordinance to achieve the plan goals. A program implementation and financing strategy are also included to support implementation of the Specific Plan.

### 1.3.1 SPECIFIC PLAN LOCATION

West Athens-Westmont is located in the southwestern portion of the Metro Planning area (Figure 1.1: Regional Context). It 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 Glen Anderson (I-105) Freeway runs below grade east to west dividing the West Athens-Westmont into two distinct subareas. The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) C – line (formerly known as the Green Line) runs along the median of the 105 freeway for the majority of its route, extending from Norwalk to Redondo Beach. The Vermont/Athens Station platform is located in the median of the 105 freeway under the Vermont Avenue bridge.

#### Specific Plan Area

The Specific Plan area (Figure 1.3: Specific Plan Area) is contained within the West Athens-Westmont Community Plan area. TODs are described in the General Plan as the area within an approximately half-mile radius from an existing transit station. This combined with other opportunities identified in the General Plan (see Figure 1.4: General Plan Opportunity Areas) and described below, are why the Specific Plan is limited to the area reasonably accessible to the transit station.

In West Athens-Westmont, one of the major community assets, Los Angeles Southwest College (LASC) offers a large potential transit ridership but lies just beyond the half mile radius from the station. At the community workshops held during the preparation of the Specific Plan, participants expressed support for creating a neighborhood center at the



Existing bus stop at Vermont Avenue at the Vermont/Athens Station.

intersection of Imperial and Western with new retail and housing opportunities in a "college town" atmosphere that could serve the campus and the surrounding neighborhoods. Preserving these neighborhoods provides greater connectivity and more opportunities for walking and biking. Participants also supported providing a better first/last mile connection from the Vermont/Athens Station and onto the campus. The boundaries of the TOD area largely follow an established Link Shuttle route that circulates between the Vermont/Athens Station to several stops including LASC and points west in the City of Inglewood and then around and back to the Station. These neighborhoods and areas within the boundary were generally regarded as being within a comfortable biking or walking distance to LASC and the adjacent neighborhood center and connections to the Vermont/Athens Station. The limits of the Specific Plan area are defined as follows:

- 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

The area to the east of Vermont Avenue falls within the jurisdiction of the City of Los Angeles and their South Los Angeles Community Implementation Overlay that designates transit-oriented land uses on the east side of Vermont Avenue. The Los Angeles Department of City Planning identified targeted improvements that will facilitate new uses that are compatible in scale and form to existing development and a more transparent entitlement process to foster implementable long-range Community Plans.

**FIGURE 1.1: REGIONAL CONTEXT**

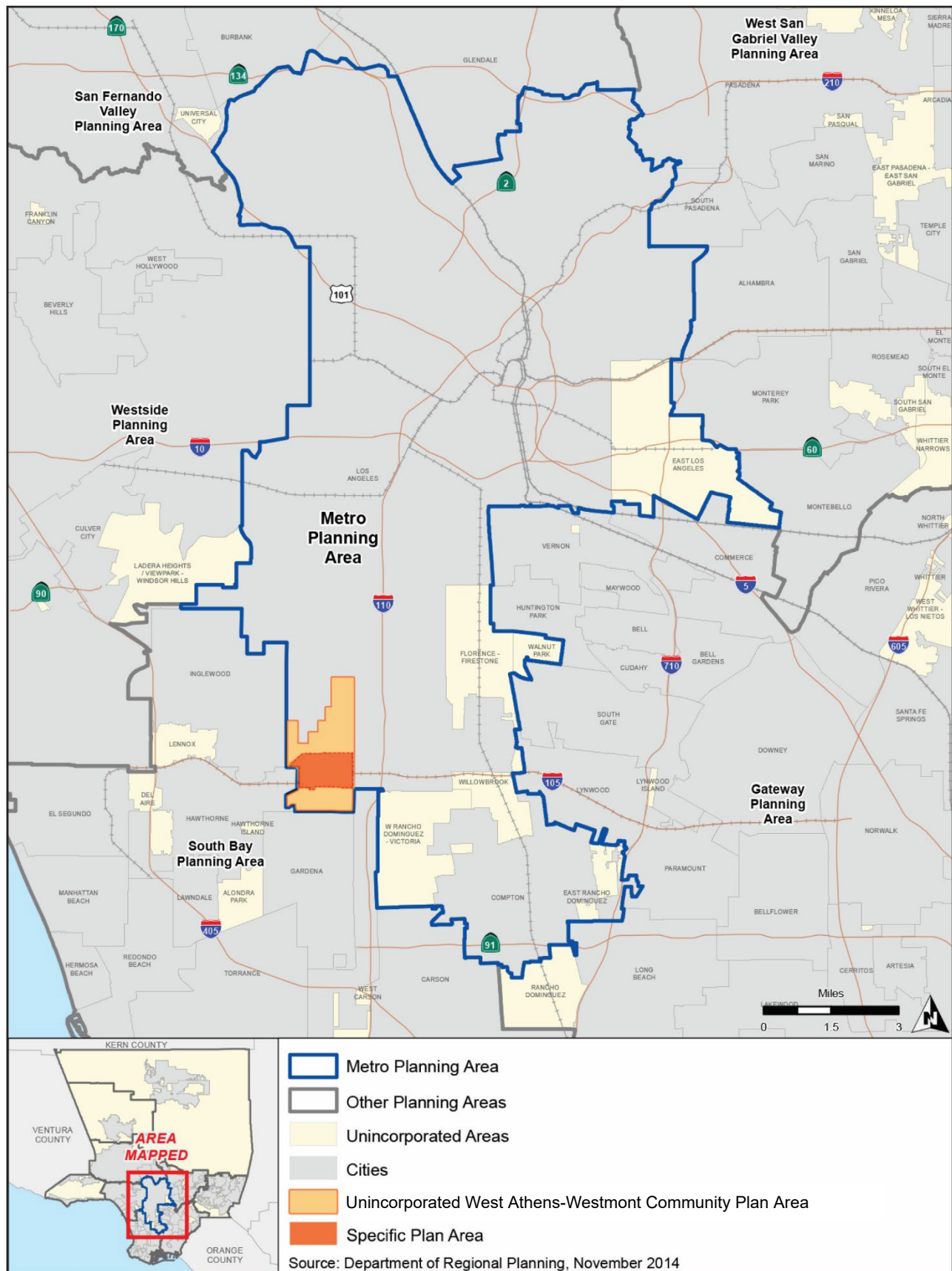
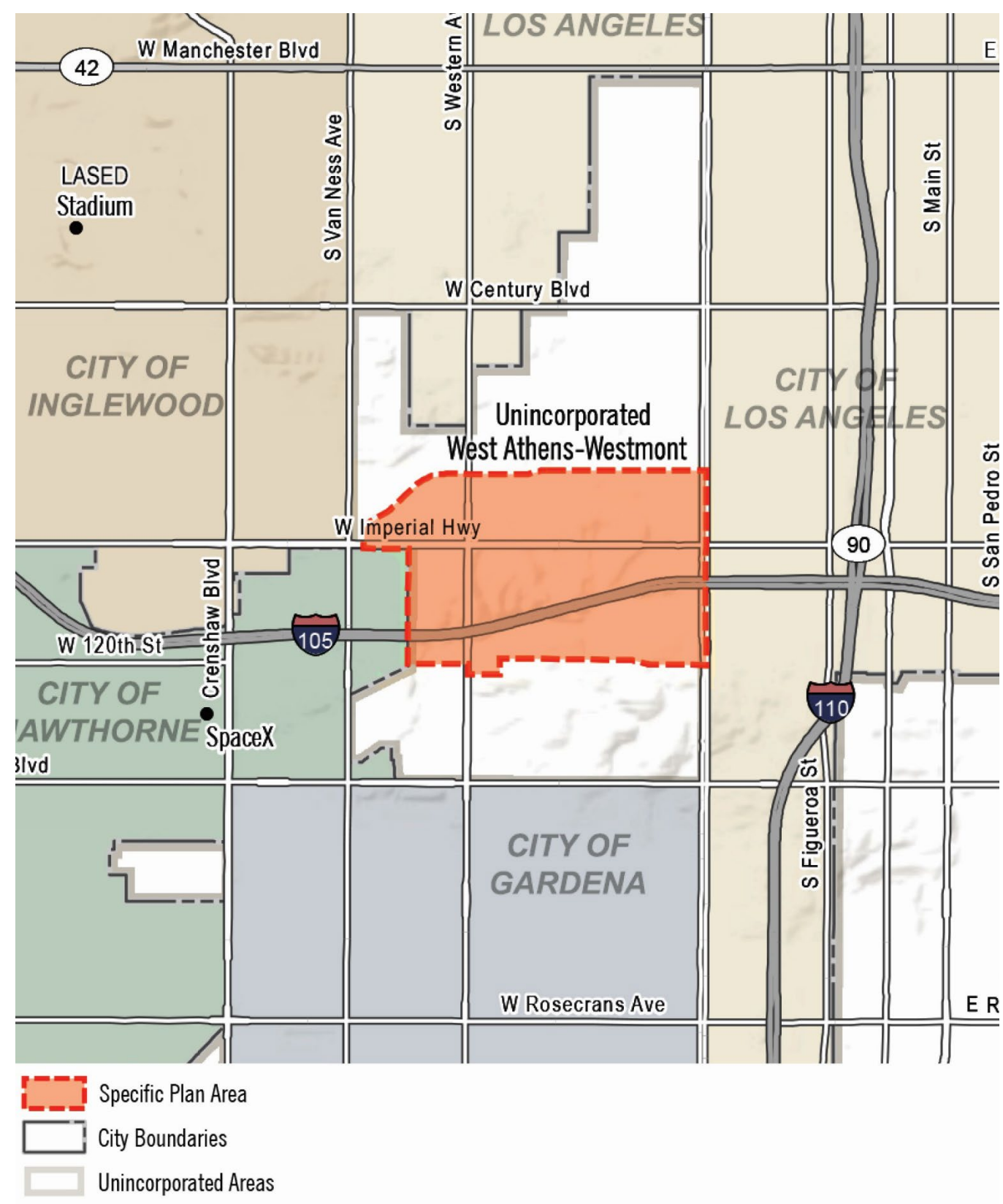


FIGURE 1.2: LOCAL CONTEXT





**FIGURE 1.3: SPECIFIC PLAN AREA**

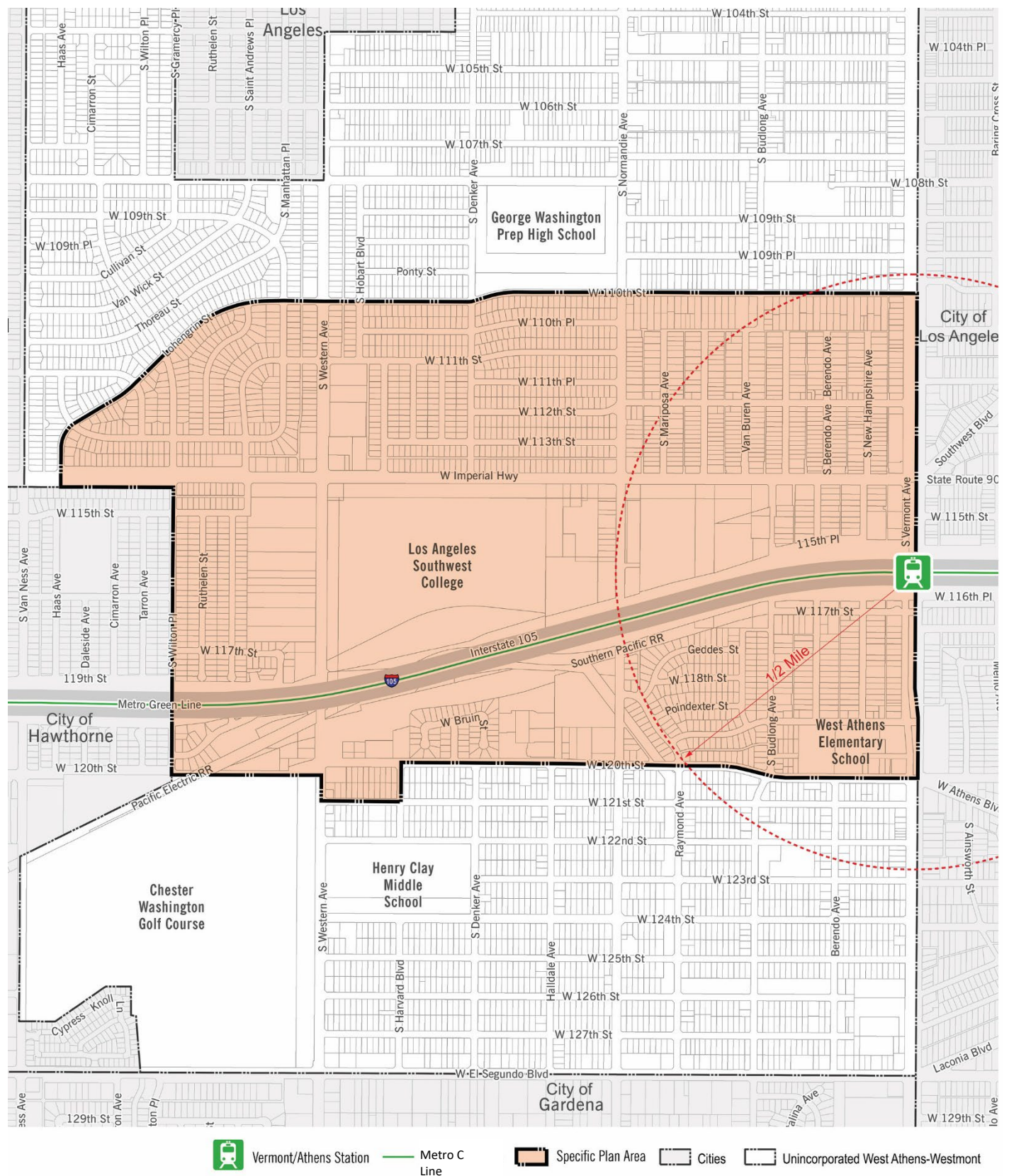
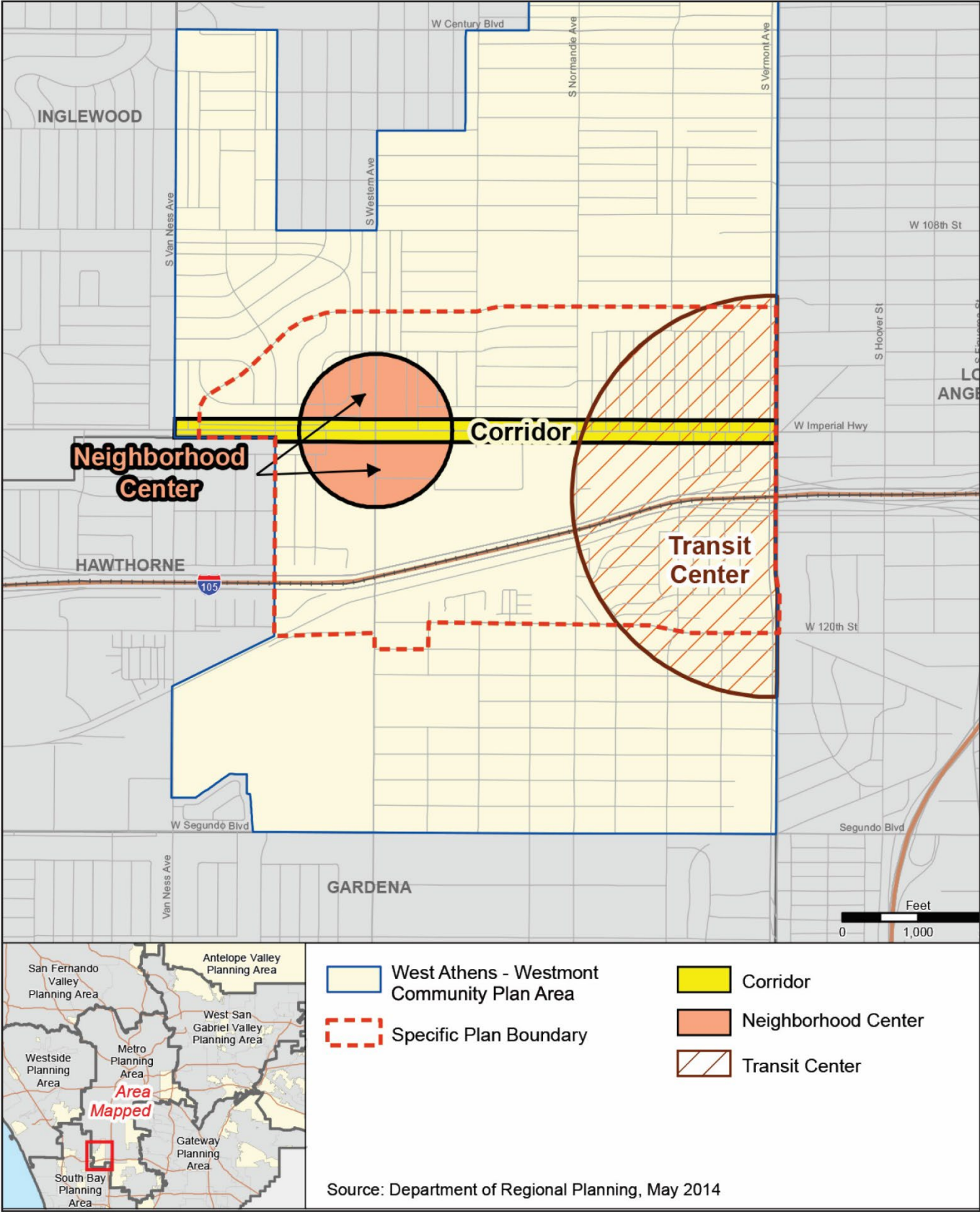


FIGURE 1.4: GENERAL PLAN OPPORTUNITY AREAS





## 1.3.2 PROJECT SETTING & BACKGROUND

The Specific Plan area includes auto-oriented commercial corridors, single-family neighborhoods, and multi-family residential areas within close proximity of job centers, amenities and attractions in the region.

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

### Land Use and Urban Design Character

The majority of existing land use (52%) in the Specific Plan area is designated as residential. A variety of uses, such as convenience stores, retail shops, restaurants, and schools, are within a quarter-mile walking distance of residential uses. A notable portion (18%) of the Specific Plan area has institutional uses, including LASC, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Southwest Station, the Los Angeles County Service Center, and the Los Angeles County Department of Social Services offices.

Much of the commercial portion of the Specific Plan area (11%) is composed of auto-oriented uses such as gas stations, drive-through restaurants, automotive repair shops, as well as some vacant parcels and parcels with nonconforming low-density residential uses. Auto-oriented uses do not promote pedestrian activity or transit use and are inconsistent with TOD goals. Additionally, some properties reflect a lack of maintenance and upkeep contributing to a perception of an unsafe neighborhood and discouraging new development and investment.

Perhaps the greatest challenge to transit riders, is the location of the Vermont/Athens Station platform within the median of the 105 freeway under the middle of the Vermont Avenue bridge crossing. There is no land use, design, or aesthetic relationship between the station and adjacent development. The physical barriers to pedestrian access are exacerbated by the width of Vermont Avenue itself and the surrounding concrete and hardscape environment.

### Mobility

The West Athens-Westmont community is well served by bus transit, regional arterial roadways, and the I-105 and nearby 110 freeways. Roadways function well overall, with congestion occurring primarily along Imperial Highway and Vermont Avenue. It has main bus transit corridors with multiple bus routes from various local transit agencies and the C- line station. Narrow sidewalks, highway on-ramps and off-ramps,



*Bus boarding adjacent to the Vermont/Athens Station.*

and the significant width of Vermont Avenue make walking to the station difficult and unpleasant. The station platform's relative isolation prevents general surveillance creating significant personal safety concerns.

Although there is a complete sidewalk network, the overall pedestrian and bikeway network is limited and somewhat disconnected. The current pedestrian environment is not very conducive for walking, due to the design of the public realm with narrow sidewalks and a lack of street trees and other pedestrian amenities.

### **Socio-Economic Conditions**

As of 2015, approximately 9,900 residents live within the Specific Plan area, roughly 24% of all residents in West Athens-Westmont, which has a population of just over 41,100 residents. Between 2000 and 2015, the population in the Specific Plan area decreased by 7.5% while the population increased by 1% overall in West Athens-Westmont. West Athens-Westmont residents represent approximately 5% of total residents living within the Greater South Los Angeles-South Bay area (refer to Figure 1.1). The Greater South Los Angeles-South Bay area today has a population of almost 869,000 residents and has grown 4.8% since 2000.

In 2015, there were approximately 2,875 households in the Specific Plan area, or roughly 22% of the 12,380 households in West Athens-Westmont. Between 2000 and 2015, the number of households in the Specific Plan area decreased by roughly 1%, while increasing by roughly 5% in West Athens-Westmont over the same period. In comparison, the Greater South Los Angeles-South Bay area had over 267,000 households in 2015, having grown by 3% since 2000.

The median annual household income in West Athens-Westmont is \$32,680, with 39% of households earning less than \$25,000, and in excess of 25% earning less than \$15,000. The Greater South Los Angeles-South Bay area also shares similar characteristics, with 36% of households earning less than \$25,000, as compared to only 24% in Los Angeles County. Compared to Los Angeles County and the Greater South Los Angeles-South Bay area, West Athens-Westmont is noticeably less affluent, with median household incomes 67% lower than Los Angeles County (\$54,690) and 10% lower than the Greater South Los Angeles-South Bay area (\$35,960). A greater share of West Athens-Westmont households, at 34%, live in poverty compared to those in Greater South Los Angeles-South Bay, at 28%.

### **Infrastructure**

Current water supply, sanitary systems, and drainage systems in West Athens-Westmont are in good condition, and capacities are sufficient to

serve the existing community. Los Angeles County will review future projects developed under this Specific Plan on a project-by-project basis to determine if localized improvements to these systems may be required in the future.

## Geology

A portion of the Newport-Inglewood Fault Zone traverses the Specific Plan area in a northwest-southeast direction. This is an active fault trace and part of an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone (DOC 1986). The siting of new buildings within the Specific Plan area would be required to comply with the requirements of the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act.

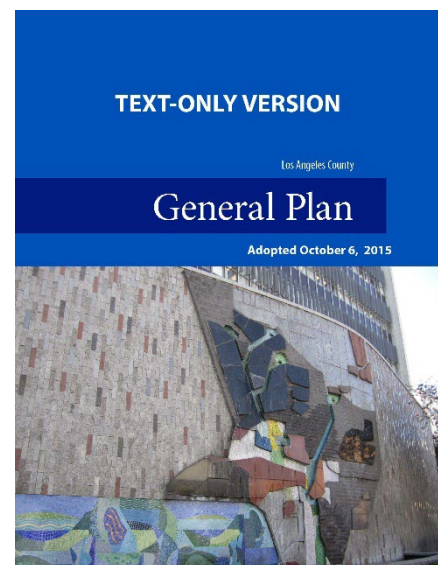
### 1.3.3 RELATIONSHIP TO THE GENERAL PLAN

The Specific Plan is 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 General Plan and will serve as the primary regulatory framework for development in the plan area. The Los Angeles County Code (County Code) of Ordinances and Zoning Map will be amended to implement land use changes proposed under the Specific Plan with zoning and development standards for all projects in the Specific Plan area. Current and past planning efforts establishing the policy and regulatory framework for developing the Specific Plan include:

#### Los Angeles County General Plan 2035, 2015

*(Los Angeles County)*

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors adopted the Los Angeles County General Plan 2035, on October 6, 2015. The General Plan establishes the Planning Areas Framework to provide a mechanism for



**"The transit center around the [Vermont/Athens] Station for the Metro [C-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."

—Los Angeles County General Plan 2035

local communities to work with Los Angeles 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", to leverage its location and transit ridership. Transit Centers are identified based on opportunities for 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. The Transit Center Opportunity Area is a half mile radius centered on the Vermont/Athens Station.

"Neighborhood centers" are areas intended to serve local residents 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; and playing a central role within a community. The Neighborhood Center in West Athens-Westmont was identified as the area within a quarter mile of the intersection of Western Avenue and Imperial Highway.

"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. Imperial Highway is identified as a Corridor in the General Plan.

### 1.3.4 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER RELEVANT STUDIES, PLANS, AND INITIATIVES

#### **West Athens-Westmont Community Plan, 1990**

*(Los Angeles County)*

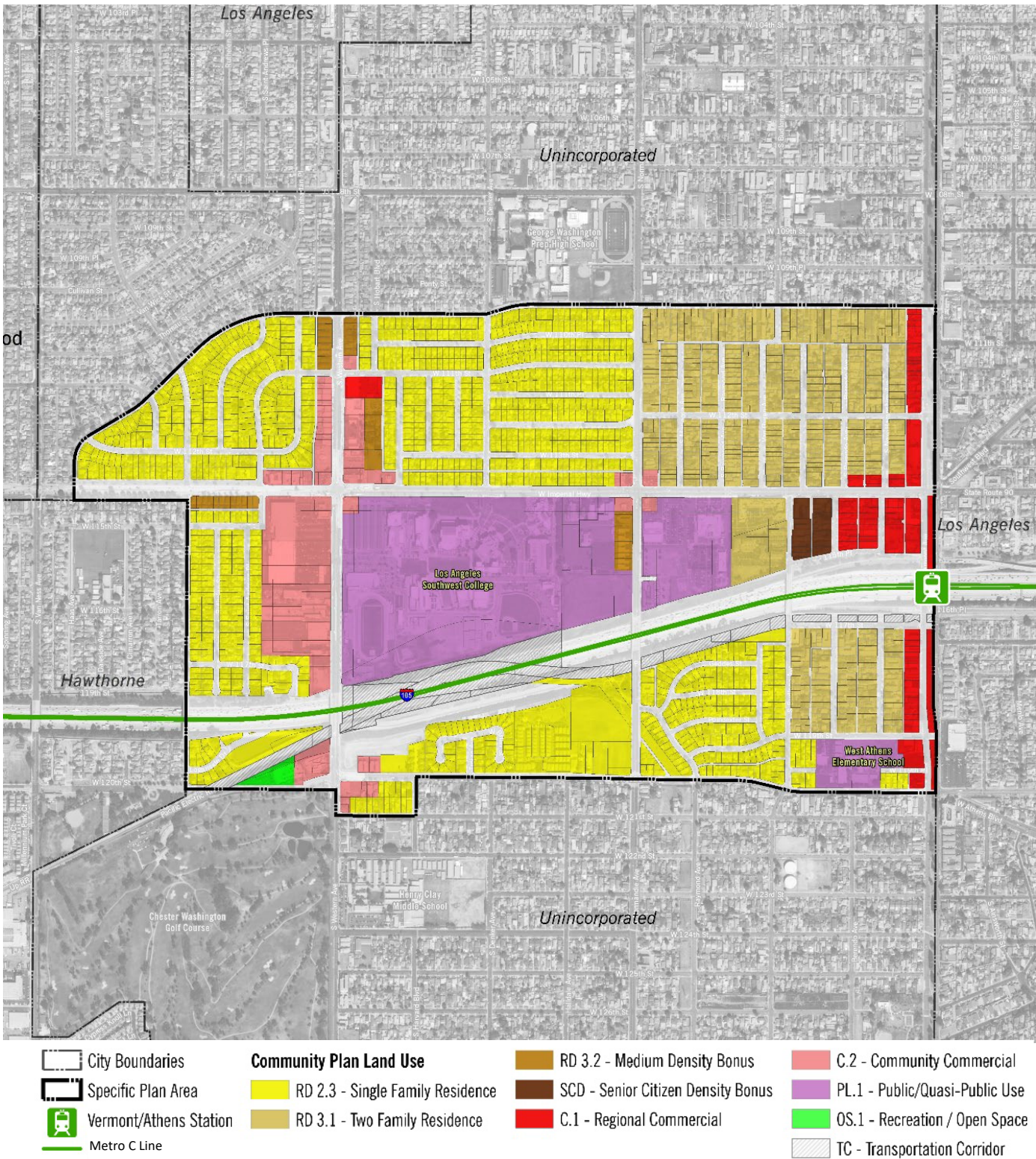
The West Athens-Westmont Community Plan (Community Plan) was last updated in 1990. The Community Plan aims to preserve and improve the quality of life in the community, based on input received from local residents during the Specific Plan's preparation. The land use policies depicted provide guidance for 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 Station, that bolsters economic activity and employment opportunities for the community.
- The preservation of the existing residential neighborhoods, and the renovation of deteriorated housing stock that is safe and affordable for residents.
- Economic incentives for small businesses that improve job opportunities for local residents.
- Multimodal transit infrastructure supporting the transit dependent population.
- Improved parks and open space in the neighborhood providing recreational opportunities for residents.

*Connect Southwest LA: A TOD for West Athens-Westmont* established new land uses and zones for all lots within its boundaries that replaced those (see Figure 1.5) established in the 1990. The 1990 Community Plan was subsequently repealed in its entirety with the adoption of the Metro Area Plan in 2023.



FIGURE 1.5: WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT COMMUNITY PLAN LAND USE POLICY (1990)





## West Athens-Westmont Community Standards District (CSD), 1990

(Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning)

The West Athens-Westmont Community Standards District (CSD) is a zoning overlay district established to provide a means of implementing special development standards necessary to ensure the goals and policies of the 1990 West Athens-Westmont Community Plan. Property in the CSD may be used for any purpose permitted in the base zone, unless expressly noted otherwise. The CSD restricts the height of all residential development to a 35-foot or two-story maximum and requires all residences to maintain a minimum of 50% landscaping in front yards.

In the CSD, the parcels bounded by New Hampshire Avenue, Berendo Avenue, Imperial Highway and the 105 freeway were reserved for the development of senior citizen housing at a maximum density of 50 dwelling units per net acre subject to a conditional use permit. This anticipated development did not occur.

All lots within the boundaries of *Connect Southwest LA: A TOD Specific Plan for West Athens-Westmont* were removed from this zoning overlay district and not subject to its provisions. This zoning overlay was subsequently repealed in its entirety with the adoption of the Metro Area Plan in 2023.

## Los Angeles Southwest College Master Plan, 2003

(Los Angeles Community College District)

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 Master Plan provides for the demolition of several academic buildings due to the presence of hazardous earthquake fault lines traversing the campus. The Master Plan was updated in 2008, 2010, and 2017 to guide future construction projects. The Specific Plan supports development contemplated in the campus Master Plan.

## Green Line Station Access Plan, 2007

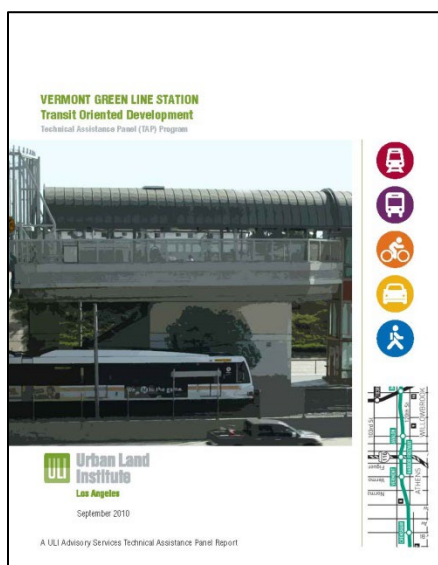
(Metro)

The Green Line Station Access Plan assesses and recommends physical infrastructure and safety improvements to increase walking and bicycling to four selected Metro Green Line stations located in the



South Bay, including the Vermont/Athens Green Line Station. Recommendations include improved coordination among Metro, Caltrans, Union Pacific Railroad, Los Angeles County, and the City of Los Angeles to facilitate pedestrian infrastructure improvements and beautification projects along Vermont Avenue. Proposed physical improvements include:

- 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/Athens 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.
- The Installation of clear signage to indicate the location of the station along major corridors within the station area.



## Vermont Green Line Station TOD Technical Assistance Panel Report, 2010

*(Urban Land Institute)*

The Vermont Green Line Station TOD Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) Report was commissioned 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, which have been re-evaluated through this process and incorporated:

- 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 County Model Design Manual for Living Streets, 2011

*(Los Angeles County Department of Public Health)*

The Los Angeles County Model Design Manual for Living Streets aims to design streets that provide safe, multimodal transportation options. It starts with the premise that any changes or improvements to streets should add value to the adjacent land and neighborhoods.

Los Angeles County uses the manual to facilitate compliance with the new requirements of the California Complete Streets Act, which mandated that the General Plan Mobility Element be based on complete streets principles. Complete Streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities.

The manual also provides guidance on new stormwater management techniques to reduce runoff into rivers, streams, and the ocean while recharging underground water supplies. This helps Los Angeles County and local jurisdictions comply with a Regional Water Quality Board mandates to reduce the amount of stormwater runoff by retaining more water on site.

## Los Angeles County Bicycle Master Plan, 2012

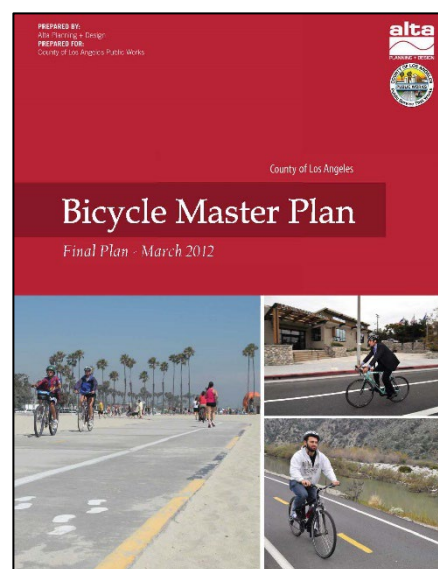
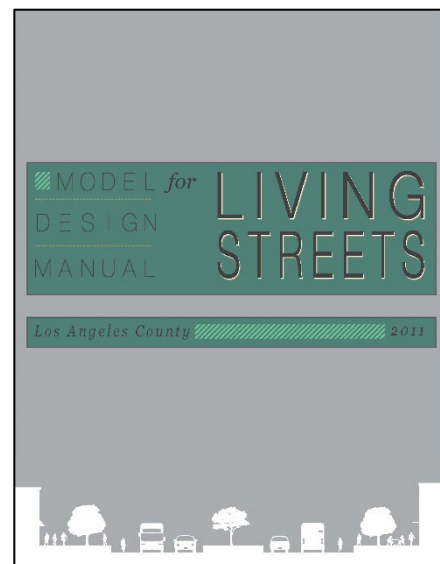
*(Los Angeles County Department of Public Works)*

This Los Angeles County Bicycle Master Plan provides direction for improving the mobility of bicyclists and encouraging more bicycle ridership within Los Angeles County by expanding the existing network, connecting gaps, addressing constrained areas, and providing for greater local and regional connectivity. Bikeway improvements specified in the Bicycle Master Plan applicable to the Specific Plan area are addressed in Chapter 6 – Mobility.

## Healthy Design Ordinance, Los Angeles County, 2012

*(Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning)*

The Healthy Design ordinance changed Los Angeles County's zoning and subdivision regulations to increase levels of physical activity and reduce obesity rates among the residents of Los Angeles County. The Healthy Design Ordinance aims to provide better walking environments, encourage more bicycling, and improve access to healthy foods through



enhanced project review requirements. Relevant provisions have been incorporated in the Specific Plan. If any provisions of the Healthy Design Ordinance conflict with regulations in this Specific Plan, the Specific Plan shall take precedence.

## Los Angeles County TOD Access Study, 2013

(Southern California Association of Governments)

The Los Angeles County TOD Access Study assesses the station access capacity and needs of nine proposed TODs in Los Angeles County to inform the creation of the TOD Program in the 2035 General Plan. At the Vermont/ Athens Station this study recommends 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

These intersections were analyzed as part of the mobility analysis conducted for this Specific Plan. Specific recommendations for crosswalk improvements, pedestrian islands, curb extensions and pedestrian crossing signage are described in Section 6.5.2 of the Specific Plan.

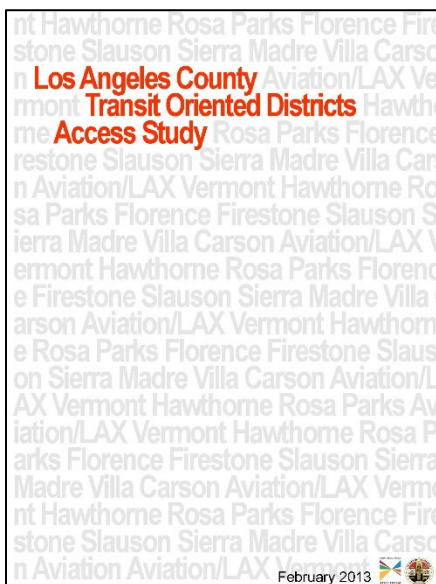
## First/Last Mile Strategic Plan, 2014

(Metro)

The First/Last Mile Strategic Plan outlines an 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 multimodal benefits and efficiencies. The Metro Pathway is intended to facilitate easy, safe, and efficient pedestrian and bicycle access to the Metro system. The guidelines serve as a resource to the Specific Plan to capture potential ridership and take full advantage of Los Angeles County's significant investments in the public transportation network. The First/Last Mile Strategic Plan is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

## Los Angeles Countywide Park Needs Assessment, 2016

(Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation)





The Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation conducted a comprehensive assessment of the park land and infrastructure needs and opportunities in the planning area. A program of community engagement resulted in a prioritized list of park projects for the County, as well as 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**

*(Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation)*

The Department of Parks and Recreation completed the Community Parks and Recreation Plan 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: 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 gardens.

### **Purposeful Aging Los Angeles Action Plan, 2018**

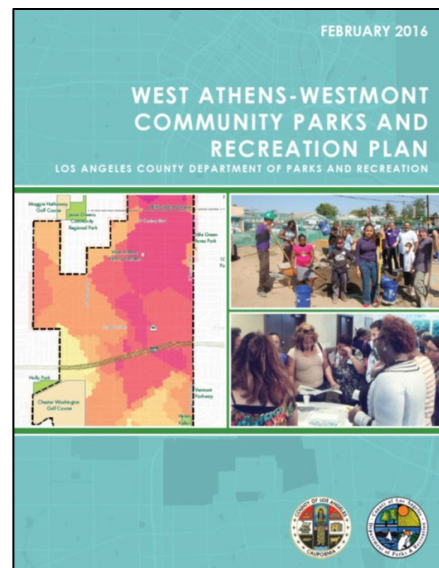
*(Los Angeles County and City of Los Angeles)*

The Purposeful Aging Los Angeles (PALA) Action Plan seeks to prepare the Los Angeles region for a rapidly aging population through an innovative, sustained initiative that unites public and private leadership and strategies. As part of the PALA Initiative, Los Angeles County and City of Los Angeles released the Age-Friendly Action Plan for the Los Angeles Region 2018-2021, which guide efforts over a three-year period to enhance the region's age-friendliness in key areas such as transportation, housing, emergency preparedness, social participation, and outdoor spaces. Relevant provisions have been incorporated in the Specific Plan.

### **Step by Step Community Pedestrian Plan – Westmont/West Athens, 2019**

*(Los Angeles County Department of Public Health)*

Step by Step is a Pedestrian Plan for unincorporated Los Angeles County that presents a vision for enhancing the County's pedestrian policies, procedures, programs, and facilities. Its purpose is to make



comfortable and safe pedestrian environments so that walking becomes an easy and desirable choice for travelling in Los Angeles County communities. This effort is led by the Policies for Livable Active Communities and Environments (PLACE) Program within the County's Department of Public Health - Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention. The PLACE Program is working in partnership with the Department of Public Works to reduce collisions involving people walking and increase the rates of walking in unincorporated communities.

A pedestrian plan was developed for the unincorporated community of West Athens-Westmont in 2017. Community based organizations working together with a planning consultant, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works engaged community members to identify physical barriers to walking, needed infrastructure improvements and solutions to other barriers to walking, such as crime and violence, to improve connectivity, and reduce the potential for pedestrian related collisions. When adopted, the specific recommendations shall be incorporated into new development projects in conjunction with this Specific Plan.

### **Vision Zero Initiative**

*(Los Angeles County Department of Public Health)*

Vision Zero is an initiative which aims to eliminate traffic fatalities by 2025 through policies, programs, and built environment interventions. In February 2017, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved a motion directing County staff to move forward with a Vision Zero initiative for unincorporated areas. The motion instructed staff to implement the strategies described in the Vision Zero Report. These included: establishing a Vision Zero Steering Committee; developing a Vision Zero Action Plan with specific engineering, enforcement, education, and evaluation strategies and timelines; and identifying opportunities to secure long term funding to sustain the initiative. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is leading this initiative in partnership with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works.

### **Our County (Los Angeles County Sustainability Plan)**

*(Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability Office)*

The Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability Office is leading the development of Our County, a regional sustainability plan, to address pressing sustainability issues using a regional approach. Our County will outline a bold, inclusive vision for growth that balances the co-equal values of environment, equity, and economy. It will present a comprehensive pathway to sustainability addressing a wide range of subjects including climate change, water, energy, resource

management, land use, transportation, open space, biodiversity, public health, economy and workforce development, housing, resilience, and governance. Our County is currently in development.

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

*(Metro)*

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 operates a surface Park & Ride lot adjacent to the Vermont/Athens Station that provides 155 parking spaces dedicated for transit patrons. This property may be a potential future joint development site.

## **Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, 2018**

*(Prepared for the Community Development Commission of the County of Los Angeles and the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles by Western Economic Services, LLC)*

To comply with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) housing and community development programs, the Community Development Commission of the County of Los Angeles (CDC) and the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA) formed a joint effort to prepare, conduct, and submit to HUD their certification for affirmatively furthering fair housing (AFFH), which is presented in this Analysis of Impediments.

The Analysis outlines a list of impediments that have been identified as contributing to fair housing issues pertaining specifically to the Urban County and HACoLA's service areas. These items are prioritized according to High, Moderate and Low impact on fair housing choice. Impediments/contributing factors deemed High and Moderate are especially impactful in racially or ethnically concentrated areas of poverty (R/ECAPs), which the Athens and Westmont neighborhoods are designated.

The impediments/contributing factors outlined in the Analysis that are deemed most relevant to the Specific Plan area, and summarized below, are:

- Barriers to mobility
- Lack of affordable housing in a range of sizes

- Land use and planning decisions that restrict fair housing choice for people with disabilities and affordable housing in general
- Poor land use and zoning situating sources of pollution and environmental hazards near housing

### **Barriers to mobility (High Priority)**

The ability for persons with disabilities to access infrastructure, public facilities, and housing units is limited by barriers to mobility, such as physical accommodations for access. Barriers to mobility limits access to opportunities, creating a disproportionate access and contributing to fair housing issues. As such, this factor has been rated as a high priority.

This Specific Plan seeks to address this impediment by including as one of its Guiding Principles, and incorporating relevant strategies, to improve access to the transit station for all users. Additional Goals and Policies, and associated mobility strategies, address improving the public realm for the comfort and safety of all users. The plan also identifies a Policy of working with developers to build and modify buildings to create welcoming, functional environments for all generations (including intergenerational play areas and improved access for those with physical and cognitive challenges) and outlines the need for developers to offer universal design features as one of the near-term implementation strategies.

### **Lack of affordable housing in a range of sizes (High Priority)**

According to the 2017 HUD AFFH data, approximately 74% of family households with five or more members experience housing problems such as cost burdens or overcrowding. The high percentage of families that need appropriately sized housing makes this contributing factor a high priority. Although the CDC has encouraged the development of affordable units for special needs and low-income households, the need for additional housing options is striking compared to available units.

The Specific Plan identifies as one of its Goals to improve affordable housing options. Accompanying Policies, and associated development standards, encourage the development of different housing types in a range of sizes that are affordable to the community and the development of affordable units for special needs and low-income households. Additional Policies identified under Goal 3 address housing for homeless individuals, streamlining of approvals, preserving existing affordable housing and inclusionary housing policies that would increase the supply of affordable housing units.



**Poor land use and zoning situating sources of pollution and environmental hazards near housing (High Priority)**

Land use and planning decisions restricting fair housing choice for persons with disabilities and affordable housing in general plays an immediate impact on fair housing issues by limiting housing choices, diminishing access to opportunity, and further exacerbates segregations among minorities and for persons with disabilities.

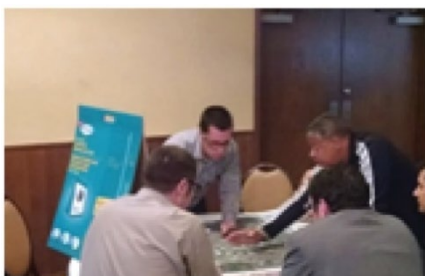
This Specific Plan seeks to avoid such impediments by increasing the supply of affordable housing and encouraging the creation of welcoming, functional environments for all generations (including intergenerational play areas and improved access for those with physical and cognitive challenges) as described above.

**Land use and planning decisions restrict fair housing choice for persons with disabilities and affordable housing in general (High Priority)**

The disparity in access to healthy neighborhoods shows a marked disparity for racial and ethnic minorities in accessing healthy neighborhoods. The location of housing adjacent to environmental hazards may continue to allow for disparities to exist and limit household access to lower pollution levels. Poor land use and zoning policies diminish access to opportunity and healthy neighborhoods. Siting decisions increase the disproportionate level of access to unhealthy neighborhoods for racial and ethnic minorities and low-income households, particularly those in R/ECAPs.

This Specific Plan seeks to address improved access to healthy neighborhoods by identifying as Goal 6 the creation of A Safe and Healthy Community, and associated Policies. The Specific Plan also seeks to limit exposure to environmental hazards by establishing development standards for multi-family residential neighborhoods that mandate a 200-foot buffer from the freeway right-of-way and orientation to local streets.

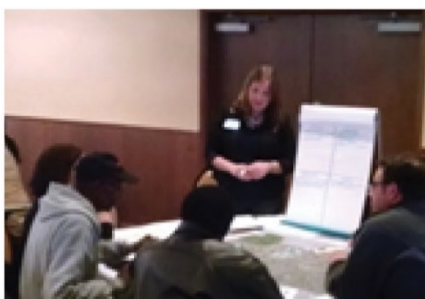
### 1.3.5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Community members participate in small group discussions at the introductory public workshops.



Stakeholders discuss the proposed plan area at the introductory public workshops.



Community members participate in a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) at the introductory public workshops.

In developing the Specific Plan, County staff from the DRP facilitated a robust program of 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 convened for five meetings to guide and provide input for the preparation of this plan. The complex challenges contained within the Specific Plan area required a concentrated effort by a team of professionals and community liaisons to create change and improve the study area. The Task Force was empowered to:

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

The Task Force consisted of DRP staff; representatives from other Los Angeles County agencies, and other key stakeholders, including:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • Los Angeles County Department of Public Works                                | • South Bay Cities Council of Governments                          |
| • Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation                        | • Los Angeles Southwest College                                    |
| • Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture (formerly Arts Commission) | • City of Inglewood  |
| • Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation                                 | • City of Hawthorne  |
| • Los Angeles County Department of Public Health                               | • City of Los Angeles  |
| • Los Angeles County Fire Department   | • City of Gardena  |
| • Community Development Commission of the County of Los Angeles                | • Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) |
|  | • Second Supervisorial District                                    |
|  | • California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)               |

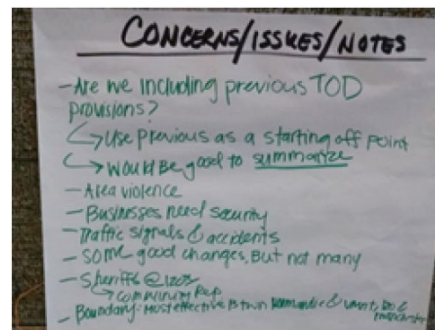
## Community Workshops

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 opportunities and concerns within the Specific Plan area. Forty members of the community attended and provided insights and local knowledge about the challenges and opportunities in the Specific Plan area. The following themes were raised as important outcomes:

- Security and safety with more coordination between Los Angeles County and adjacent cities for enforcement presence and visibility.
- The area around Los Angeles Southwest College should be more focused toward the campus to create a "college town" atmosphere.
- Business development to encourage and support new businesses, such as casual dining 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 Specific Plan throughout the planning process.
- Take previous planning efforts into consideration.
- Revitalization to encourage and promote the development of new affordable housing.
- Avoid gentrification and tailor the Specific Plan to meet the needs of existing community members and the unique place that exists today.

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

At the final workshop, conducted on December 8, 2016, prior to release of the draft Specific Plan, a comprehensive existing conditions report; a refined Vision Statement; a Guiding Principles, Goals and Objectives document; an Opportunity Areas map; proposed Specific Plan zone descriptions; and a proposed zoning map were presented in draft form for discussion.



Stakeholder notes from discussions at the introductory public workshops.



Stakeholders marked up maps as part of groups activities at the introductory public workshops.

## Stakeholder Outreach

Throughout the planning process, DRP staff met with and received input from the following community groups and stakeholders:

- Local residents and business owners
- Los Angeles County Second District Board Office
- Los Angeles Southwest College
- Southwest Community Association
- West Athens-Westmont Best Start
- West Athens-Westmont Task Force
- West Athens Victory Garden

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, the DRP staff hosted a table distributing project information and materials 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 C-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.

## 1.4 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 Specific Plan is targeted to a specific planning area to allow for greater flexibility and specificity.

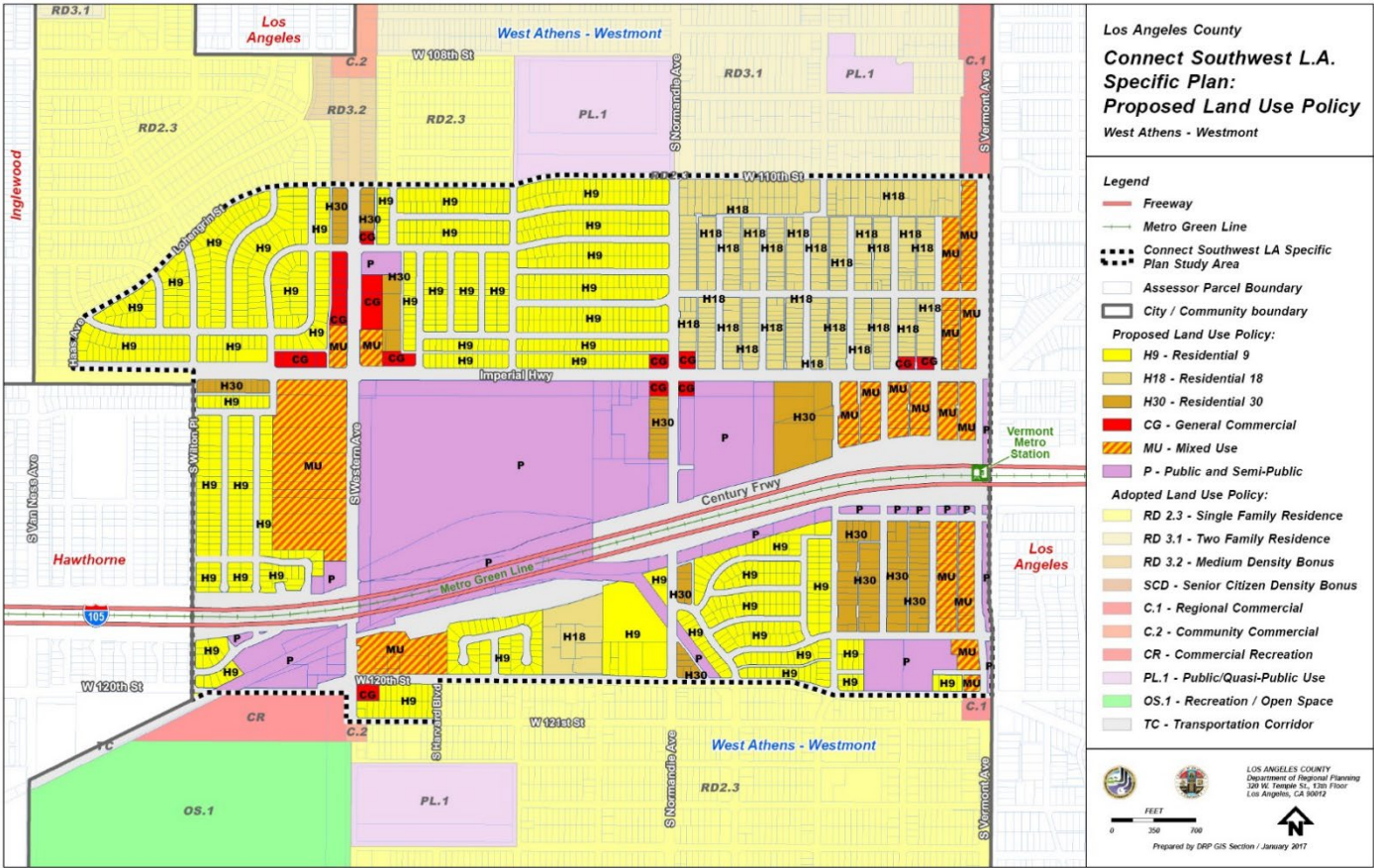
The Specific Plan is intended to be used by residents, business and property owners, developers, designers, County staff, and elected officials in the review of proposed development projects in the Specific Plan area. The Specific Plan shall be used in conjunction with the goals, policies, and regulations in the General Plan and the County Code in order to guide users through the development review process. It is important to note that the Specific Plan establishes zones, regulations, and standards for development. It does not acquire private property or identify privately-owned property as "being available" by the private owners for new development. Any particular development proposals would occur through private investment following the adoption of the Specific Plan.

### 1.4.1 GENERAL PLAN LAND USE POLICY MAP

Each lot with the Specific Plan area has a land use category from the General Plan 2035 land use legend (see Figure 1.6) that aligns with its Specific Plan Zone. Note: Figure 1.6 is shown for illustrative purposes only.



FIGURE 1.6: PROPOSED LAND USE POLICY





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# 02



## CHAPTER 2

# VISION, GOALS & POLICIES

## CHAPTER 2 VISION, GOALS & POLICIES

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Specific Plan sets a vision that describes the West Athens-Westmont community's 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 community 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 appear 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 and pedestrian 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 Specific Plan establishes a framework for the future of the area between LASC and the Vermont/Athens Station. Below are five guiding principles to create a more walkable, sustainable, and accessible TOD.

1. **Guiding Principle 1:** Accommodate 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 C-Line and major educational and public facilities. Development opportunities, particularly near the Vermont/Athens Station and LASC offer housing, shopping, and healthy food options for residents and visitors.
2. **Guiding Principle 2:** Improve access to the transit station for all users.
3. **Guiding Principle 3:** Improve the public right-of-way to increase mobility options for pedestrians and bicyclists. New sidewalks and bike facilities should create attractive, safe and secure connections to destinations that are along the transit system.
4. **Guiding Principle 4:** Create safer and more inviting spaces with design and programmatic improvements that promote safety, decrease criminal activity, and seek to eliminate pedestrian accidents.
5. **Guiding Principle 5:** Ensure compatible development. New development should respect and respond to the existing scale and density of adjacent neighborhoods.

## 2.4 GOALS AND POLICIES

The following goals and policies support a diverse 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. For policies that require implementation actions outside of the County's jurisdiction or control, we have indicated the responsible partners.

### **Goal 1: Build on the Distinct Identity of West Athens-Westmont**

**Policy 1.1:** Work with Metro to enhance the Park & Ride lot to activate the space so that it is an asset to the community.

**Policy 1.2:** Require developers to design buildings with entrances and windows oriented to the street to emphasize a community, pedestrian-oriented atmosphere.

**Policy 1.3:** Preserve the character of residential neighborhoods.

**Policy 1.4:** Allow for new development that increases housing and commercial opportunities along corridors and in proximity to transit while respecting the character of surrounding neighborhoods.

**Policy 1.5:** Work with LASC to integrate into and support the activities of the surrounding community through its expansion and renovations.

**Goal 2: A Diverse Mix of Land Uses and Transit-oriented Development**

**Policy 2.1:** Facilitate opportunities for adaptive reuse of existing buildings in the planning area.

**Policy 2.2:** Require mixed-use development that is compatible in scale with existing adjacent residential uses.

**Policy 2.3:** Support 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 2.4:** Focus new development and mixed-use projects in areas adjacent to the Vermont/Athens Station and at the intersection of Imperial Highway and Western Avenue, as those areas have been identified as strategic opportunity areas.

**Policy 2.5:** Promote a mix of uses and services to support the needs of families, youth, seniors, and a growing population.

**Policy 2.6:** Support land uses and infrastructure improvements that can reduce the need for parking and promote active transportation such as transit, walking, or biking.

**Policy 2.7:** Ensure adequate utilities including broadband internet to serve all residents.

**Goal 3: Affordable Housing Options**

**Policy 3.1:** Accommodate the development of different housing types in a range of sizes that are affordable to the community.

**Policy 3.2:** Encourage the development of affordable units for special needs and low-income households.

**Policy 3.3:** Allow for the integration of novel housing strategies such as Single Room Occupancy (SROs) units and "bridge" or temporary housing units to help people experiencing homelessness in the Specific Plan area.



**Policy 3.4:** Support the conversion of "nuisance" motels into supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness in the neighborhood.

**Policy 3.5:** Coordinate with private and non-profit organizations to streamline and expedite affordable housing projects through the project and environmental review process.

**Policy 3.6:** Ensure there is no net loss of restricted or naturally occurring affordable housing units in the community.

**Policy 3.7:** Discourage the conversion of affordable housing units to condominiums.

**Policy 3.8:** Ensure that any loss of existing affordable units (including market rate affordable units) is replaced at a minimum rate of one-for-one.

**Policy 3.9:** Support inclusionary housing policies that would increase the supply of affordable housing units.

#### **Goal 4: A Diverse Economy**

**Policy 4.1:** Accommodate the development of employment-generating uses and commercial uses along the major corridors.

**Policy 4.2:** Encourage the expansion and retention of LASC, and supportive educational and service industries.

**Policy 4.3:** Require that the street frontages of commercial uses are located and designed to foster active pedestrian activity supporting their economic activity.

**Policy 4.4:** Work with LASC to offer job-training, continuing education courses, and recreational opportunities and programs for local residents.

#### **Goal 5: A Variety of Mobility Options**

**Policy 5.1:** Work with Metro and other transit agencies to develop a balanced, integrated, multimodal transportation system that is efficient and safe with frequent service connecting to destinations, employment centers, and residential areas.

**Policy 5.2:** Collaborate with Metro and other transit agencies to provide a variety of transportation choices that promote accessible alternatives to the automobile including walking, bicycling, and taking transit.

**Policy 5.3:** Work with developers to 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 5.4:** Collaborate with Metro and other transit agencies to ensure that current and new public transportation systems reflect the needs of a growing older adult population (including people with disabilities).

**Policy 5.5:** Support walking and biking as first/last mile solutions to transit by providing amenities such as bicycle parking, bike racks, streetlights, seating, and wayfinding maps and signage.

**Policy 5.6:** Provide a safe and comfortable pedestrian network linking the transit station with LASC, commercial centers, county facilities, and residential neighborhoods.

**Policy 5.7:** Implement parking strategies that encourage travel by public transit and other sustainable modes of transportation, such as priced parking, parking time limits, or prohibited or restricted on-street parking.

**Policy 5.8:** Implement more accurate and flexible parking standards that reflect the parking demand for the area.

**Policy 5.9:** Work with Metro to provide secure bicycle parking adjacent to the Vermont/Athens Station and ensure new development provides effective bicycle parking.

## **Goal 6: A Safe and Healthy Community**

**Policy 6.1:** Incorporate more lighting and visibility along streets and pedestrian ways.

**Policy 6.2:** Implement traffic calming features along main corridors to increase pedestrian safety.

**Policy 6.3:** Support safer routes to schools and parks through increased signage, lighting, landscaping, crosswalks, and pedestrian connections around schools.

**Policy 6.4:** Work with Metro to locate transit stops in areas that are active and visible to maximize personal security and safety of waiting transit riders.

**Policy 6.5:** Support initiatives to combat juvenile crime including after-school programs and gang and drug intervention programs.

**Policy 6.6:** Improve community health by supporting policies and programs aimed at promoting physical fitness and increasing access to healthy foods.

**Policy 6.7:** Promote the production and distribution of locally grown food such as by allowing farmers markets, food cooperatives, and public rights-of-way for urban agriculture.

**Policy 6.8:** Work with developers to build and modify buildings to create welcoming, functional environments for all generations including intergenerational play areas and improved access for people with disabilities.

**Policy 6.9:** Improve underutilized sites such as parking lots and vacant property with community gardens, farmers markets, and pocket parks.

**Policy 6.10:** Seek out opportunities to enhance the Metro Park & Ride lot so that it is an asset to the community.

#### **Goal 7: Public Realm and Quality Open Space**

**Policy 7.1:** Work with Metro to improve the Vermont/Athens 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.

**Policy 7.2:** Work with Metro to improve visibility and access to the Vermont/Athens Station through increased lighting, signage, public art, and street furniture.

**Policy 7.3:** Redesign the west-side entrance of the Vermont/Athens Station with ample amenities, including public restrooms, to improve the comfort and safety of transit users.

**Policy 7.4:** 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 7.5:** Increase recreational opportunities for the community by creating neighborhood pocket parks and finding other creative uses for underutilized open space.

#### **Goal 8: A Sustainable Environment**

**Policy 8.1:** Encourage resource-efficient building techniques, materials, and other principles of green building design in new construction, renovation, and landscaping.

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# 03



## CHAPTER 3

# LAND USE & URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK



## CHAPTER 3 LAND USE & URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter describes the approach to land use and urban design that will promote and allow transformation of the Specific Plan area into a vibrant, transit-oriented community, while strengthening its connections to adjacent residential neighborhoods.

### 3.2 SPECIFIC PLAN DISTRICTS

The Specific Plan area is divided into five subareas that support a range of land uses, including residential, retail, office, as well as institutional and educational facilities and services. Potential strategies for uses and building form are described for each subarea and depicted with illustrations to show how each of the subareas may evolve over time.

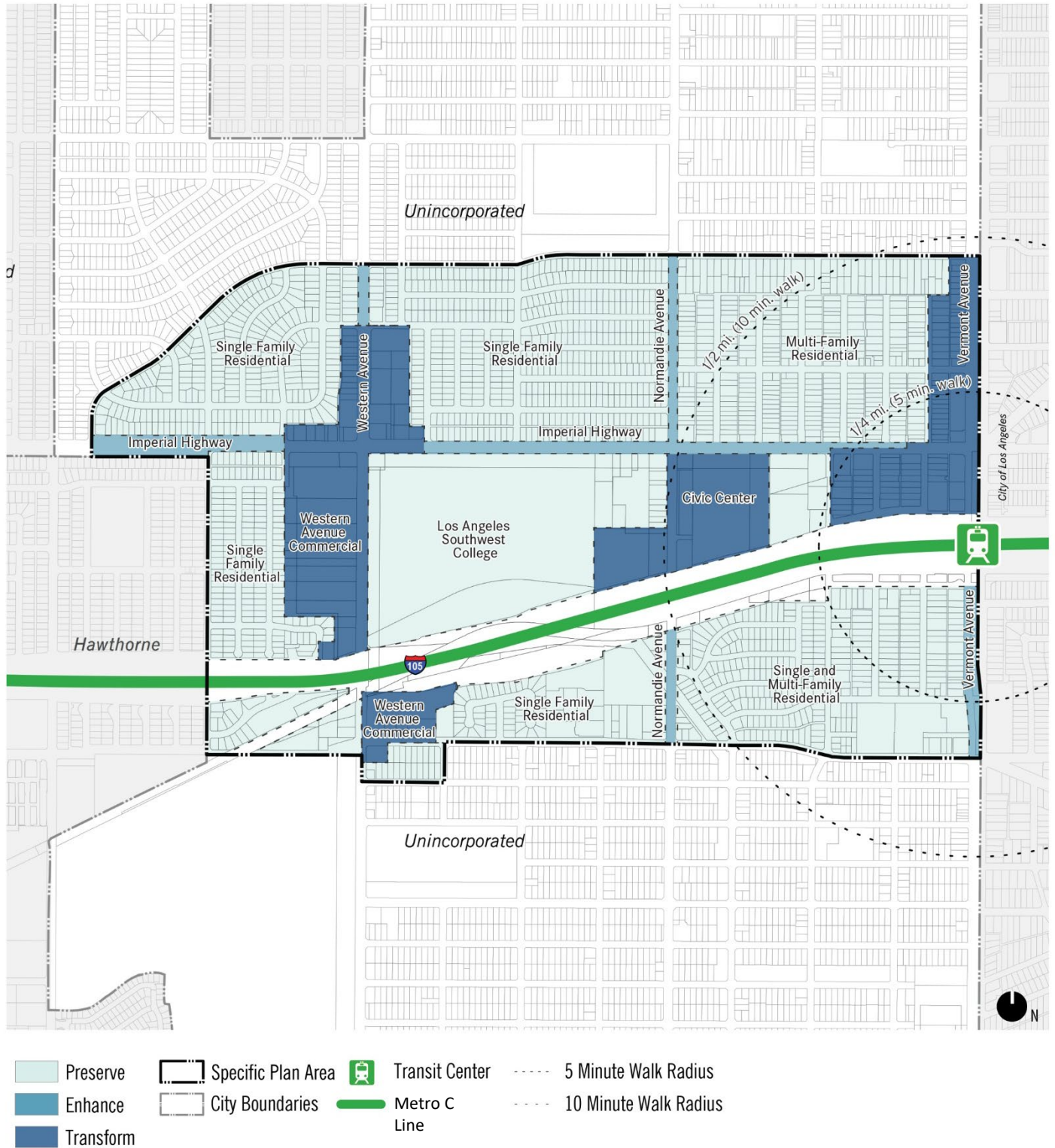
#### 3.2.1 FRAMEWORK PLAN

Figure 3.1 illustrates the three broad categories of change envisioned for the Specific Plan area: Preserve, Enhance, Transform. Areas identified as "Preserve" are generally comprised of the established single- and multi-family residential neighborhoods in the Specific Plan area. The majority of the properties that are located in single-family and multi-family residential neighborhoods and the core of Los Angeles Southwest College will not experience any significant land use change.

Areas identified as "Enhance" are generally associated with the major arterials that bisect the Specific Plan area. Improvements envisioned for Imperial Highway, Normandie Avenue, Vermont Avenue and Western Avenue, and articulated in Chapter 6, are intended to transform the existing auto-oriented streetscape into a more sustainable, multimodal design.

Areas identified as "Transform" demonstrate the potential for significant change over time. On the following pages of this chapter, transformational changes are proposed for the Civic Center/Mixed-Use District, the Western Avenue Commercial District, and the Vermont Station Corridor that leverage opportunities for infill development and public investment to provide additional community-serving uses and neighboring gathering places, encourage a more a transit-supportive environment and supply new housing options.

FIGURE 3.1: FRAMEWORK PLAN



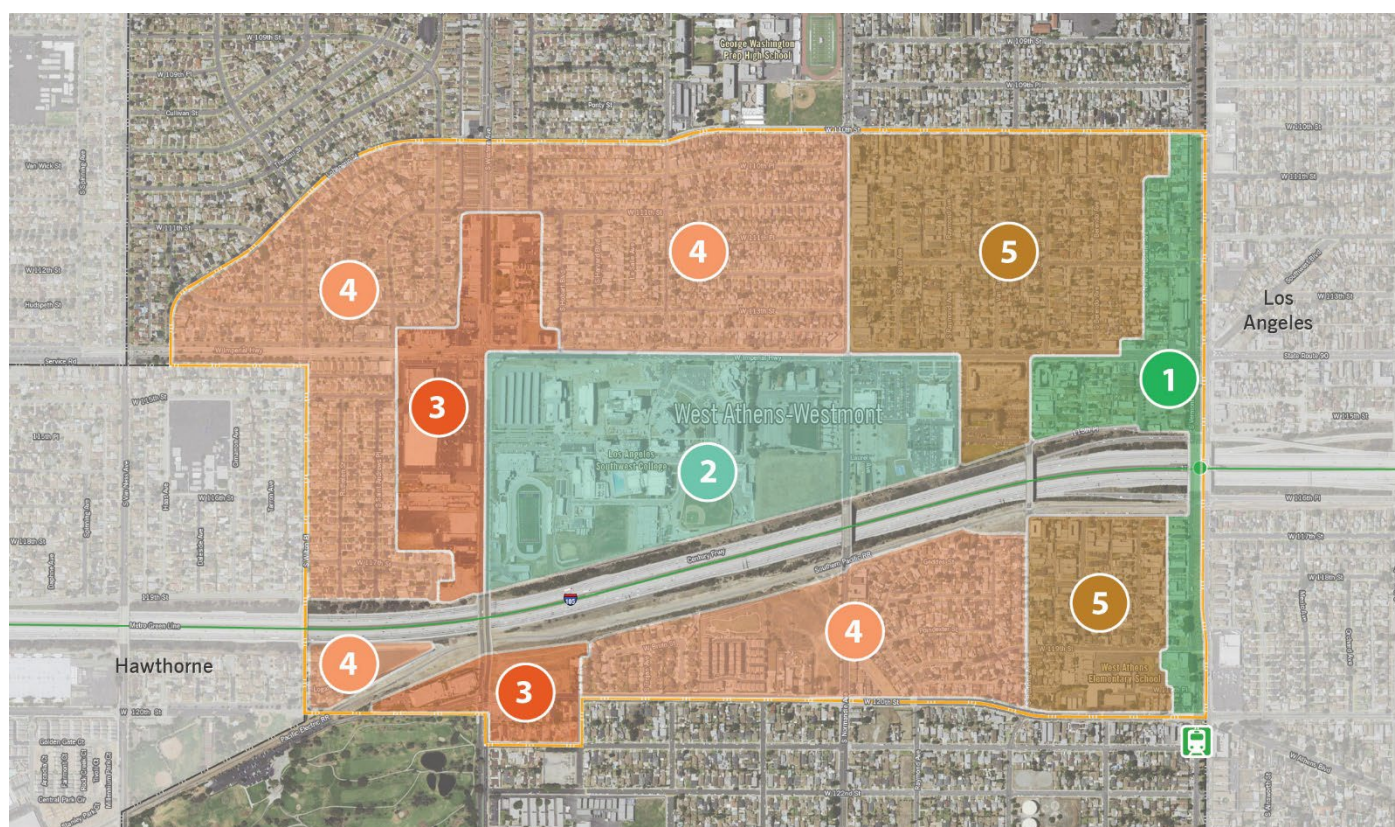


## 3.2.2 LAND USE DISTRICTS OVERVIEW

The Specific Plan 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, and age.

An existing conditions summary for each district is presented in this 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.

**FIGURE 3.2: LAND USE DISTRICTS MAP**



- |                                    |                                    |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b> Vermont Station Corridor  | <b>4</b> Single Family Residential |
| <b>2</b> Civic Center/Mixed Use    | <b>5</b> Multi-Family Residential  |
| <b>3</b> Western Avenue Commercial |                                    |

## Development Potential for Opportunity Areas

The illustrations on the following pages depict potential building locations, streetscapes and the relationship between buildings and open spaces. These portray possible examples of how the Specific Plan recommendations could be implemented. They are not intended as a *de facto* design project, nor do they indicate that any privately-owned properties depicted are available for development. The exact location, scale and design character of future public and private improvements may differ from these plans and should respond to scale, form, and architectural design per each block.

As noted in Section 1.3.2, a portion of the Newport-Inglewood Fault Zone traverses the Specific Plan area in a northwest-southeast direction. This is an active fault trace and part of an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone (DOC 1986). The siting of new buildings within the Specific Plan area would be required to comply with the requirements of the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act.



Existing Vermont/Athens Station signage.

### 3.2.3 VERMONT STATION CORRIDOR DISTRICT

#### Existing Conditions

The Vermont Station Corridor District encompasses the properties fronting Vermont Avenue from 110th Street to 120th Street, including the Vermont/ Athens Station and a center median (refer to Figure 3.2). The Vermont/Athens Station is located at the intersection of the 105 freeway, in the freeway median below street level. The station is accessed through an entrance located on the Vermont Avenue bridge.

A lack of signage and streetlights make the Vermont/Athens Station difficult to access. Furthermore, the overall aesthetic of the station area is not welcoming to transit users and deters potential riders. The station platform located in the freeway median exposes transit users to excessive noise and traffic exhaust.



Existing view of station platform.

The west side of the corridor, north of Imperial Highway, is occupied by buildings directly adjacent to the public right of way. The properties at the Vermont Avenue/Imperial Highway intersection have variable building setbacks that accommodate vehicular access, with surface parking between the building frontages and the street.

South of the Vermont/Athens Station, development transitions to deep rectangular parcels featuring buildings with varying setbacks, and few that accommodate vehicular access.



## Potential Strategy for the Vermont Station Corridor District

The Vermont/Athens Station should be improved and modernized to provide better access and visibility from Vermont Avenue. The improvements of the station would be the responsibility of Metro, with Los Angeles County Public Works improving the public right-of-way. These should include consideration of the following:

- Upgrade the elevators, escalator, and stairs to the Metro C-Line platform and reduce sound and pollution exposure for riders on the platform.
- Improve the 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 opportunities for more streetscape amenities including benches, water fountains, and restrooms.
- Add new bus canopies, trees and shading elements along the bridge overpass 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 would include a range of multi-family residential housing types in a vertical mixed-use configuration that has retail or office with residential above. Vertical mixed-use development along Vermont Avenue, with storefronts opening on to sidewalks, engaging façades, and a dynamic retail mix, would help create a more consistent pedestrian-oriented environment. Residential uses within 500-feet of the freeway are discouraged unless properly mitigated for noise and air pollution risks.

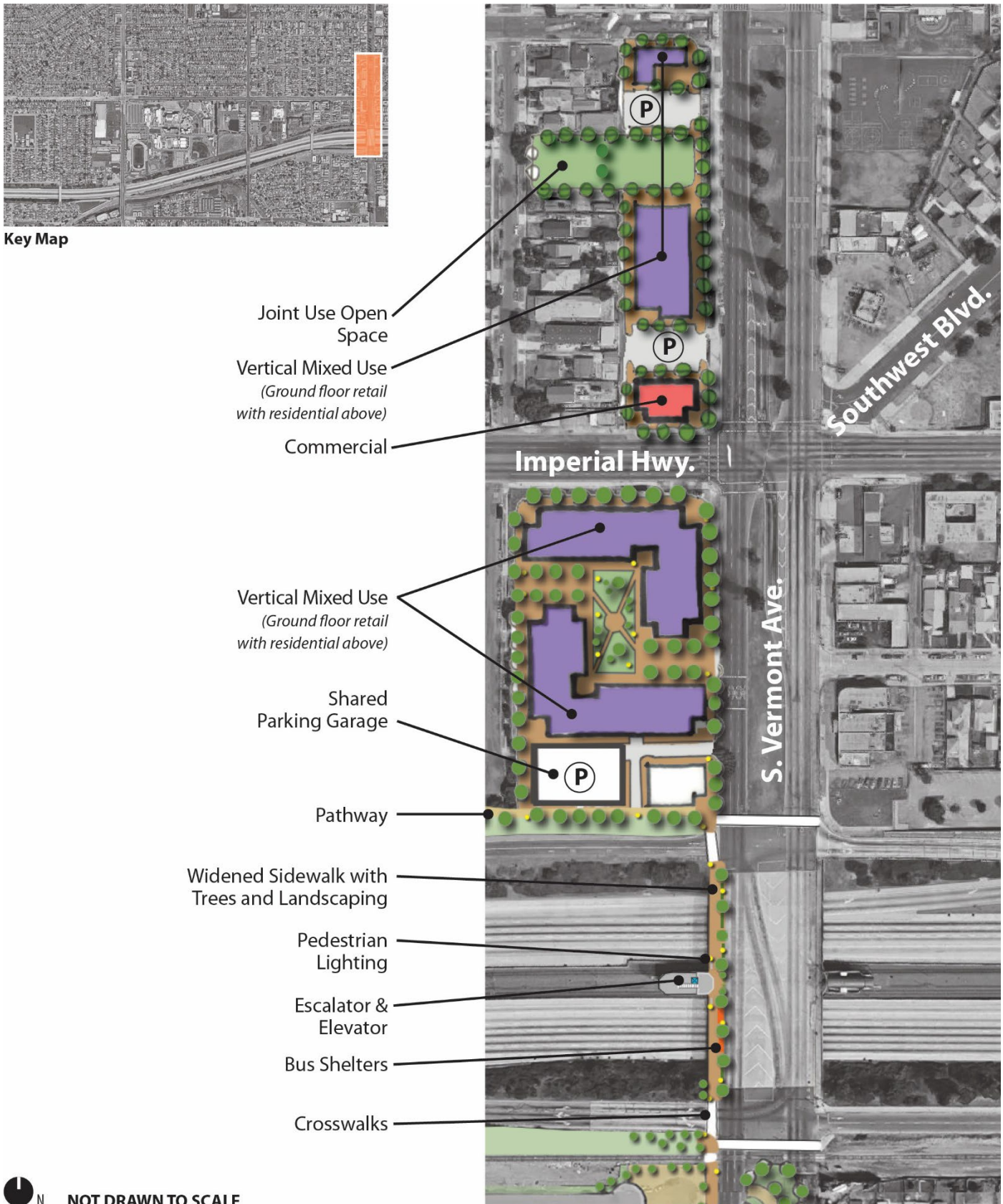
Figure 3.3 illustrates how properties could be developed for new uses, buildings, and open spaces. Low-to mid-rise buildings, integrating commercial and office/professional uses would include residential units above. A mixed-use building depicted on the existing Metro Park & Ride lot would include structured parking for residents, visitors, and transit riders.

A variety of open space opportunities, such as pocket parks and urban plazas could also be developed in this district as discussed in section 3.2.8, New Park Opportunities.



*Existing Metro Park & Ride lot has 155 parking spaces for transit patrons.*

**FIGURE 3.3: CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN FOR "TRANSIT HUB DEVELOPMENT"**





## New Park Opportunities

West Athens-Westmont is considered park poor with only one community park, Helen Keller Park, which is outside of the Specific Plan area. It is located in the southeast corner of the community and serves a limited number of residents. Parks outside of the community are not within close enough proximity to provide ample access. Today, 81.3% of the population is not within a half-mile walking distance of a park.

There are various informal green spaces, both publicly and privately-owned, running through the area, 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 could be used for walking and exercise or gathering and garden spaces.

A variety of open space opportunities, such as pocket parks and urban plazas could also be developed in this Specific Plan area. In Figure 3.4, a conceptual design for an improved median on Vermont Avenue directly south of I-105 would create more usable public open space and increase pedestrian connectivity with proper management, maintenance and security.

Figures 3.5 & 3.6 illustrate a concept design for a small park north of Imperial Highway that would provide residents opportunities for passive and active recreation. The design and programming of these spaces, which must include proper use management, maintenance and security, should follow new development and be based on the input of neighborhood residents.



*Example pocket park.*

## 3.2.4 CIVIC CENTER/MIXED-USE DISTRICT

### Existing Conditions

The Civic Center/Mixed-Use District encompasses the properties located on the south side of the Imperial Highway between Western Avenue and Budlong Avenue (refer to Figure 3.2). 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. LASC is located on about 64 acres in the center of the Specific Plan area. Approximately 12,000 commuter students attend classes at LASC. Signage is visually prominent at the entrances for vehicular traffic to easily view. The buildings are set back significantly from the street. The campus stands apart from the scale and aesthetic of the surrounding community as an institutional superblock.



*Existing Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Southwest Station along Imperial highway.*

FIGURE 3.4: CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN FOR PARK SPACE



**NOT DRAWN TO SCALE**

Public Open Space /  
Pedestrian Refuge



Key Map



Example linear public park.



**FIGURE 3.5: CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN FOR POCKET PARK**



**FIGURE 3.6: CONCEPTUAL MASSING MODEL FOR POCKET PARK**





LASC Campus.

The design of the campus supports pedestrian activity, with sidewalks, 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. A 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 Station, it is not used by the majority of students. Better pedestrian infrastructure and safety improvements connecting the station to LASC could improve ridership.

The Los Angeles County Probation Department, Public Works Department of Building and Safety, and Sheriff's Department occupy three separate structures on approximately 15 acres at the southeast corner of Normandie Avenue and Imperial Highway. These single-story buildings are set back an average of 160 feet from Imperial Highway and separated by a surface parking lot that features landscaped parking medians. The buildings are oriented towards the surface parking lots.

### **Potential Strategy for the Civic Center/Mixed-Use District**

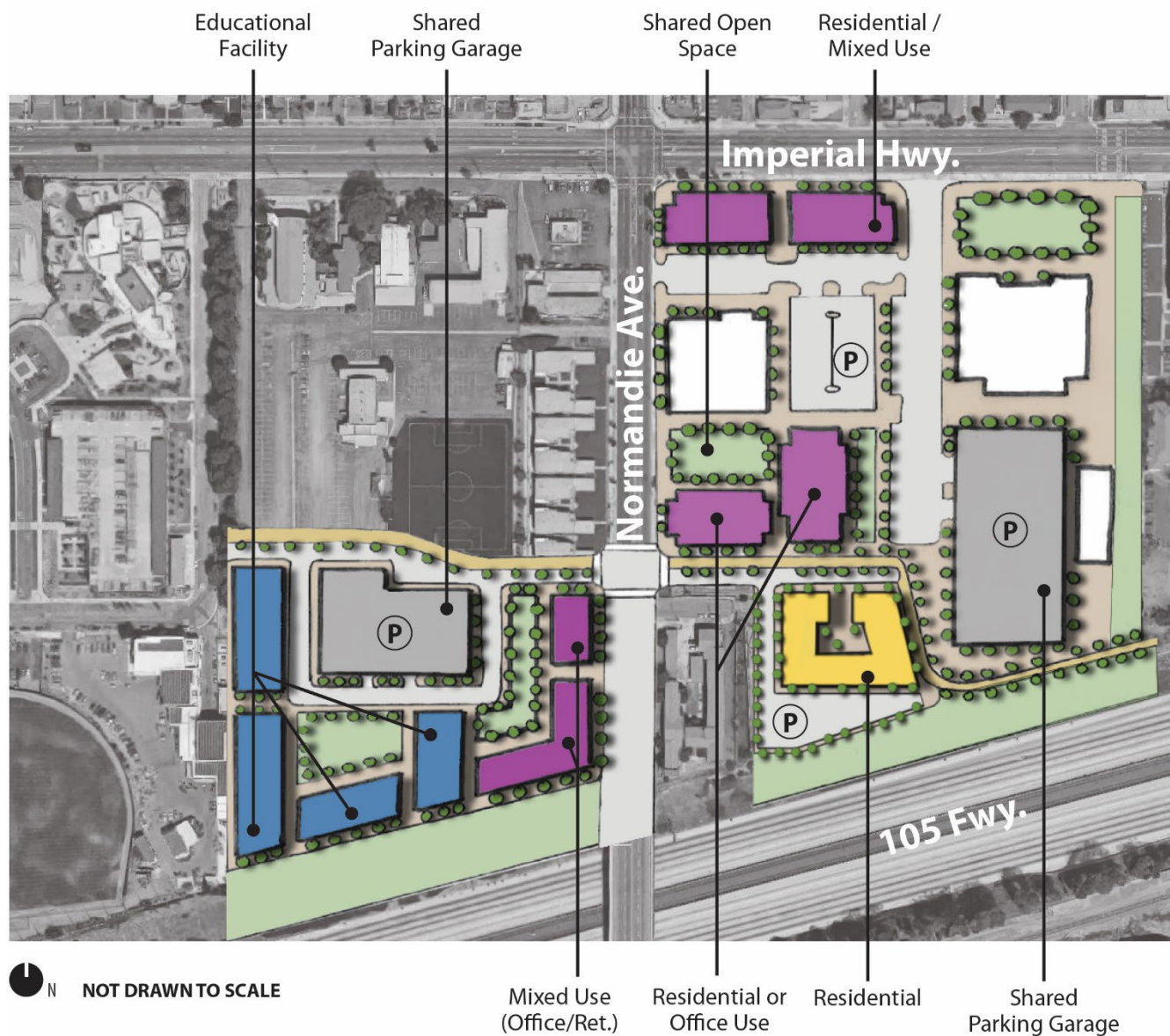
Underutilized land owned by Los Angeles County at the corner of Imperial Highway and Normandie has the potential to accommodate additional community-serving uses and become a neighborhood gathering place. A short-term strategy for this site is to develop a bridge housing project for people experiencing homelessness in the area while the market for longer-term investment in the area stabilizes.

In order to achieve the long-term vision of the community, the Specific Plan permits the transition of the existing uses to higher intensity development in this area. Permanent residential uses within 500-feet of the freeway are discouraged unless properly mitigated for noise and air pollution risks.

The Conceptual Site Plan (Figure 3.7) illustrates how this area could be redeveloped over the long-term under the development regulations and standards of the Specific Plan. Through lot consolidation and new development of a unified project, a mix of uses could be developed and integrated with public institutional and non-civic uses, including commercial, limited residential, and public open space along Imperial Highway and Normandie. The Civic Center/Mixed-Use District would integrate housing development with a civic use, such as a recreation center or library.



**FIGURE 3.7: CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN FOR THE CIVIC CENTER/MIXED-USE DISTRICT**



**Key Map**



*Example of shared open space in a commercial development*



Over time, the integration of existing civic uses and the multifamily residential areas to the east would create a more walkable, pedestrian-oriented district that is well connected to the Vermont/Athens Station. New housing options, including workforce or senior housing, could be developed in proximity to both employment uses and transit.

### 3.2.5 WESTERN AVENUE COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR DISTRICT

#### Existing Conditions

The Western Avenue Commercial Corridor district is located on the north side of the 105 freeway along Western Avenue opposite the LASC campus (refer to Figure 3.2). This area was identified by the General Plan as an Opportunity Area for a Neighborhood Center. These areas are considered suitable for community-serving uses, including commercial and/or mixed-use development that integrates housing with retail, service, office and other uses.

The commercial area is focused south of Imperial Highway along the west 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 a commercial neighborhood, located close to the street 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 set back 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 are set back far from Western Avenue, providing poor spatial definition to the public realm.

#### Potential Strategy for the Western Avenue Commercial Corridor District

The conceptual site plan shown in Figure 3.8 illustrates how the Western Avenue Commercial Corridor District could be developed with properties north of Imperial Highway exhibiting a development character similar to a neighborhood-focused retail district, with uses serving local residents and students. Infill of commercial buildings on underutilized lots and mixed-use development would be designed to respect the existing scale and character of the district. New development, as well as the adaptive reuse of existing buildings, would help activate the street with new uses and promote more pedestrian activity along Western Avenue and Imperial Highway in this area.

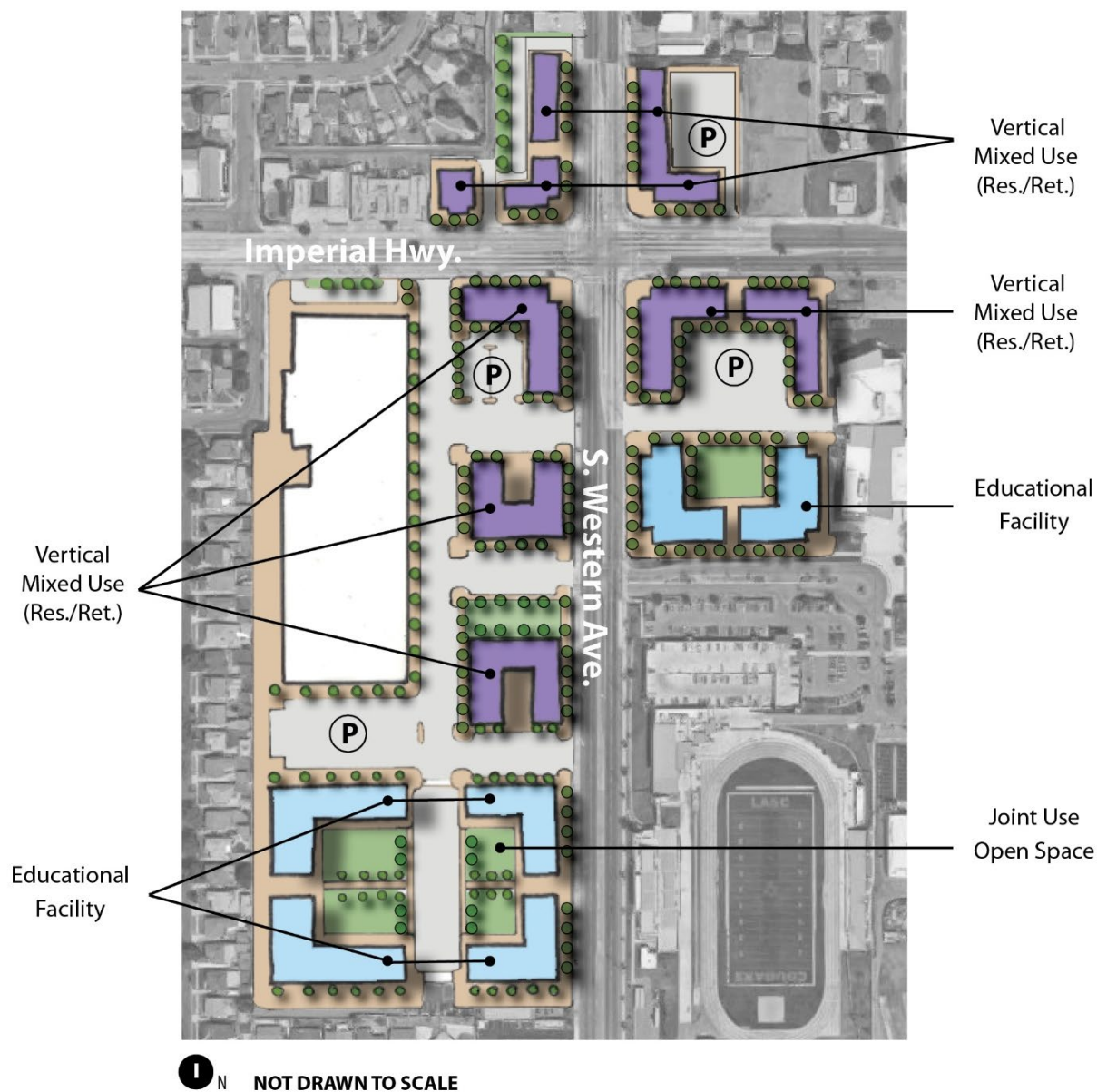


Existing view of Western Avenue entrance to LASC.



Existing Food4Less Supermarket facing Western Avenue.

**FIGURE 3.8: CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN FOR THE WESTERN AVENUE COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR DISTRICT**



**Key Map**



*Example of public open space in a mixed use development*

Lot consolidation and development of a unified project at higher densities in the Food4Less shopping center could offer the potential to create a campus-oriented commercial village with new retail, residential, and employment opportunities for college students and local residents. Where adjacent to residential uses, buildings would maintain lower heights to provide appropriate transitions to adjacent residential properties.

### **3.2.6 SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT**

#### **Existing Conditions**

The Single-Family Residential District encompasses the residential neighborhoods north of the 105 freeway/west of Normandie Avenue and south of the 105 freeway/west of Budlong Avenue (refer to Figure 3.2). These were largely developed between 1947 and 1955, apart from the two gated subdivision developments located 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; bungalows or ranch style homes with gable-styled pitched roofs. These homes were constructed as tract housing developments, by various 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 or alley. Many of these homes have accessory structures located to the rear of the property, used for storage space or additional living space.

#### **Potential Strategy for the Single-Family Residential District**

The Single-Family Residential District is an established neighborhood and will continue to consist of detached single-family homes and duplexes. The Specific Plan aims to preserve and enhance these uses.

### **3.2.7 MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT**

#### **Existing Conditions**

The Multi-Family Residential District encompasses residential neighborhoods north of the 105 freeway/east of Normandie Avenue and south of the 105 freeway/east of Budlong Avenue (refer to Figure 3.2). These neighborhoods mainly consist of multi-family duplexes, triplexes, and apartment buildings, constructed between 1920 and 1960.

These vary significantly in size, orientation, setback, lot coverage, design and materials. Most structures are separated from the sidewalk by a security fence, ranging in size and design. 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.

### **Potential Strategy for the Multi-Family Residential District**

The Specific Plan provides opportunities for the development of housing with multiple units, as either apartments, rowhouses, townhouses, or condominiums as depicted in Figure 3.9. The intent is to increase opportunities for sufficient densities to promote transit ridership. The development standards promote a variety of housing types given the range of lot sizes and configurations to encourage the development of affordable and workforce housing to serve the needs of LASC and the West Athens-Westmont communities.



**FIGURE 3.9: CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN OF ATTACHED RESIDENTIAL**



**Key Map**



*Example of multi-family residential development.*



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# 04



## CHAPTER 4

# IMPLEMENTING ZONES

## CHAPTER 4 IMPLEMENTING ZONES

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section discusses the zones developed to guide the relationship between the private and public realms.

Development standards in the implementing ordinance established for this Specific Plan are tailored to each zoning designation based on its location and adjacencies as shown in the Specific Plan zoning map in Chapter 22.416. They include:

- Use regulations that identify permitted, conditionally permitted, and prohibited uses
- Built form standards that address specific aspects of site development including building mass and placement adjacent to streets and other buildings.
- Open space standards that address necessary private and public open space for residential and nonresidential developments.
- Landscape standards that 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.

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. Please refer to Title 22 Planning and Zoning, Chapter 22.416 for the Specific Plan zoning map, the land use regulations, and development standards for each Specific Plan zone.

Note: Figures 4.1 - 4.10 herein are included for illustrative purposes only.

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

Zoning Description	Acres	% Of Total	Estimated Buildout	
			Residential	Non-Residential
CSLA Residential 1	167	35.3%	1,278 units	0 sq. ft.
CSLA Residential 2	80	16.8%	1,432 units	0 sq. ft.
CSLA Residential 3	18	3.9%	478 units	0 sq. ft.
CSLA RPD-5000-10U	7	1.4%	67 units	0 sq. ft.
CSLA Neighborhood Commercial	11	2.3%	0 units	164,363 sq. ft.
CSLA Mixed-Use Development 1	27	5.6%	536 units	574,580 sq. ft.
CSLA Mixed-Use Development 2	23	4.9%	559 units	1,217,935 sq. ft.
CSLA Civic Center	22	4.7%	168 units	731,244 sq. ft.
CSLA Public / Institutional	83	17.5%	0 units	786,925 sq. ft.
CSLA 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 SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

The following special requirements shall be deemed not to conflict with the Specific Plan when they are adopted or implemented.

### 4.2.1 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 land use and zoning changes included in this Specific Plan support the development of new affordable units toward meeting regional housing needs.

### 4.2.2 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).

### 4.2.3 COMPACT LOT SUBDIVISIONS

The Compact Lot Subdivision Ordinance, scheduled for adoption in late 2019, will allow the creation of smaller, fee-simple single-family residential lots, or "compact lots," in areas zoned for two-family and multi-family housing where infill development is encouraged. The Ordinance will amend Title 21 (Subdivisions) of the County Code to exempt compact lots from the street frontage requirement. The Ordinance will also amend Title 22 (Planning and Zoning) of the County Code to establish new development standards for single-family residences on compact lots. These new development standards include but are not limited to required lot area and lot width; setbacks; floor area; height; private usable open space; landscaping; tree planting; and parking including the allowance of a separate parking-only lot where some or all required parking spaces are provided.

Compact lot subdivisions provide a space efficient and economical alternative to traditional options for homeownership. Compact lot



subdivisions reduce the amount of land required for new single-family residences, which potentially create opportunities for affordable homeownership through lower land costs. In addition, compact lot subdivisions allow a greater variety in lot sizes and flexibility in lot configuration, which promote urban infill, a diversity of housing types, and neighborhood stability.

#### **4.2.4 AFFORDABLE HOUSING PRESERVATION ORDINANCE**

Affordable housing preservation seeks to maintain the supply of lower-cost housing to avoid displacement of tenants. The Board of Supervisors initiated an ordinance to preserve existing affordable housing that considers a variety of anti-displacement strategies, such as the regulation of condominium conversions and mobile home park closures, and one-for-one replacement or "no net loss" policies. The Affordable Housing Preservation Ordinance is currently being developed.

#### **4.2.5 INCLUSIONARY HOUSING ORDINANCE**

Inclusionary Housing policies require new residential projects that meet certain criteria to set aside a percentage of units for affordable housing. These requirements are to be set at a level that can be supported on a financially feasible basis, as determined through an economic feasibility study. The County is currently developing an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance to establish a policy that outlines the applicability, set-aside requirements, development standards, alternatives, and developer incentives.

#### **4.2.6 INTERIM AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING ORDINANCE**

The Interim and Supportive Housing Ordinance will encourage the development of housing that is critical to ending homelessness. Interim housing provides short-term stays and various services for people experiencing homelessness until they are connected with permanent housing. Supportive housing is affordable housing combined with a comprehensive array of services that help people who face the most complex challenges to live with stability, autonomy, and dignity. The Interim and Supportive Housing Ordinance is currently being developed.

#### **4.2.7 BY-RIGHT ORDINANCE**

The intent of the By-Right Housing Ordinance is to streamline multi-family residential developments by allowing them "by-right" in certain zones where appropriate (e.g., commercial zones). The Ordinance will

reflect a new State law which requires the availability of a streamlined ministerial approval process for eligible multi-family infill residential developments. This Ordinance will include additional local policies to further incentivize and streamline multi-family residential developments.

#### **4.2.8 DENSITY BONUS ORDINANCE**

Under the State Density Bonus Law, local jurisdictions must grant a density bonus to housing developments of five or more units if they include a percentage of affordable or senior citizen housing. The County updated its Density Bonus Ordinance to reflect changes in State law including revised findings for incentives, reduced parking requirements for projects near transit, a replacement requirement, providing affordability for 55 years, and equity sharing upon resale of affordable for-sale units. In addition, local policies to further incentivize and streamline the review of density bonus projects include: an extremely low-income household category with set aside requirements, density bonuses, incentives and no parking; ministerial review of density bonus projects that meet the certain criteria, exemptions in commercial zones, and updated requirements for fees and agreements.

#### **4.2.9 EXISTING STRUCTURES**

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

Prior to the issuance of use and occupancy permits for 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 and expressly excluding rough-coat stucco.
- Updated building façade 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.

#### **4.2.10 ALTERNATIVE FINANCIAL SERVICES**

"Alternative Financial Service" means a use, other than a State or federally chartered bank, credit union, mortgage lender, savings and loan association, or industrial loan company, that charge a percentage fee to provide a loan or check cashing service. The term "Alternative Financial Service" includes, but is not limited to, deferred deposit transaction (payday loan) businesses, check cashing businesses, and motor vehicle title lenders who offer a short-term loan secured by the title to a motor vehicle. The term "Alternative Financial Service" does not include: 1) non-profit financial institutions, or 2) retail businesses primarily selling consumer goods, with incidental check cashing for a minimum fee, not exceeding two dollars (\$2), as a service to its customers. Alternative Financial Services are prohibited within the Specific Plan area.

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### 4.3.2 CSLA RESIDENTIAL 2 (CSLA R-2) ZONE



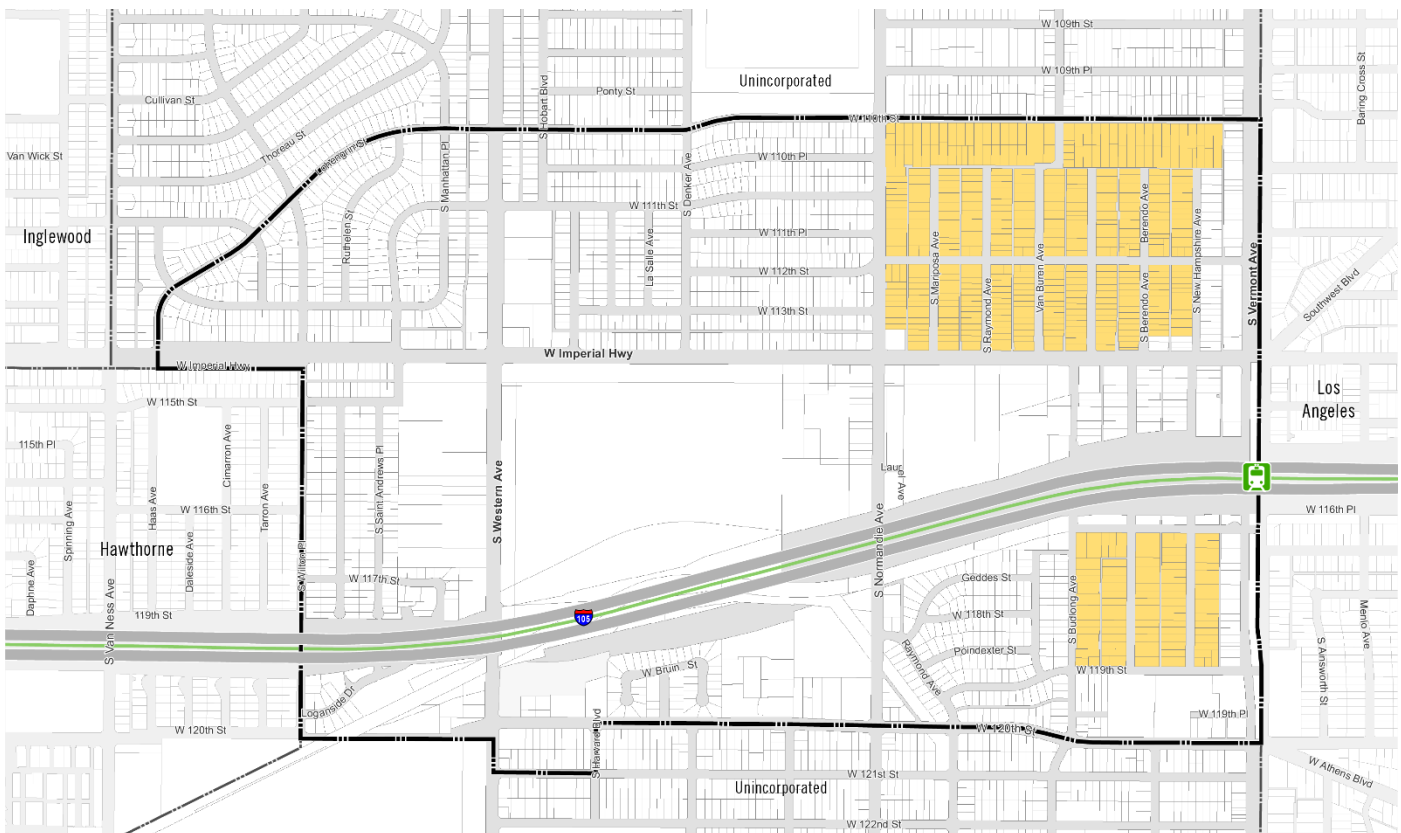
Example of attached housing that may be allowed in the CSLA R-2 Zone.

The CSLA R-2 Zone (see Figure 4.2) 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 CSLA R-2 Zone

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

**FIGURE 4.2: CSLA R-2 ZONE MAP**



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### 4.3.3 CSLA RESIDENTIAL 3 (CSLA R-3) ZONE



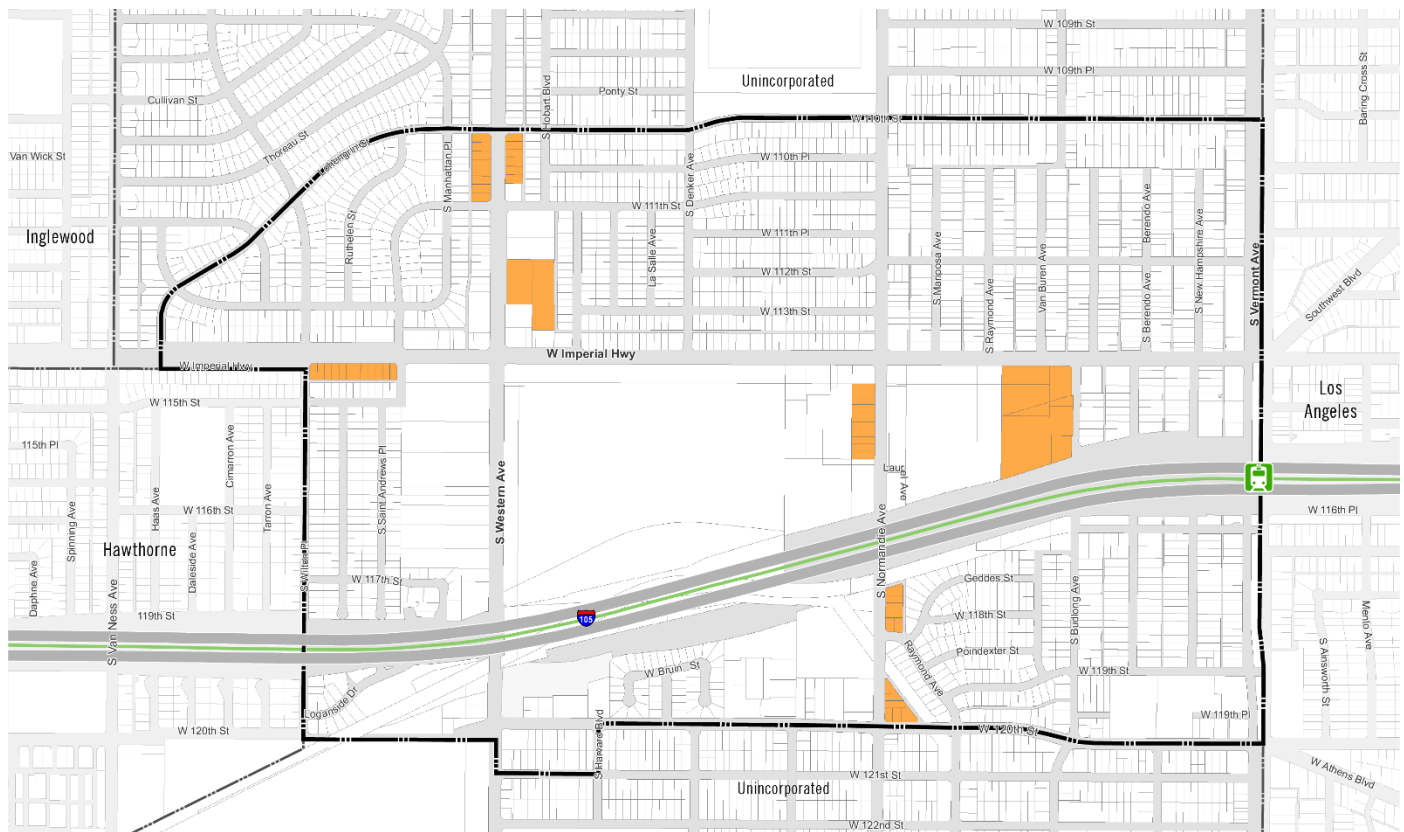
Example of medium density housing that may be allowed in CSLA R-3 Zone.

The CSLA R-3 Zone (see Figure 4.3) accommodates developments containing higher density with 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 LASC and the West Athens-Westmont community.

#### Development Potential for CSLA R-3 Zone

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

**FIGURE 4.3: CSLA R-3 ZONE MAP**



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### 4.3.4 CSLA RESIDENTIAL PLANNED DEVELOPMENT-5000-10U (CSLA RPD-5000-10U)



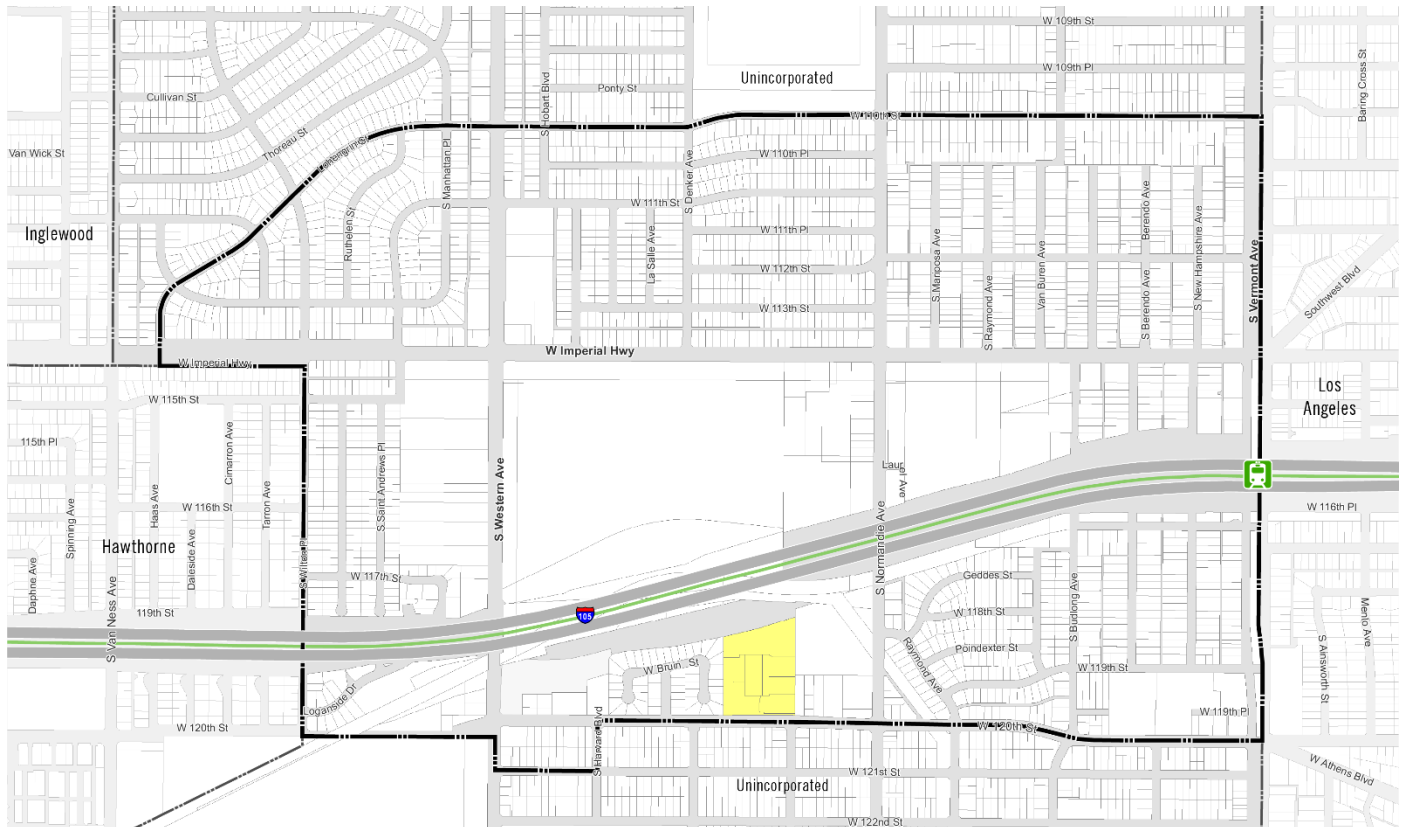
Olive Glen by Williams Homes.

The CSLA RPD-5000-10U zone (see Figure 4.4) was established to include Olive Glen by Williams Homes, a planned unit development approved in 2012, within the Specific Plan area. It has no other effect on the prior project approval.

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

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

FIGURE 4.4: CSLA RPD-5000-10U ZONE MAP





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#### 4.3.5 CSLA NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL (CSLA NC) ZONE



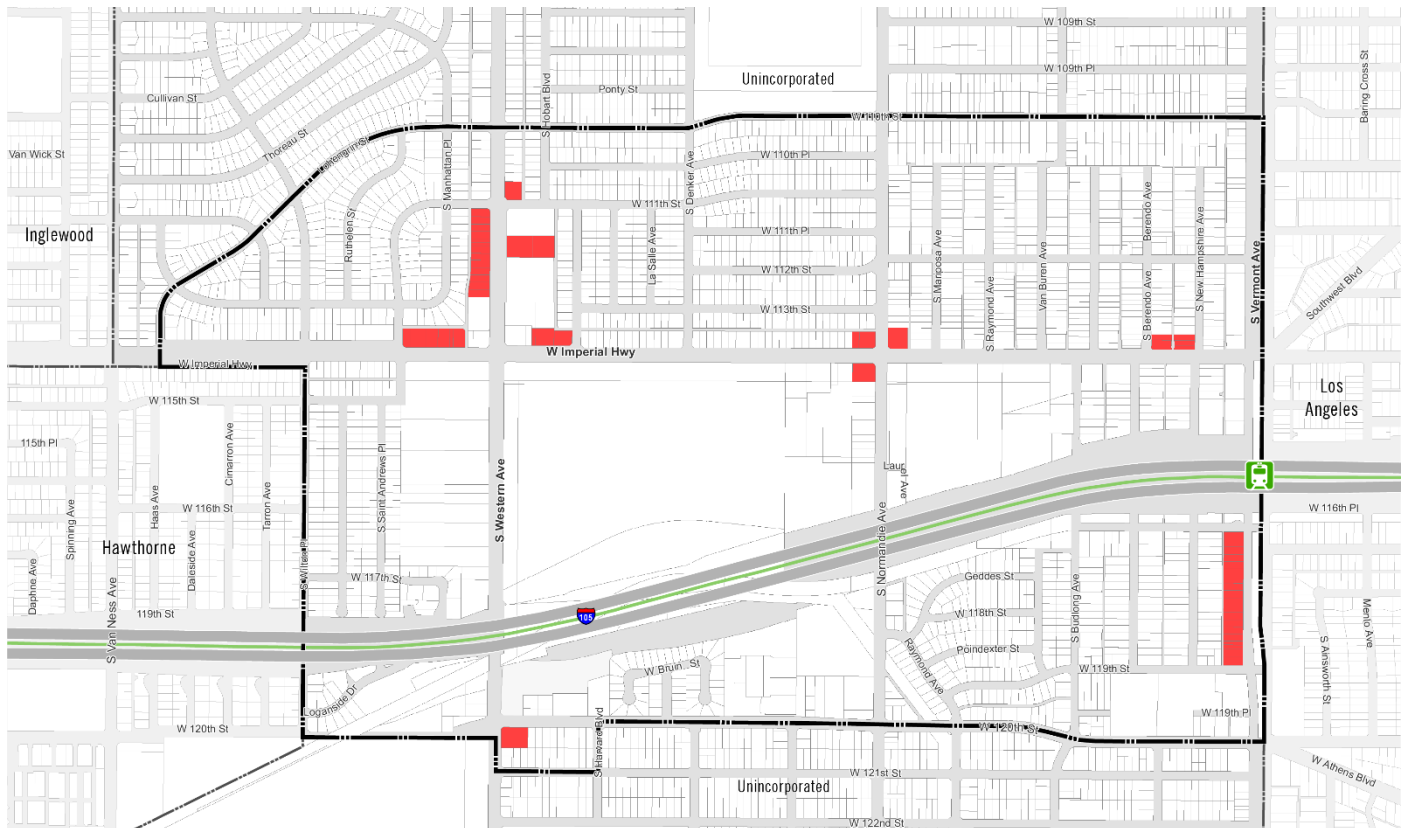
Example of neighborhood commercial development

The CSLA NC Zone (see Figure 4.5) is established to serve the local retail and service needs of the residents, employees, and students in the area. This zone is suited for small-scale retail and 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.

## Development Potential for CSLA NC Zone

- Total Developable Area: 11 acres
- Non-Residential: 164,363 sq. ft.

### FIGURE 4.5: CSLA NC ZONE MAP



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### 4.3.6 CSLA CIVIC CENTER (CSLA CC) ZONE



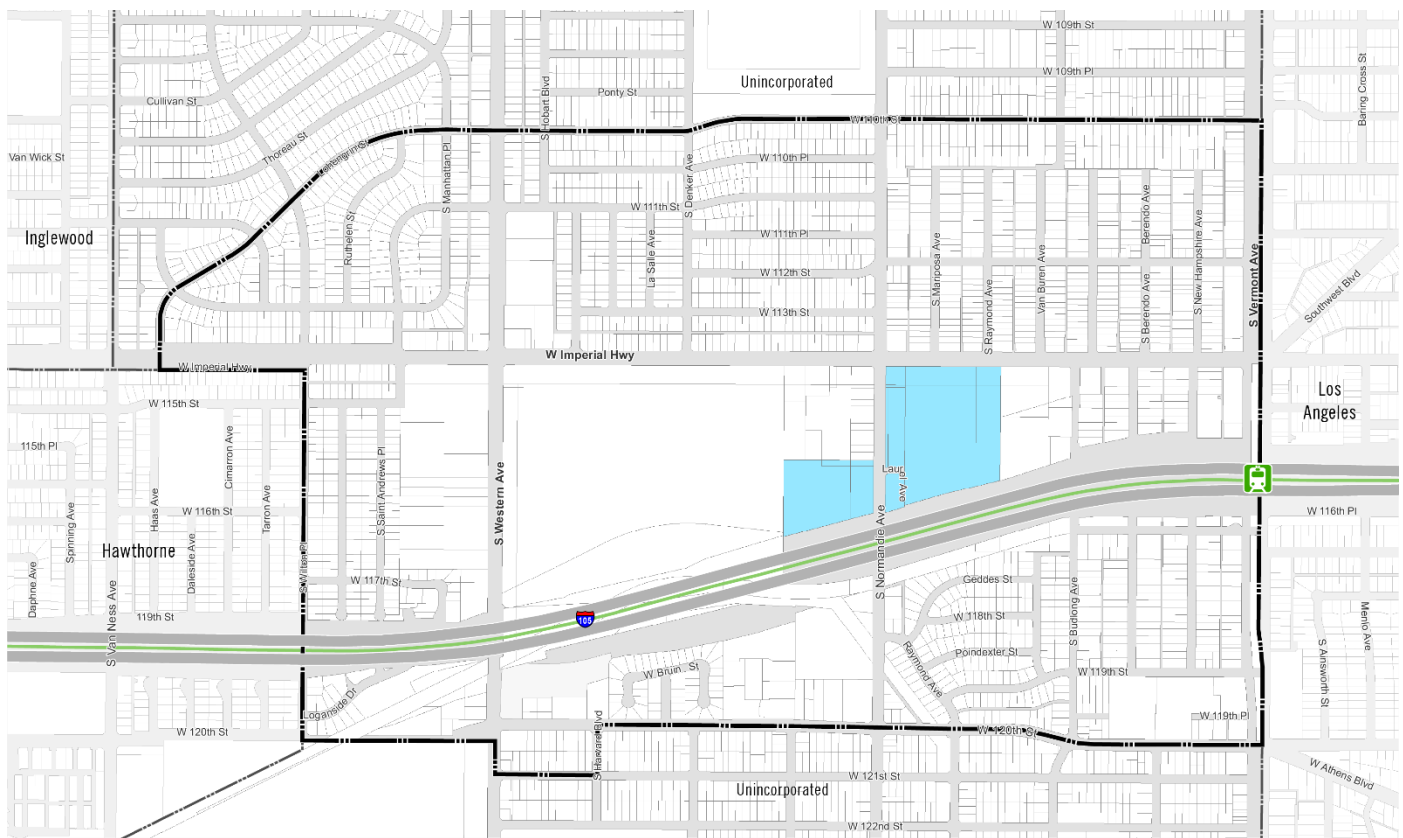
Example of a campus with landscaping and quality architectural features.

The CSLA CC Zone (see Figure 4.6) is intended to allow opportunities for non-civic uses including commercial, interim and supportive housing, multifamily residential uses, and public open space where appropriate to occur with civic uses located along Imperial Highway. The CSLA CC Zone allows multifamily residential uses as an incentive for the development of affordable housing. Over time, the CSLA CC Zone will integrate the existing civic uses and the multifamily residential areas east toward the station, into a walkable, safe district. Residential uses are intended to provide for housing options and affordability, particularly workforce housing in proximity to both employment uses and transit.

#### Development Potential for CSLA CC Zone

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

**FIGURE 4.6: CSLA CC ZONE MAP**



## 4.3.7 CSLA MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT 1 (CSLA MXD-1) ZONE

The CSLA MXD-1 Zone (see Figure 4.7) promotes development of a mix of commercial, office, and residential, with an emphasis on neighborhood serving uses. The CSLA 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 have private/public open space components and strong bicycle and pedestrian connections to the Vermont/Athens Station, LASC campus, and the community.

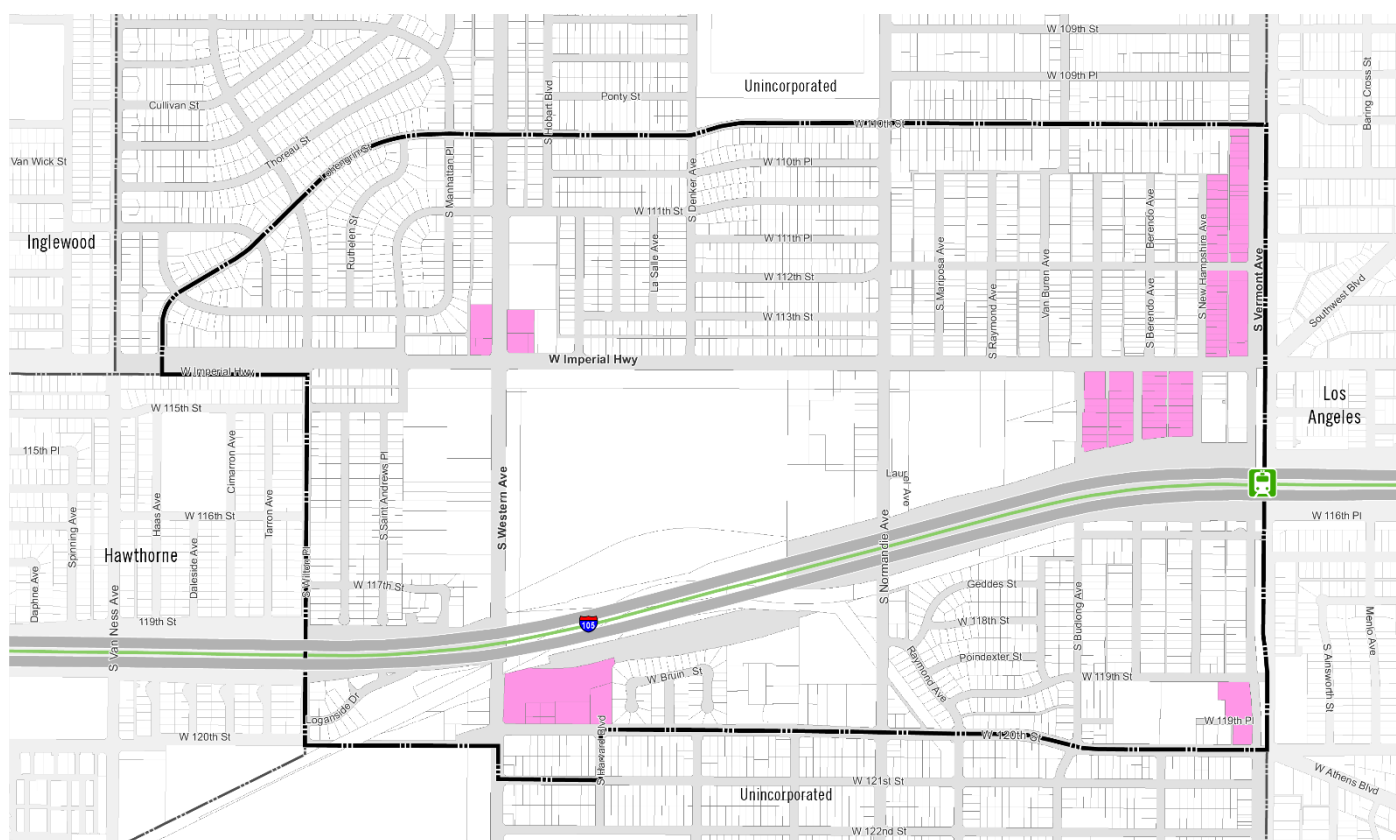


Example of a mixed-use building with ground floor commercial and residential above.

### Development Potential for CSLA MXD-1 Zone

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

FIGURE 4.7: CSLA MXD-1 ZONE MAP





#### 4.3.8 CSLA MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT 2 (CSLA MXD-2) ZONE



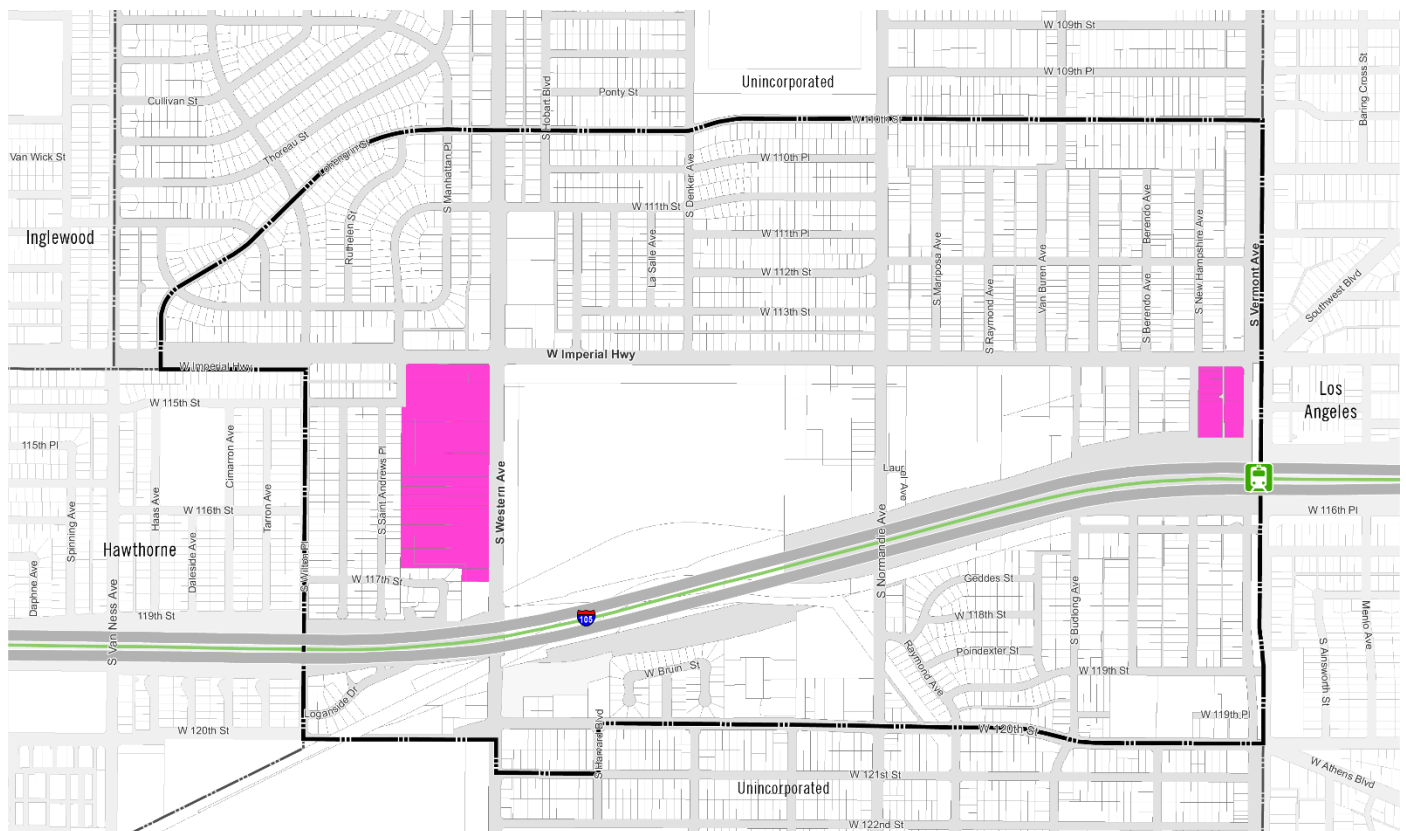
Example ground floor commercial with shopfront frontage and residential above.

The CSLA MXD-2 Zone (see Figure 4.8) 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. This designation encourages multiple family residential, in a vertical mixed-use configuration, up to 60 dwelling units per acre. The development standards and design requirements address vital private/public open space components, and pedestrian facilities. The MXD-2 Zone is intended to promote community redevelopment through higher intensity, transit supporting infill development.

## Development Potential for CSLA MXD-2 Zone

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

### FIGURE 4.8: CSLA MXD-2 ZONE MAP



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### 4.3.9 CSLA PUBLIC INSTITUTIONAL (CSLA IT) ZONE



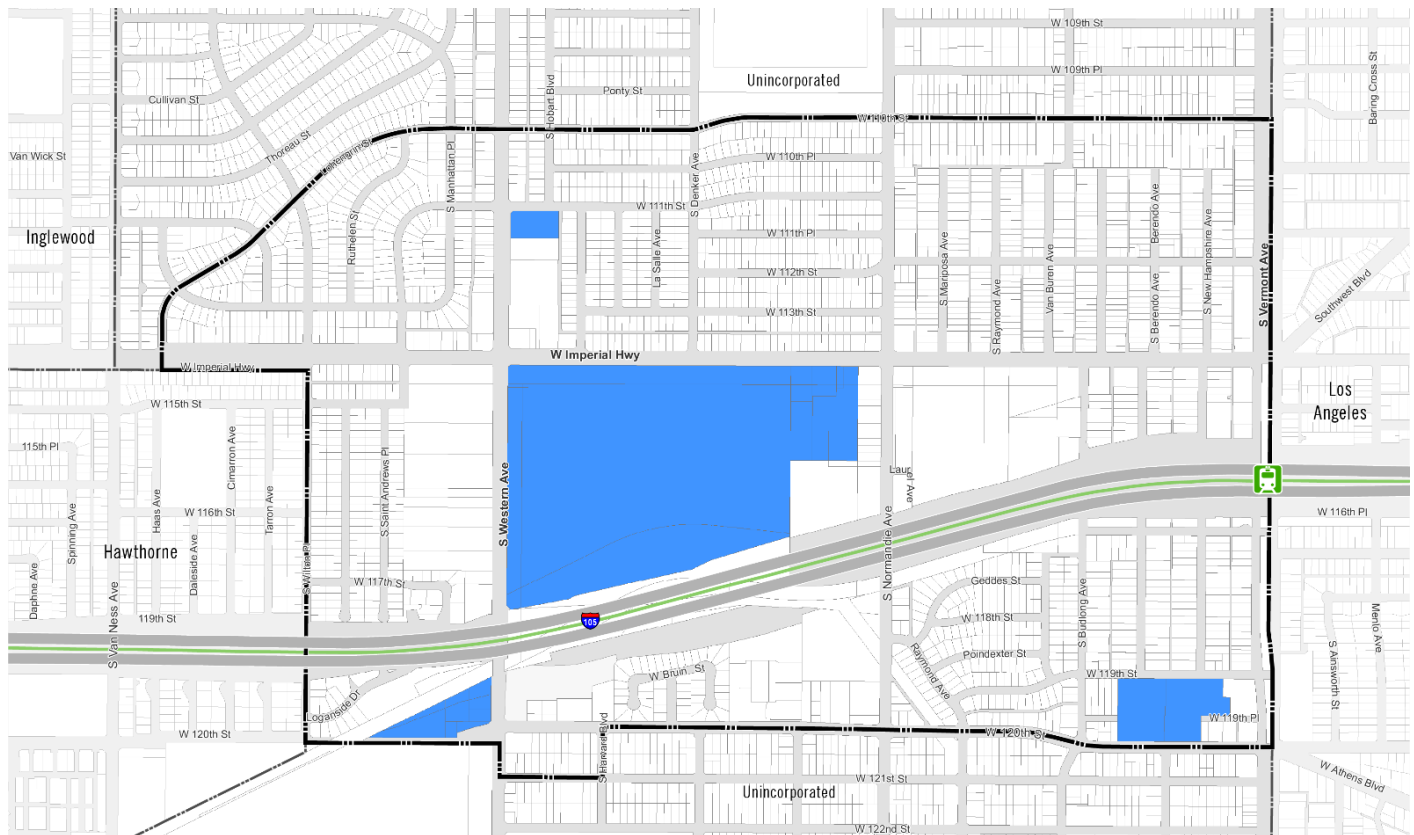
Public space and building at LASC.

The CSLA IT Zone (see Figure 4.9) provides for established public uses including schools, parks, and other public uses. This designation is intended to promote the integration of publicly owned land and facilities into the public realm to the extent feasible extending pedestrian open space and providing safe connections.

#### Development Potential for CSLA IT Zone

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

FIGURE 4.9: CSLA IT ZONE MAP



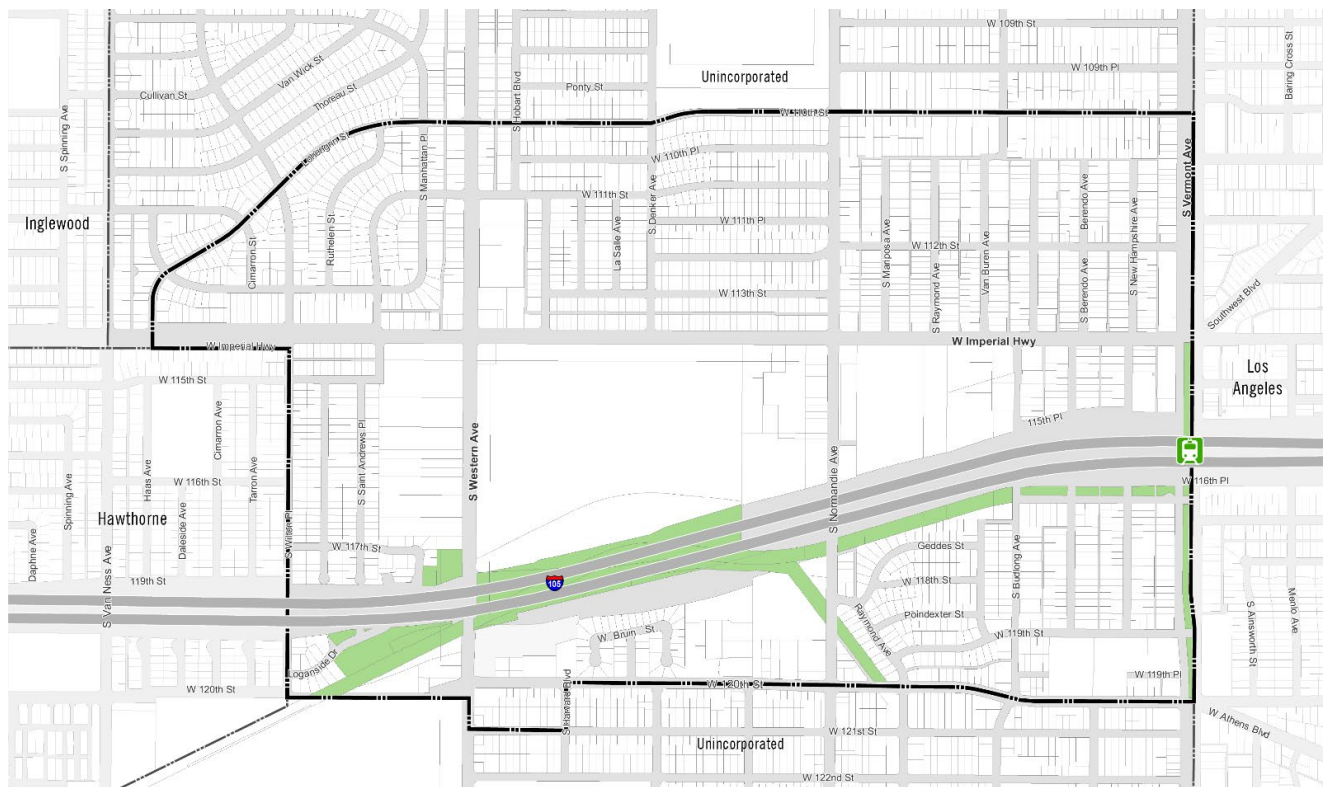
### 4.3.10 CSLA BUFFER ZONE (CSLA B-1)

The CSLA B-1 Zone (see Figure 4.10) provides a buffer from the 105 freeway by accommodating public infrastructure and open space that is not suitable for development.

#### Development Potential for CSLA B-1 Zone

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

FIGURE 4.10: CSLA B-1 ZONE MAP



# 05



## CHAPTER 5

# DESIGN GUIDELINES



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# CHAPTER 5 DESIGN GUIDELINES

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The design guidelines contained in this section promote aesthetically pleasing and compatible development within the Specific Plan area that supports the vision and the goals and policies of the Specific Plan. They enhance the built environment and are flexible to allow creative freedom. Design Guidelines provide a framework to follow when planning and reviewing development proposals in order to support a distinct character and positive community aesthetic.



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

## 5.2 SITE DESIGN

Site design is critical to any development. It determines how buildings are placed, where access will occur, and how structures and spaces relate to each other and their neighbors.

### 5.2.1 BUILDING PLACEMENT & ORIENTATION

- Buildings should be oriented toward public streets, pedestrian pathways, or public open spaces to encourage pedestrian activity along the street frontage. Ground floor spaces of commercial and mixed-use buildings should house retail and service commercial uses.
- In residential districts, the front and side yard pattern on the block should be identified and a new dwelling's front and side yards should approximate that of adjacent residences while meeting the minimum requirements.
- Buildings should meet or exceed CalGreen green building requirements and should be oriented for energy efficiency (e.g., to capture day lighting, minimize heat gain, take advantage of prevailing breezes, and for natural ventilation) to reduce energy consumption.
- Multiple buildings on the same site should be designed and grouped to provide a visual relationship among buildings and cohesive open space areas.
- New development should be designed to create outdoor spaces for active and passive use.
- When configuring the site, the negative impacts of shade and shadow, lighting, noise, and other elements should be



*Example roof-mounted solar on multifamily housing.*

considered and minimized, particularly when projects are adjacent to existing single-family residential uses.

- Landscaping should be used to define the spatial organization of the site while maintaining visibility.

## 5.2.2 CIRCULATION AND ACCESS

- Vehicular access points should be designed to minimize conflicts with pedestrians. Entrances and exits should be clearly marked and well-lit.
- Nonresidential uses—especially multi-building development projects—should use shared driveways to reduce conflicts with pedestrians.
- Colored, textured, and/or permeable paving treatments should be used whenever possible.
- Development projects should emphasize walking, biking, and other forms of non-motorized active transportation for access and internal circulation.
- Bicycle and pedestrian paths should connect to surrounding uses and to existing and planned pedestrian and bicycle networks. Access to these networks at the edges of the site should be prioritized in site design.
- Pedestrian thru-ways at the end of cul-de-sacs should be created to provide more direct access.



*Example of distinguishable vehicle access.*



*Illustrative photo of entry paving treatments.*

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



*Example of landscaping in a service area.*



*Illustrative photo of an attractive service access.*

- The location of electrical meters, cable boxes, junction boxes, and irrigation controllers should be designed as an integral part of the building on a rear or side elevation or otherwise screened from public view.
- Building forms, fences, trellises, and landscaping should be used to screen above ground utility transformers, pull boxes, and termination cabinets whenever possible.
- Service and loading areas should be accessed from a secondary or service road whenever possible.
- Service and loading areas should be located behind primary structures whenever possible or properly shielded through fences, gates, landscaping, berms, etc.
- Access to service and loading areas should be clearly marked and not block adjacent vehicular or pedestrian circulation.
- Service and loading areas should be located away from residential properties whenever possible or mitigate impacts with restricted hours of use, idling limits, etc.

### 5.2.4 FENCES, WALLS, GATES, AND HEDGES

Walls and fences and other boundary elements should be designed as integral parts of a project for screening and security. Decorative fencing adjacent to public rights of way, such as wrought iron, are generally encouraged.



*Illustrative Photo of landscape screening.*



## 5.2.5 OPEN SPACE

- Existing on-site trees should be retained whenever possible.
- Buildings should be oriented in a manner to provide landscape or open space buffers next to adjacent residential properties whenever possible.
- Corners of buildings adjacent to transit station areas should provide public open space for residents, visitors, and transit users.
- Common and/or public open space should be designed to respect and not negatively impact adjacent residential uses.
- Public open spaces and recreational amenities should be designed and programed to serve people with a variety of abilities, needs, and interests.
- Trees should be planted adjacent to sidewalks whenever possible.



*Illustrative photo showing distinguishable vehicle access.*



*Illustrative photo of entry paving treatments.*



*Example non-residential open space.*



## 5.2.6 FRONTAGES



*Illustrative photo of outdoor dining area and an active pedestrian realm.*

This Specific Plan suggests ground-floor frontage types for the Mixed-Use and Civic-Center zones along Vermont Avenue, Imperial Highway, and Western Avenue. This section provides design guidance for each frontage type. Frontages dictate the relationship between the street and the façade of the ground floor of the building and include the following:

- **Shopfront** - the building façade and entrance are at sidewalk grade adjacent to the pedestrian zone.
- **Forecourt** – the building façade and entrance are at sidewalk grade, but a portion of the building façade is recessed.
- **Terrace** – the building façade and entrance are set back from the pedestrian zone and are accessed by an open area elevated above sidewalk grade.
- **Stoop** - the building façade and entrance are elevated and accessed by steps leading directly up from the pedestrian zone, a courtyard, or an open space.

All new development adjacent to a street with frontage requirements, specified in Tables 5.1 and 5.2, should have a primary building façade and primary entry from the identified street.

**TABLE 5.1 FRONTAGES FOR THE CSLA MXD-1 ZONE AND THE CSLA CC 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	Permitted	Permitted

**TABLE 5.2: FRONTAGES FOR THE CSLA 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

Tables 5.3 to 5.6 on the following pages describe the intent of each frontage type and provide guidelines for application to the building façade and street front.

### TABLE 5.3: SHOPFRONT FRONTAGE TYPE

#### Description

A shopfront is a frontage where the building façade and entrance are at sidewalk grade and close to the pedestrian zone. Shopfronts are oriented to display ground-level commercial uses and have large transparent windows and doors. Shopfronts commonly have cantilevered roofs or awnings.

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

#### Guidelines

A great variety of shopfront designs are possible, but the following apply (See Figure 5.1):

- a. A shopfront façade area should be at least 15 feet tall, as measured from the adjacent walk, and minimum 10 feet wide.
- b. Shopfronts may be recessed from the primary building façade by up to five feet. (Not explicitly illustrated.)
- c. Shopfronts should provide clear views of merchandise displays and beyond into interior spaces.
- d. A base of similar, visually "heavier" materials should be used below display windows.
- e. Doors should be substantial, well detailed, and match the materials, design, and character of the façade.
- f. Canopies and awnings should be integrated to shopfront openings.
- g. Remaining open areas within the frontage should be landscaped taking into consideration public right of way landscaping. (Not explicitly illustrated.)

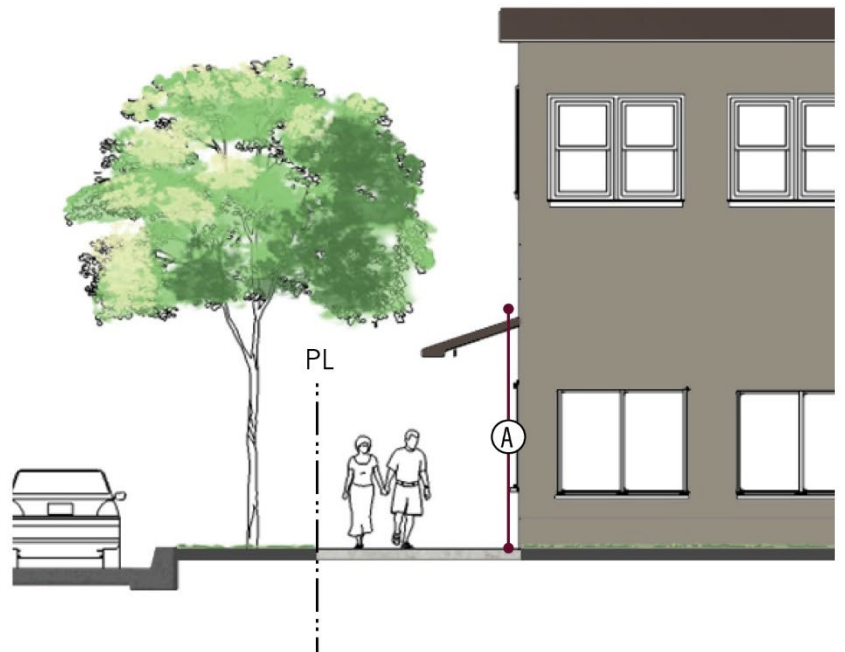
**FIGURE 5.1: SHOPFRONT FRONTAGE TYPE**



*Example photo of shopfront type.*



*Example photo of shopfront type.*



*Images for illustrative purposes only.*

**TABLE 5.4: FORECOURT FRONTAGE TYPE**

**Description**

A forecourt is a frontage where the building façade and entrance are at sidewalk grade, but a portion of the building façade is recessed. 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.

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-fronting spaces. This type can be used in conjunction with shopfronts and stoops.

**Guidelines**

A variety of forecourt designs are possible, but the following apply (see Figure 5.2):

- a. A forecourt should be a minimum of ten feet and maximum of 40 feet deep.
- b. A forecourt should be a minimum of 20 feet and maximum of 50 feet wide or 50 percent of the lot width, whichever is less.
- c. At least one building entry should front onto the forecourt.
- d. The forecourt may also be raised from the sidewalk, not exceeding three feet in height from the sidewalk grade, creating a small retaining wall at the property line with entry steps to the forecourt. (Not explicitly illustrated.)
- e. The proportions and solar orientation of the forecourt should be carefully considered for user comfort.
- f. A fence or wall not exceeding 42 inches in height may be used to define the private space of the court. (Not explicitly illustrated.)
- g. Remaining open areas within the frontage should be landscaped taking into consideration public right of way landscaping. (Not explicitly illustrated.)



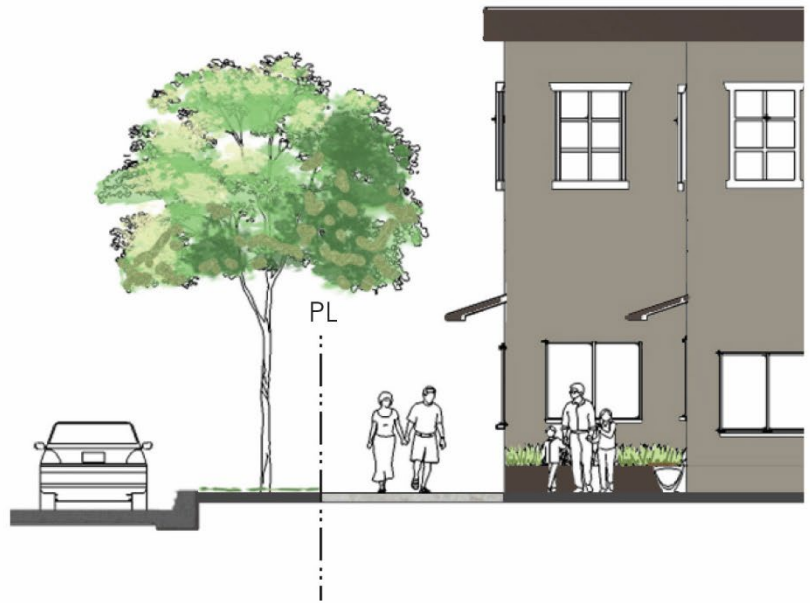
**FIGURE 5.2: FORECOURT FRONTAGE TYPE**



*Example photo of forecourt type.*



*Example photo of forecourt type.*



*Images for illustrative purposes only.*



**TABLE 5.5: TERRACE FRONTAGE TYPE**

**Description**

A terrace is a frontage where the building façade is set back from the pedestrian zone by an elevated open area that is paved and/or landscaped.

This type is recommended for residential and commercial uses as it can accommodate the semi-private use of frontage areas.

**Guidelines**

A variety of terrace designs are possible, but the following apply (See Figure 5.3):

- a. A terrace should be a minimum of five feet to maximum of eight feet deep and should consider public right of way landscaping.
- b. Terraces should be raised to transition into the building not more than three feet from the adjacent grade of the pedestrian zone.
- c. Entry landings should be a minimum of six feet wide.

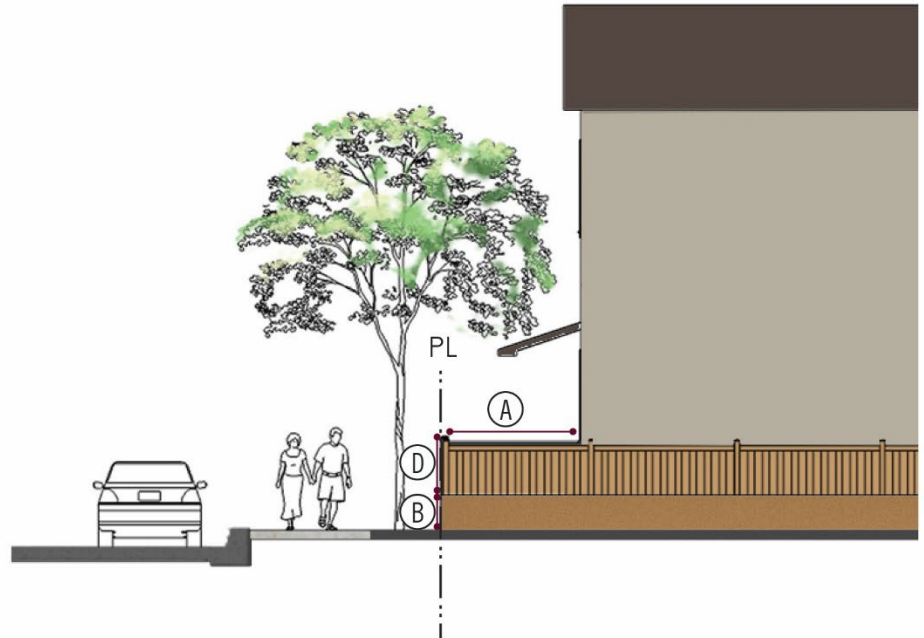
**FIGURE 5.3: TERRACE FRONTAGE TYPE**



*Example photo of terrace type.*



*Example photo of terrace type.*



*Images for illustrative purposes only.*

**TABLE 5.6: STOOP FRONTAGE TYPE**

**Description**

A stoop is a frontage where the building façade is separated from the pedestrian zone by an entrance to the elevated ground floor of the building. The entrance is usually an exterior stair and landing and may be covered.

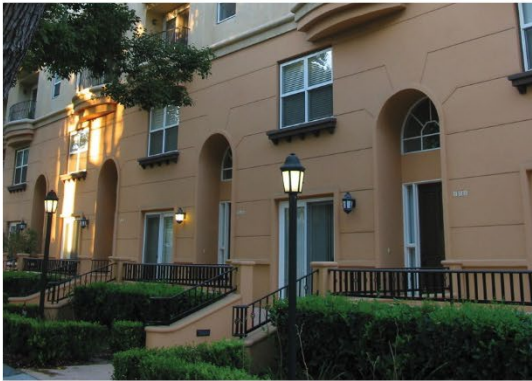
This type is recommended for ground-floor residential uses to clearly delineate the transition from public to private realm in a limited amount of space. It also can facilitate a transition to a more residential frontage.

**Guidelines**

A variety of stoop designs are possible, but the following apply (See Figure 5.4):

- a. A stoop should be around a minimum of three feet and maximum of five feet deep.
  - b. A stoop should have safe and sturdy railings.
  - c. Stoops transition into the raised ground floor of a building.
  - d. Stoops may be set back a distance equal to their depth from the sidewalk.
  - e. The building façade should not be set back further than the top step or landing of the stoop.
  - f. A stoop may include a covered roof or awning.
  - g. Remaining open areas within the frontage zone should be landscaped taking into consideration public right of way landscaping.
-

**FIGURE 5.4: STOOP FRONTAGE TYPE**



*Example photo of stoop type.*



*Example photo of stoop type.*



*Images for illustrative purposes only.*



## 5.2.7 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.

- Structure massing and design should be balanced so that the ground level is designed at the human scale with the upper levels visually less massive.
- Massing breaks, such as entry courts and stepped-back corners, are encouraged to promote more visibility into a building.

For facilitating high quality single-family residential development, the following design guidelines apply in the CSLA R-1 and CSLA R-2 Zones.

- The scale and mass of new dwellings should be similar to that of neighboring homes and not overwhelm the neighborhood with a disproportionate size or architectural style that is out of character.
- Heights and rooflines should be consistent with neighboring residential structures such as type, slope, size, material, and color.
- Additions and accessory uses should respect the architectural style, scale, rhythm, and building elements of the existing primary structure. They should complement and balance the overall form, mass, and composition of the existing primary structure on the property.

## 5.2.8 BUILDING MODULATION/ARTICULATION AND DETAILING

- Changes in façade materials, textures, colors, and window patterns should be used to enhance visual interest and encourage pedestrian activity. Blank face walls should be used as opportunities for public art.
- Buildings can express different architectural styles that compliment height, mass, articulation, and materials of neighboring buildings.



*Example of varied scale and massing.*



*Illustrative photo of building modulation and articulation.*



*Illustrative photo showing an inviting pedestrian experience.*





*Example variation of materials and textures.*



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

- 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.
- Frontages should be consistent along Vermont and Imperial Highway with articulation used primarily for entrances and outdoor dining areas.
- Building façades should include three-dimensional detailing such as cornices, belt courses, window moldings, bay windows, and reveals to create shadows and façade relief and use articulated doors and windows in nonresidential spaces that create visual interest and allow one to see inside.

## 5.2.9 BUILDING ENTRANCES

- Individual storefront entrances should be clearly defined and distinct.
- In mixed-use buildings, residents should have a separate main entrance located on the primary street.
- Residential uses should 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 not through a vehicle parking area.
- Pedestrian and bicycle amenities should be located near building entrances
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) design principles should be incorporated to create well-lit and active entryways. Physically intimidating security features, such as window grills or spiked gates, should be avoided. See Section 5.2.14 for more information.

## 5.2.10 WINDOWS, DOORS & BALCONIES

- For residential buildings, windows should 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 in-setting the window into the exterior wall.
- Non-reflective coatings, low-emissivity glass, and external shade structures 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 to reduce reliance on artificial light sources.
- Opposing windows should be staggered, particularly in the case of bedrooms.
- Projecting features, such as balconies, porches, bays, and dormer windows, are encouraged to create distinction between units and to provide visual interest.

### 5.2.11 BUILDING FAÇADES

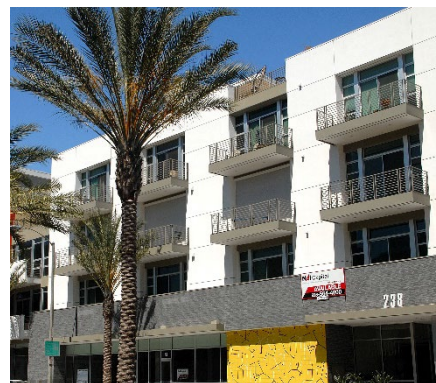
Building façades generally refers to a building's external wall that faces a public street or open space. The design and composition of façades involves the arrangement of architectural elements, such as doors, windows, balconies, caps, and pilasters, on the walls of buildings. The façade and ground floor of a building are the most visible components seen by pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. How the mass of the building "meets the street" should be well detailed. The design of the façade is what people experience most intimately when on the sidewalk and is the biggest contributor to district character.

- Building façades should 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 should be focused on the ground floor and areas visible from the public realm.
- Roofs should be designed and considered as an integral part of the overall building design and should add visual interest.

### 5.2.12 ARCHITECTURAL LIGHTING

Lighting enhances a building's form and the pedestrian experience and safety at night.

- Lighting should not aim directly at the open sky or project off-site.
- Architectural lighting should highlight main building entrances and special architectural elements along the building façade.



*Example of balconies facing the sidewalk, which provide "eyes on the street."*



*Example of coordination of materials, textures, and massing.*



*Example of street-facing mixed-use*



*Illustrative photo of architecturally compatible lighting.*

Pocket lighting should be incorporated into walls, stairs, or bollards as appropriate.

- Internal and external storefront lighting should be designed to augment the pedestrian space.
- Blinking, flashing, and oscillating lights are discouraged. Warm white light is preferred, and colored lights should only be used if they are part of the architectural theme of commercial areas or establishments or for limited-time special events and observances.
- Light fixtures should use energy-efficient technology, fixtures, and bulbs.

### 5.2.13 PARKING FACILITIES

- 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. Subterranean parking facilities may extend to all property lines.
- Above-ground parking structures should 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 should 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 should be designed with materials, color, and detail compatible with the principal building and surrounding buildings.
- Parking structures should incorporate technology to assist visitors and minimize the time spent searching for a space.
- Electric vehicle parking stations should be placed in parking garages to encourage the use of zero emission vehicles.
- Surface parking lots should be designed to take advantage of available adjacent building shade and provide sufficient coverage with either shade trees or solar panel canopies, to



*Illustrative photo of parking lot tree coverage.*



reduce the urban heat island effect and provide shade for vehicles and pedestrians.

## 5.2.14 CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED)

CPTED is a crime prevention philosophy based on the theory that proper design of the built environment can reduce the incidence of crime. It is not a program or system of ready-made solutions but rather four overlapping strategies: Natural Surveillance, Territorial Reinforcement, Access Control, and Maintenance. All developments should incorporate principles of CPTED.

### Natural Surveillance

- Design buildings and open space so they are naturally surveilled by residents, workers, shoppers, and passersby.
- Scale lighting to the pedestrian environment.
- Site new fire and police stations adjacent to parks, trails, and schools.

### Territorial Reinforcement

- Design spaces that clearly define boundaries and ownership.
- Design areas as public, private, or semi-public/semi-private.
- Install low decorative fencing around the semi-private outdoor patio of a restaurant.
- Install proper signage that communicates the ownership of a space and the rules of its use.

### Access Control

- Design physical controls to direct movement through a space with strategic placement of entrances and exits, railings, fencing, narrowing or widening of pathways or corridors, landscaping, or other barriers.
- Design well-marked pedestrian pathways through parking lots to alert drivers and guide pedestrians along a safer path of travel.
- Place bollards across an entrance to a park or trail to prevent vehicle.



*Housing overlooking a neighborhood park can provide natural surveillance.*

## Maintenance

- Ensure regular and consistent upkeep over time to demonstrate that the space is cared for and observed.
- Provide ongoing cleaning and security personnel when warranted.
- Properly trim and maintain landscaping to ensure visibility



*Illustrative photo of wide sidewalks and pedestrian spaces.*



*Illustrative photo of art installation.*



*Illustrative photo of trees providing shading along street.*

## 5.3 PUBLIC REALM

The public realm is an essential component of the Specific Plan.

### 5.3.1 PUBLIC ART

The County is currently developing a Public Art in Private Development Ordinance (PAPD). The ordinance will allocate 1% of project costs from eligible developments or an alternative flat fee to fund a civic artwork installation; cultural facility; or conservation, artistic, and cultural services.

- Public art should be incorporated early during the design process, and be located to maximize the number of tenants, visitors, and other passersby who 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.
- Public art should not disrupt vehicle, bicycle, or pedestrian movement or safety.

### 5.3.2 OPEN SPACE

- 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.
- Light fixtures installed in the public right-of-way, in parking areas, and along pedestrian or bicycle paths should be pedestrian-scaled and directed towards the ground to avoid light pollution and spill-over to surrounding residential areas.

### 5.3.3 STREET TREES

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



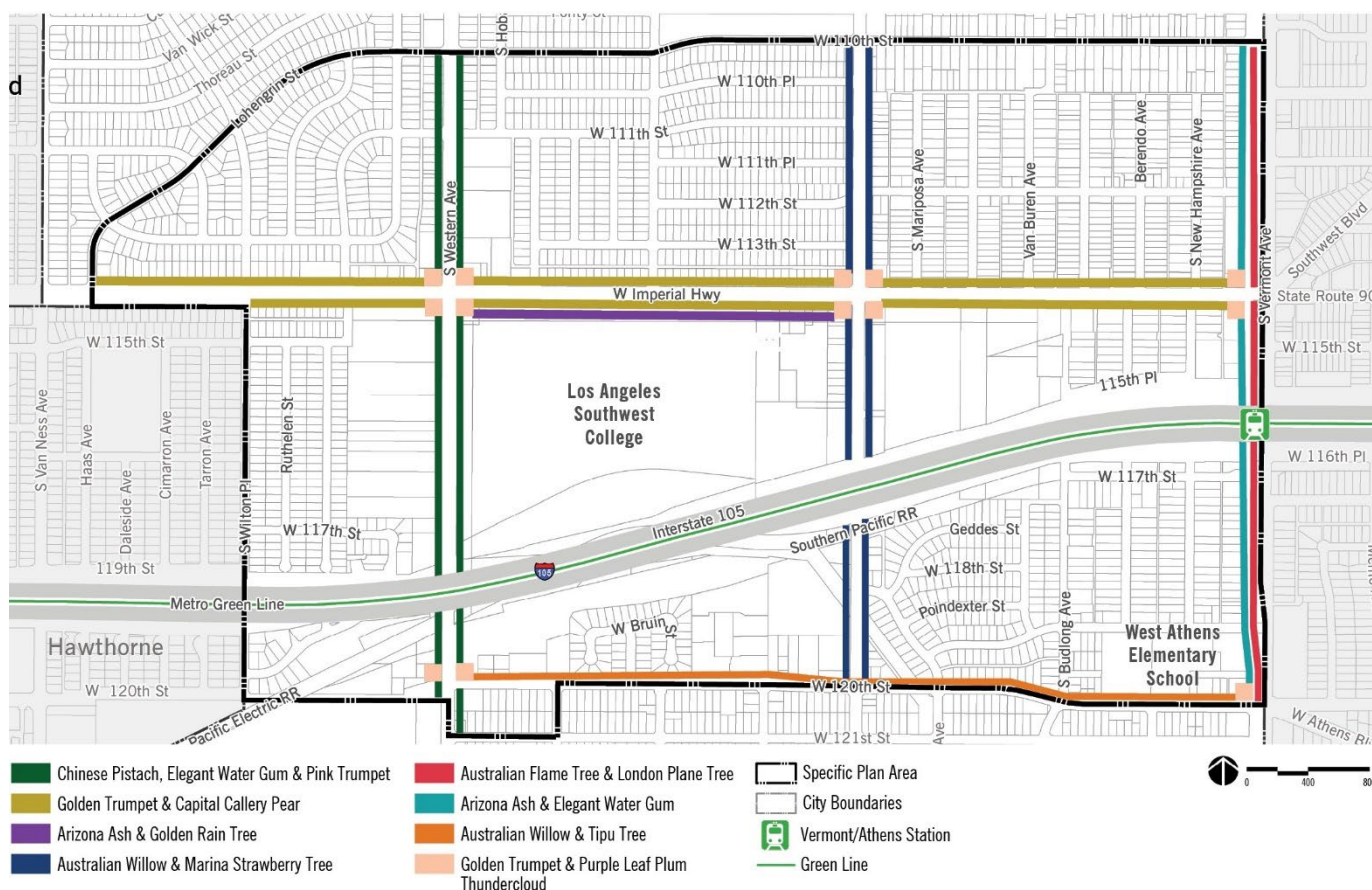
palette, shown in Figures 5.5 and 5.6, are based on the Department of Public Works' Tree Selection Catalog, Los Angeles County's Drought Tolerant Plant List.

- Major streets should be composed of signature plantings unique to each street to improve wayfinding and announce arrival.
- Plantings should be arranged along parkways at intervals appropriate with street scale to provide a sense of rhythm and movement.
- The placement of trees and portions of planted parkways should provide separation for pedestrians from vehicle traffic.



*Illustrative photos of a pedestrian-oriented streetscape.*

### FIGURE 5.5: STREETS WITH TREE PLANTING REQUIREMENTS





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



**Arizona Ash**



**Australian Flame Tree**



**Australian Willow**



**Chinese Pistache**



**Elegant Water Gum**



**Golden Rain Tree**



**Golden Trumpet Tree**



**London Plane Tree**



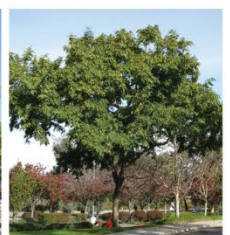
**Marina Strawberry Tree**



**Pink Trumpet Tree**



**Purple Leaf Plum Thundercloud**



**Tipu Tree**

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# 06



## CHAPTER 6

# MOBILITY & THE PUBLIC REALM





# CHAPTER 6 MOBILITY & THE PUBLIC REALM

## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The Mobility Strategy for the 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 focuses on vehicular travel, to a network of complete streets. The strategies set forth 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.

The Specific Plan area provides access to an extensive network of public transportation that includes light rail and local bus services. Despite the potential, first/last mile connections have yet to overcome the existing built environment. The auto-centric design of primary transit corridors impairs the perceived safety of pedestrians and bicyclists.

This chapter examines the existing conditions of the Specific Plan area in terms of the overall street network, transit circulation, pedestrian and bicycle circulation, and parking. It also proposes strategies and recommendations to enhance multimodal design, increase transit ridership, and improve safety for all users.

## 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. These strategies include elements from and are consistent with existing County plans, policies, and initiatives such as Vision Zero, the Complete Streets Model Street Design Manual, Healthy Communities, Neighborhood Preservation CDBG Action Plan, and Purposeful Aging. Compliance with these mobility strategies, including construction of improvements, will be required as part of development projects.

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



*Existing Vermont Avenue streetscape.*

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**Complete Streets have been defined as "...streets for everyone.** They are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work. They allow buses to run on time and make it safe for people to walk to and from transit stops."

*—The National Complete Streets Coalition*

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*Illustrative photo of a multimodal street.*

- Support walking and biking as first/last mile solutions to increase transit ridership.
- Improve visibility and access to the Metro Vermont/Athens Station with increased lighting, signage, and improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.
- Reduce crime by incorporating CPTED principles into all improvements.
- Increase safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for all by incorporating strategies from the Vision Zero Initiative.
- Reallocate excess portions of right-of-way, such as overly wide vehicular travel lanes, to improve sidewalks and bicycle facilities.
- Incorporate wayfinding, signage, and other amenities that allow pedestrian, bicycle, and transit routes to be easily identifiable.
- Design streetscapes that are attractive and inviting by providing a buffer to vehicular traffic and incorporating sufficient lighting, street trees, landscaping, benches, and other amenities.

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



*Example of short-term bicycle parking.*

- Implement complete streets designs that promote a multimodal network of streets and prioritizes safety.
- Prioritize roadway improvement projects that improve access to transit and the Vermont/Athens Station.
- Provide safe and comfortable pedestrian and bicycle connections between the Vermont/Athens Line Station and LASC.
- Locate new transit stops in areas that are active and visible to maximize personal security and safety of waiting transit riders.
- Create safe and comfortable bus stops and other transit waiting areas by providing amenities like public restrooms, trash cans, shelters, benches, shade structures, lighting, system maps, transit timetables.

**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.

- Support land uses and infrastructure improvements that reduce the need for parking and promote active transportation.

- Implement parking programs such as priced parking, shared parking, parking time limits, and restricted street parking.

**Strategy 4:** Ensure that public transportation systems meet the needs of seniors and people with disabilities.

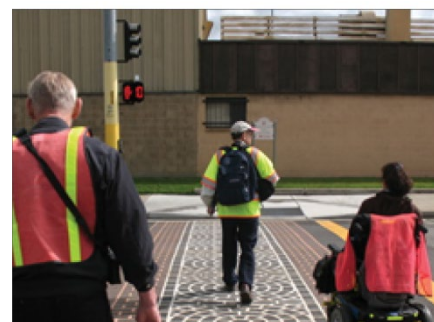
- Increase regional alignment among transportation services such as Access Services, Dial-A-Ride, City Ride, City Door-to-Door, and New Freedom.
- Explore innovative collaborations with transportation network companies such as *GoGoGrandparent* that connect riders with drivers.

**Strategy 5:** Increase the perceived safety for seniors and people with disabilities to move about their communities:

- Implement the recommendations in the Step-by-Step Westmont/West Athens Community Pedestrian Plan.
- Evaluate pedestrian crossing and increase crossing times at signalized intersections.
- Add leading pedestrian intervals to provide a head-start when crossing intersections.
- Create pedestrian refuge islands in wide streets to reduce crossing distances and provide benches or seating areas at regular intervals.
- Add curb extensions to shorten crossing distances and slow turning vehicles.
- Ensure all intersection crossings and signals are fully accessible.
- Consider raised cross walks at intersections with high volume pedestrian traffic.
- Proactively inspect and repair sidewalks and pedestrian rights of way.



*Complete Street example.*



*Signalized crosswalk with decorative paving entrance visibility.*

## 6.3 STREET NETWORK

This section describes the existing street network and provides a contextual street improvement plan. The existing street network from the Los Angeles County Master Plan of Highways is illustrated in Figure 6.1. Streetscape improvements proposed along key arterials are the first step toward a more multimodal design. When possible, short term and long term options, subject to County approval, are suggested.

FIGURE 6.1: WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT STREET NETWORK



Source: Los Angeles County Master Plan of Highways



## 6.3.1 IMPERIAL HIGHWAY

### Existing Conditions

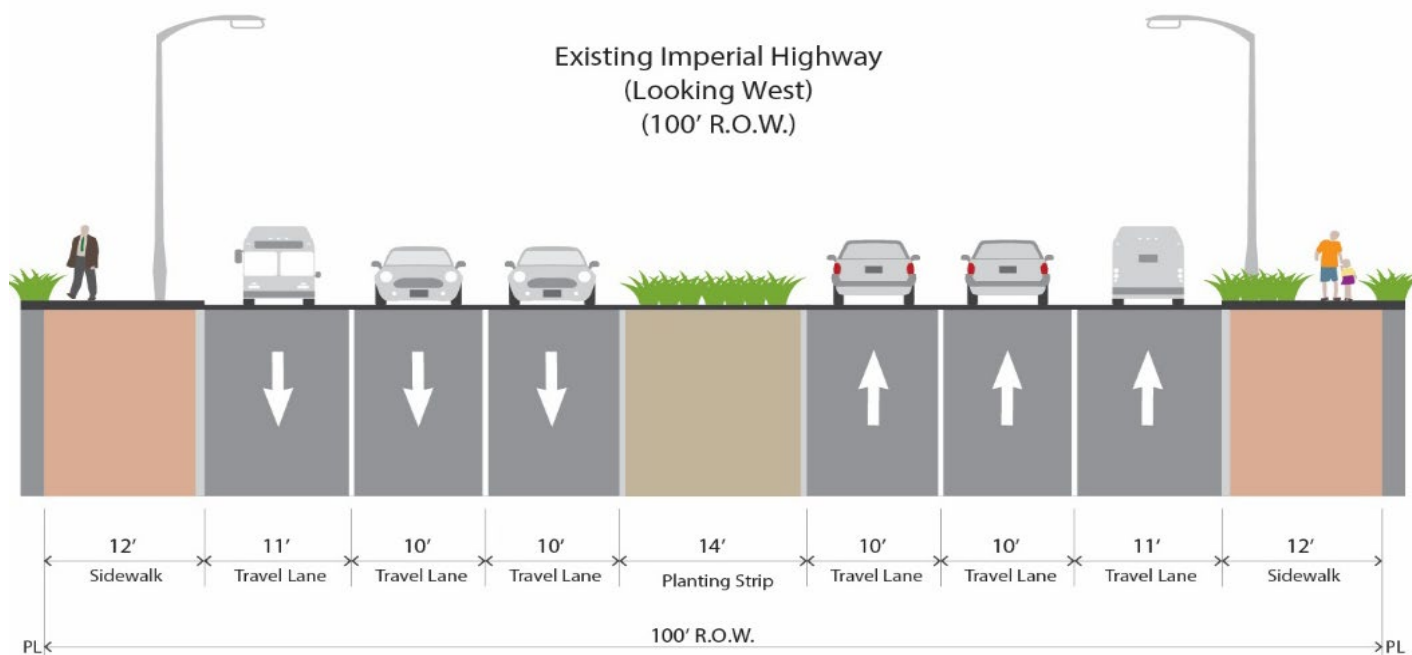
Imperial Highway is classified as a Major Highway on the Los Angeles County Master Plan of Highways and runs east and west within the Specific Plan boundary. Imperial Highway serves as both a major arterial and transit corridor meeting the minimum 100-foot width right-of-way standards for Major Highway classification.

The corridor is lined primarily with residential and commercial land uses. The posted speed limit is 35 miles per hour (mph). The roadway consists of three travel lanes in each direction with a raised median along much of the center. On-street parking is permitted in limited areas. Metro and City of Gardena bus lines have stops along the corridor. Existing streetscape conditions are illustrated in Figure 6.2.



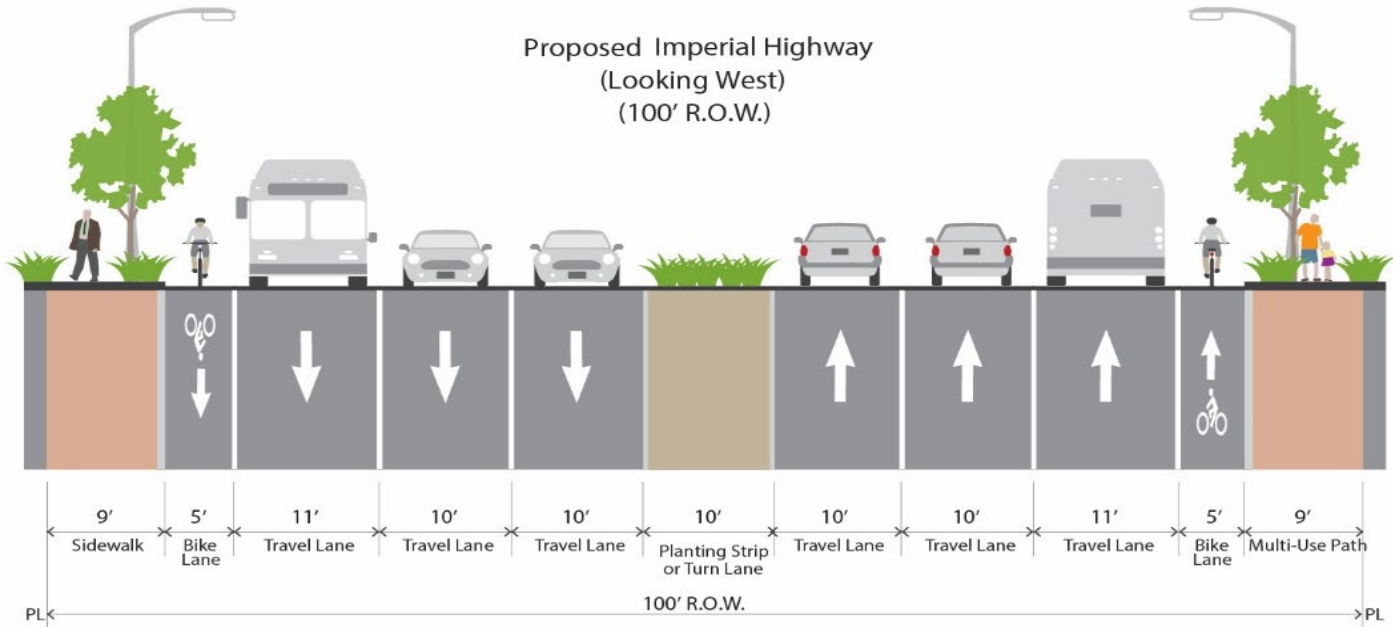
Existing view of Imperial Highway.

**FIGURE 6.2: EXISTING IMPERIAL HIGHWAY STREETScape**



### Plan Strategy

The Specific Plan proposes reducing the existing sidewalk and planting strip and the existing raised medians widths to accommodate a 5-foot bicycle lane in each direction, as illustrated in Figure 6.3. The corridor should be designed to support high levels of bicycle and pedestrian activity. Improved landscaping and bicycle and pedestrian amenities would provide shade and visual interest while making the corridor safer for bicyclists and pedestrians.

**FIGURE 6.3: PROPOSED IMPERIAL HIGHWAY STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS**

## 6.3.2 VERMONT AVENUE

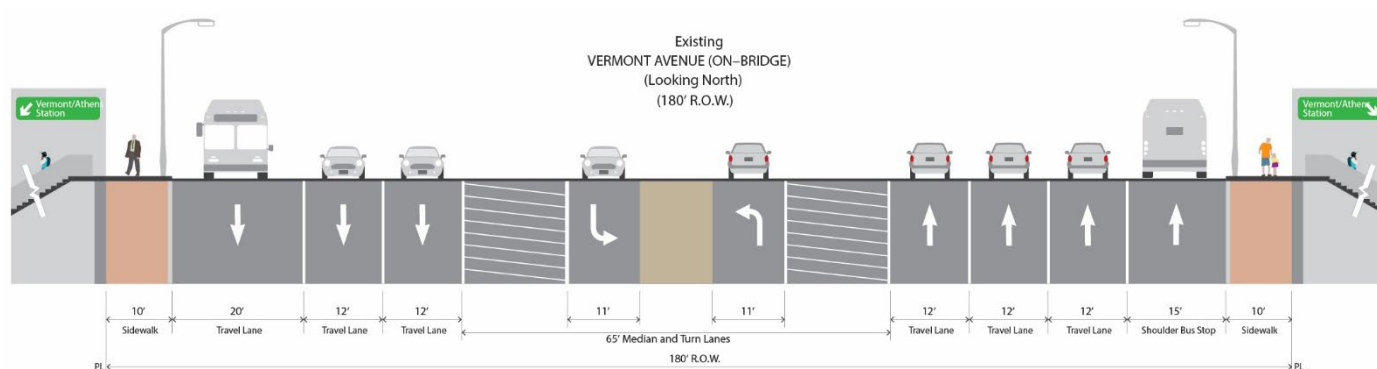
### Existing Conditions



Conditions along Vermont Avenue at the station entrance.

Vermont Avenue is classified as a Major Highway on the Los Angeles County Master Plan of Highways and runs north and south within the Specific Plan area. At 180 feet wide, the corridor currently greatly exceeds the minimum width of its classification. Vermont Avenue serves as the jurisdictional boundary between unincorporated West Athens-Westmont and the City of Los Angeles and is lined on both sides with low-rise commercial land uses. The posted speed limit is 35 mph and 25 mph in school zones when children are present. The roadway consists of three travel lanes in each direction with a wide raised median along much of the center. Class II bike lanes are also striped and street parking is permitted along much of the corridor. Metro and the City of Gardena operate bus lines along the corridor. The Vermont/Athens Line station is accessed from the middle of the section of Vermont Avenue that functions as an overpass above the 105 freeway. The existing conditions along the overpass are illustrated in Figure 6.4.

**FIGURE 6.4: EXISTING VERMONT AVENUE STREETScape (OVERPASS)**



## Plan Strategy

The Specific Plan proposes improvements for multimodal access and pedestrian activity. These short-term improvements include widening the existing sidewalk on the section over the freeway as well as north to Imperial Highway and providing buffered bike lanes by reducing vehicle lane and center median widths. This would also provide space for pedestrian amenities and improvements to landscaping as illustrated in Figure 6.5.

**FIGURE 6.5: PROPOSED VERMONT AVENUE STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS (NORTH OF OVERPASS, SHORT TERM)**

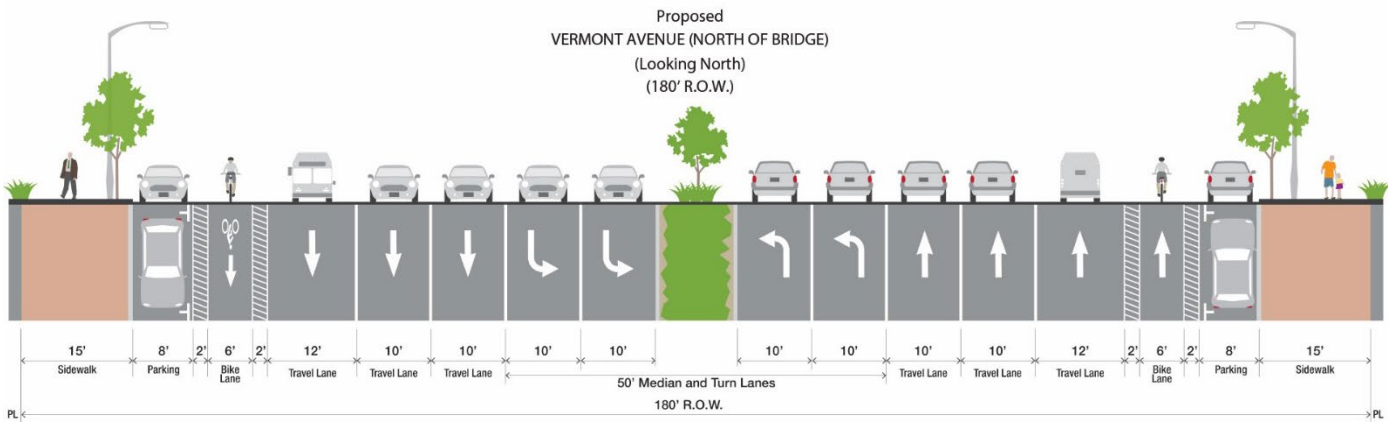


Figure 6.6 illustrates a long-term option where the bike and parking lanes are switched to increase safety for bicyclists.

**FIGURE 6.6: PROPOSED VERMONT AVENUE STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS (NORTH OF OVERPASS, LONG TERM)**

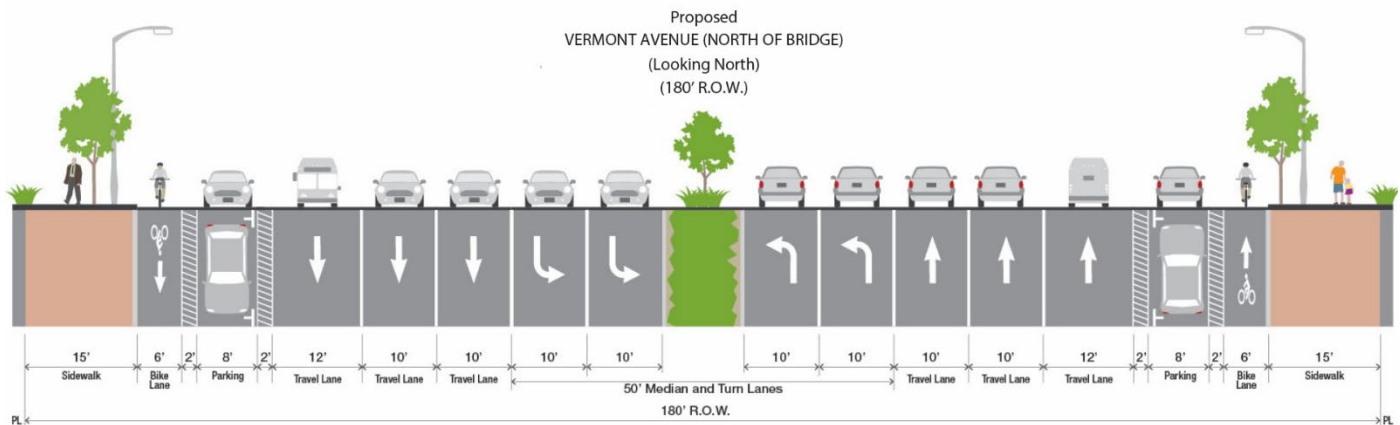


Figure 6.7. illustrates the widening of the sidewalk on the west side of the overpass section of Vermont Avenue to 25 feet (while affording the opposite side to be increased by the City of LA to at least 15 feet) to increase visibility of the entrance to the Vermont/Athens Station. Six-foot bike lanes are proposed along its entire length, with 2-foot striped buffers. Vehicle lanes should be reduced to 10 feet wide to allow a 12-foot bus lane.

**FIGURE 6.7: PROPOSED VERMONT AVENUE STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS (OVERPASS)**

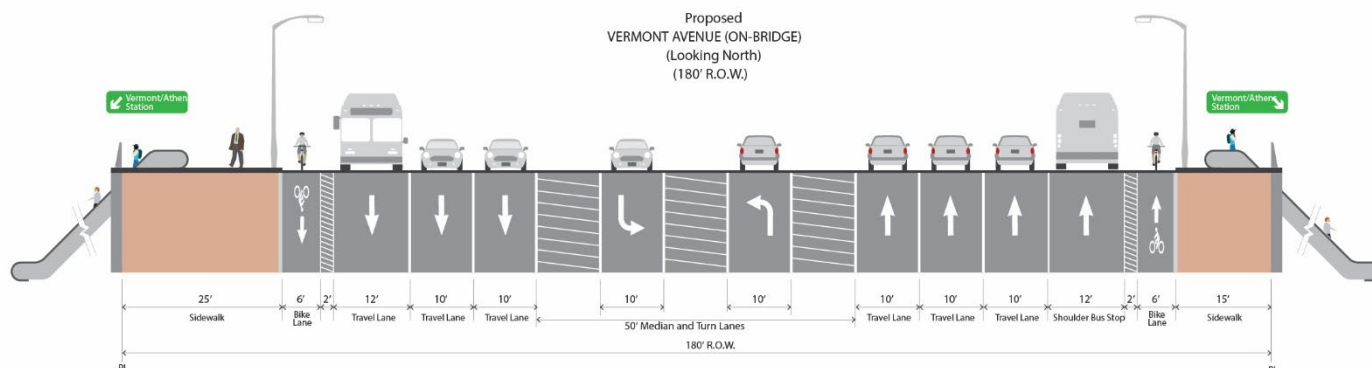


Figure 6.8 illustrates Vermont Avenue south of the overpass section that has a wider median.

**FIGURE 6.8: PROPOSED VERMONT AVENUE STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS (SOUTH OF OVERPASS, SHORT TERM)**

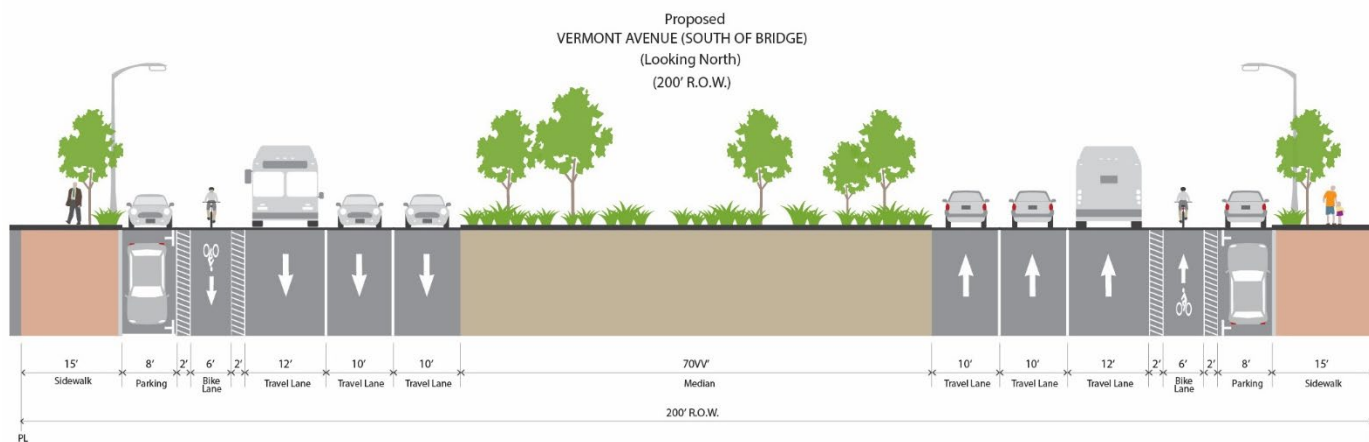
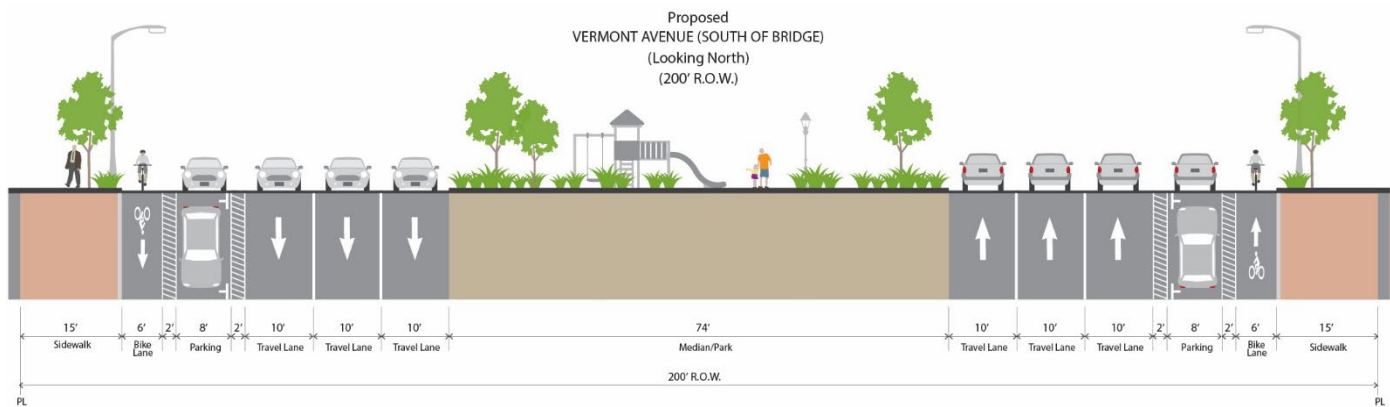


Figure 6.9 illustrates a long-term option where the bike and parking lanes are switched to increase safety for bicyclists. Conversion of the median into a parkway and pedestrian refuge should also be explored.



**FIGURE 6.9: PROPOSED VERMONT AVENUE STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS (SOUTH OF OVERPASS, LONG TERM)**



### 6.3.3 NORMANDIE AVENUE

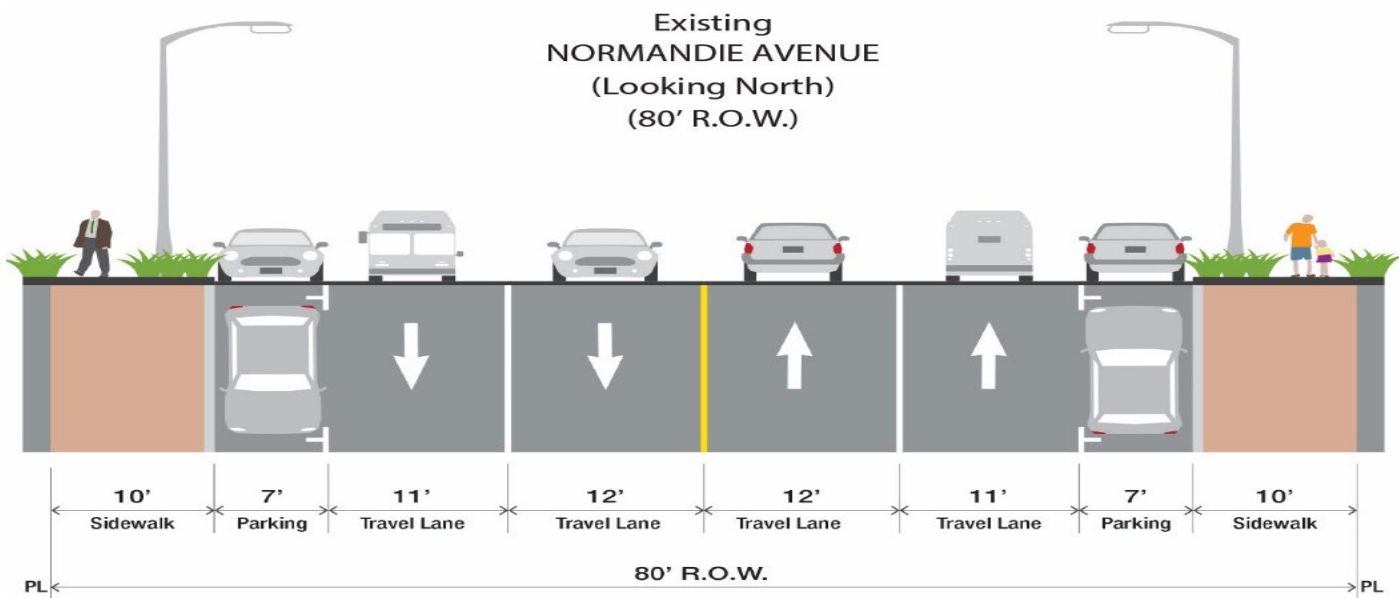
#### Existing Conditions



*Existing Normandie Avenue.*

Normandie Avenue is classified as a Secondary Highway in the Los Angeles County Master Plan of Highways and runs north and south within the Specific Plan area. The corridor currently meets the 80-foot minimum width for its classification. The posted speed limit is 40 mph north of Imperial Highway and 45 mph south of Imperial Highway. Metro operates bus lines along the corridor and on-street parking is permitted in some areas. The existing conditions are illustrated in Figure 6.10.

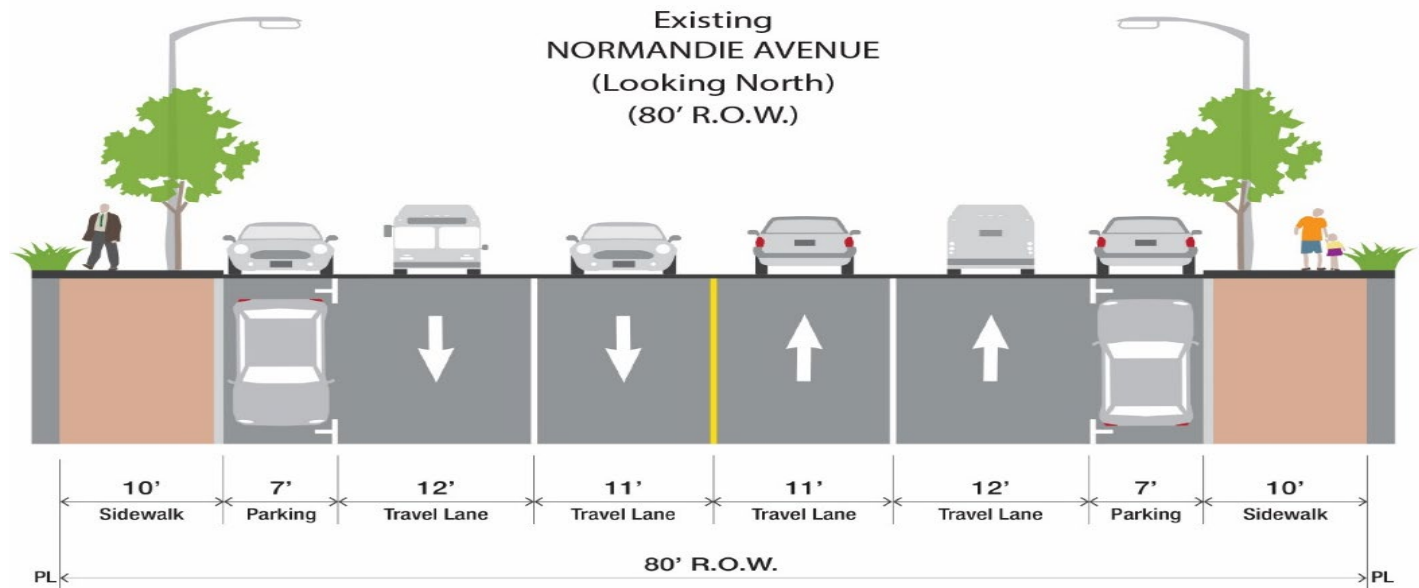
**FIGURE 6.10: EXISTING NORMANDIE AVENUE STREETScape**



## Plan Strategy

The Specific Plan recommends improving landscaping along the length of Normandie Avenue as shown in Figure 6.11. Adding street trees between the sidewalks and parking areas on each side of the corridor would enhance the pedestrian environment.

**FIGURE 6.11: PROPOSED NORMANDIE AVENUE STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS**



## 6.3.4 WESTERN AVENUE

### Existing Conditions

Western Avenue is classified as a Major Highway on the Los Angeles County Master Plan of Highways and runs north and south within the Specific Plan boundary. The corridor currently meets the 100-foot minimum for its classification.

Within the Specific Plan area, the roadway consists of two travel lanes in each direction with a center two-way left turn lane. The posted speed limit is 40 mph and 25 mph in school zones when children are present. Metro and the City of Gardena operates bus lines along the corridor. On-street parking and bicycle sharrows north of Imperial Highway transition to no on-street parking and buffered bike lanes south of Imperial Highway. The existing conditions are illustrated in Figure 6.12 and Figure 6.13.



*Existing view of Western Avenue at the entrance of Los Angeles Southwest College.*

FIGURE 6.12: EXISTING WESTERN AVENUE STREETSCAPE (NORTH)

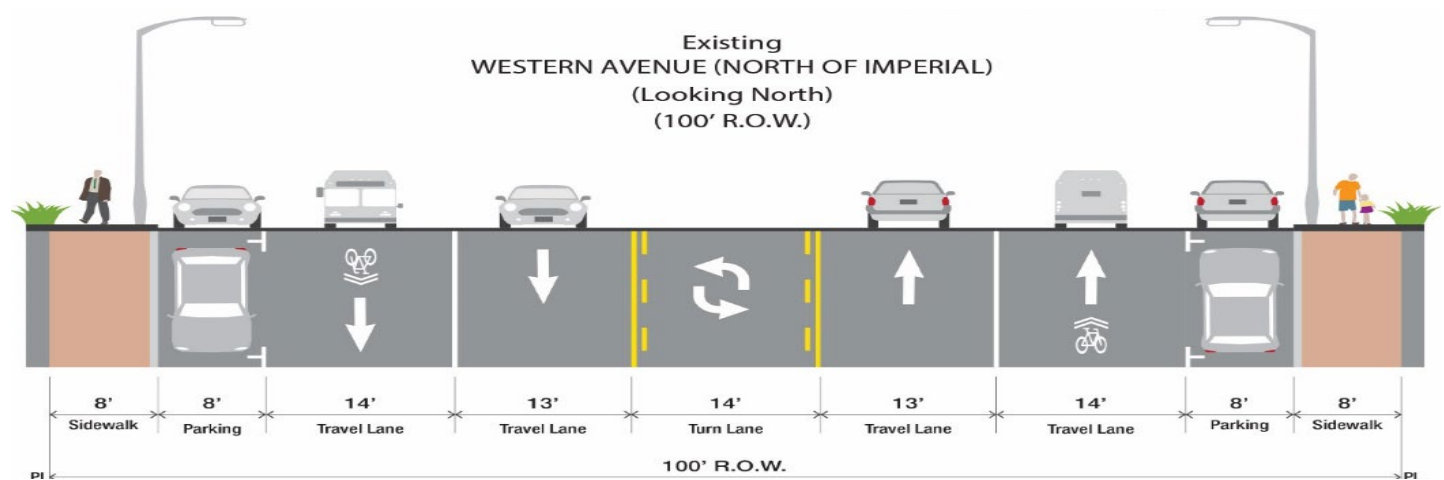
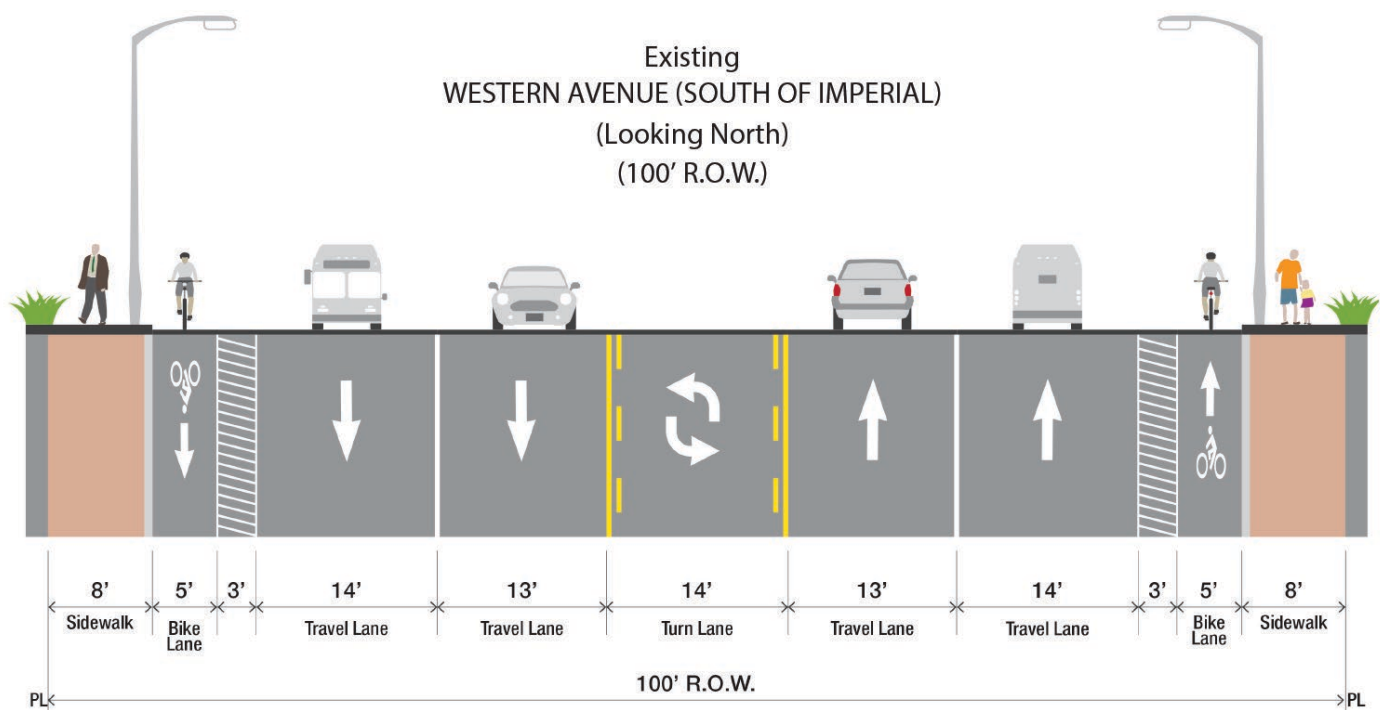


FIGURE 6.13: EXISTING WESTERN AVENUE STREETSCAPE (SOUTH)



## Plan Strategy

Streetscape improvements proposed for Western Avenue are illustrated in Figure 6.14 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 by simply reducing travel lane widths by two feet and the turn lane to 10 feet in width.

**FIGURE 6.14: PROPOSED WESTERN AVENUE STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS (SHORT TERM)**

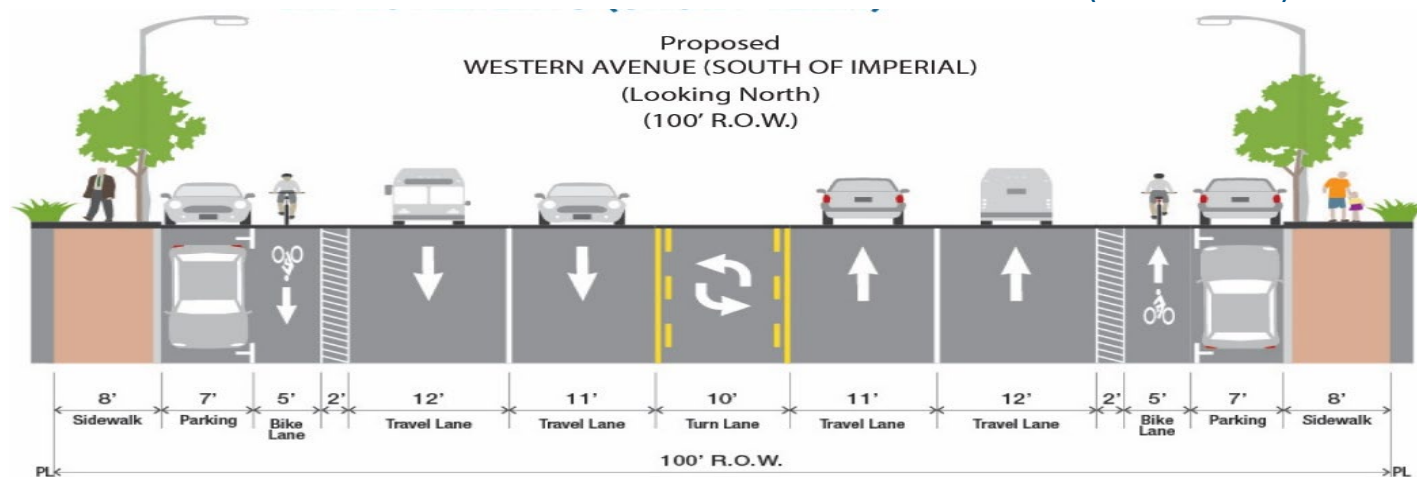
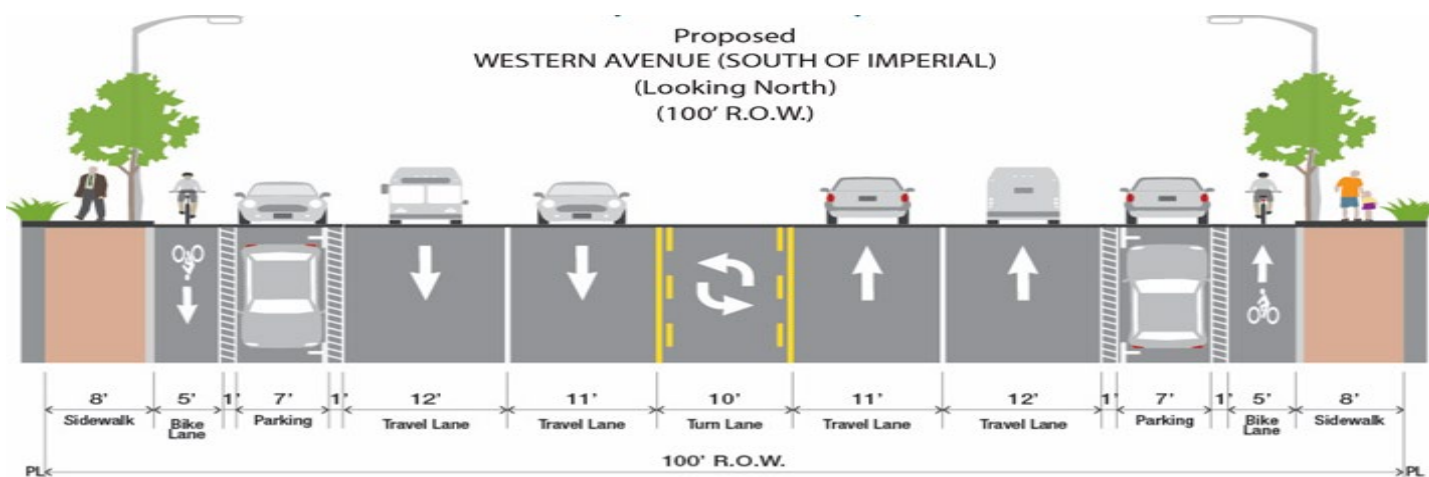


Figure 6.15 illustrates a long-term option where the bike and parking lanes are switched to increase safety for bicyclists.

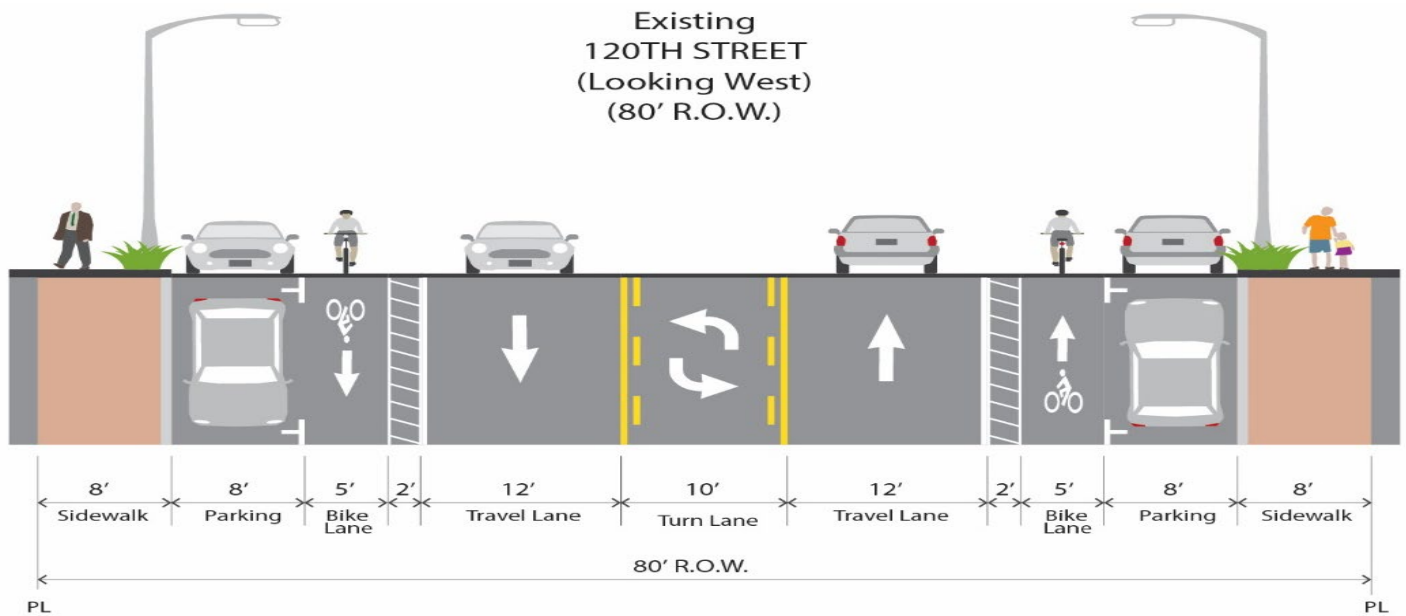
**FIGURE 6.15: PROPOSED WESTERN AVENUE STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS (LONG TERM)**



classified as a Secondary Highway on the Los Angeles County Master Plan of Highways. The corridor currently meets the 80-foot minimum

width for its classification. It runs east and west terminating at Western Avenue and is lined primarily by residential land uses with some commercial. It has one vehicle lane in each direction with a turn lane in the center and buffered 5-foot bicycle lanes next to on-street parking. The posted speed limit is 35 and 25 miles per hour in school zones when children are present. The existing conditions are illustrated in Figure 6.16.

**FIGURE 6.16: EXISTING 120TH AVENUE STREETSCAPE**

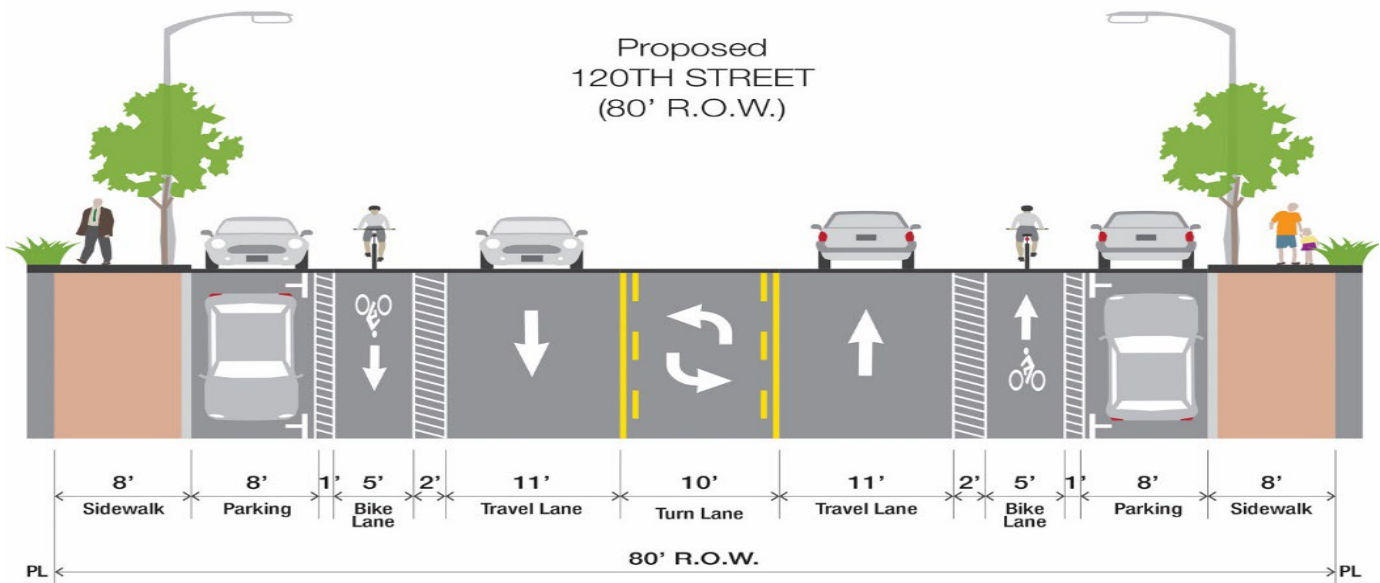


### Plan Strategy

The Specific Plan proposes reducing travel lanes to 11 feet in both directions to allow a 1-foot buffer between the bike lanes and on-street parking to increase safety as illustrated in Figure 6.17. to increase safety. Improved landscaping should also be added along the sidewalks to improve the pedestrian experience and create a buffer from traffic.



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**FIGURE 6.17: PROPOSED 120TH STREET STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS**

## 6.4 TRANSIT CIRCULATION



Vermont Avenue is well-served by transit.

A key component of the Specific Plan is to enhance the transit experience by improving access to and from transit stops and the areas spent waiting for the next bus or train. Existing transit services are illustrated in Figure 6.18.

### 6.4.1 METRO SYSTEM

The existing Vermont/Athens C-Line Station is located underneath the Vermont Avenue overpass in the median of the 105 freeway. It is accessible from Vermont Avenue via stairways and elevators. The C-Line connects to the South Bay, Harbor Gateway, and Norwalk communities as well as to a nearby transfer station with the A-Line into the larger Metro system. Although transit amenities, including benches, wayfinding maps, and shelter, exist at the Vermont/Athens Station, it has been described as hiding in plain sight. The degree to which an individual can see or perceive what lies beyond the edge of the street or public space in order to feel safe is inhibited by its placement under the overpass and lack of presence at the street-level.

### 6.4.2 LOCAL BUS SERVICES

The Specific Plan area is served by eight local bus routes operated by Metro and the City of Gardena.

**FIGURE 6.18: TRANSIT NETWORK MAP**



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 C-Line to improve transit service and efficiency.

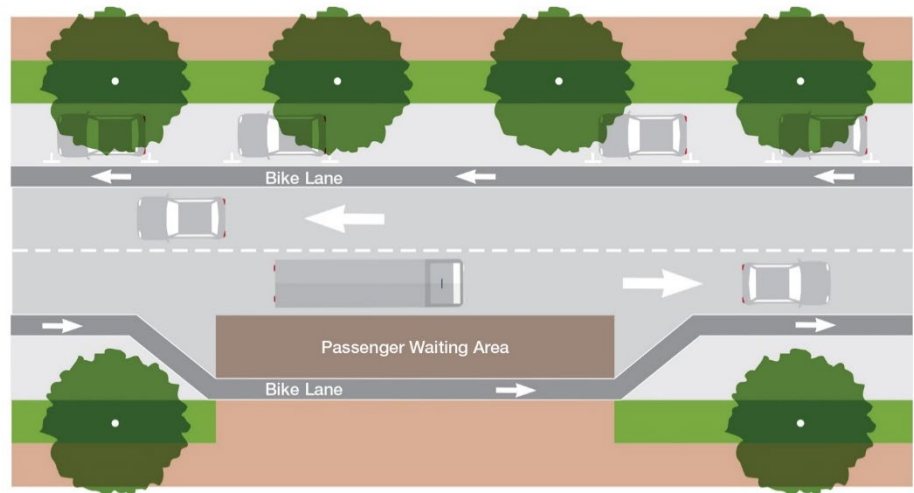
### 6.4.3 BUS AND BIKE INTERFACE

The coexistence between buses and bikes on roadways 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. The Specific Plan encourages the implementation of alternative bus stop designs particularly where traffic converges such as at the Vermont/Athens Station. One such design includes creating a short bike channel that diverts bicycle traffic behind transit stops as depicted and shown in Figures 6.19 and 6.20.



*Illustrative photo of a multi-use path next to transit corridor.*

**FIGURE 6.19: FLOATING BUS STOP AND BIKE CHANNEL DESIGN**



**FIGURE 6.20: FLOATING BUS STOP AND BIKE CHANNEL IN SEATTLE**



## 6.5 PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

First/last mile connections often impact an individual's decision to use transit. Land use coordinated with adequate pedestrian infrastructure can help to activate corridors and promote pedestrian activity. This section discusses some of the existing opportunities to improve the pedestrian environment within the Specific Plan area.

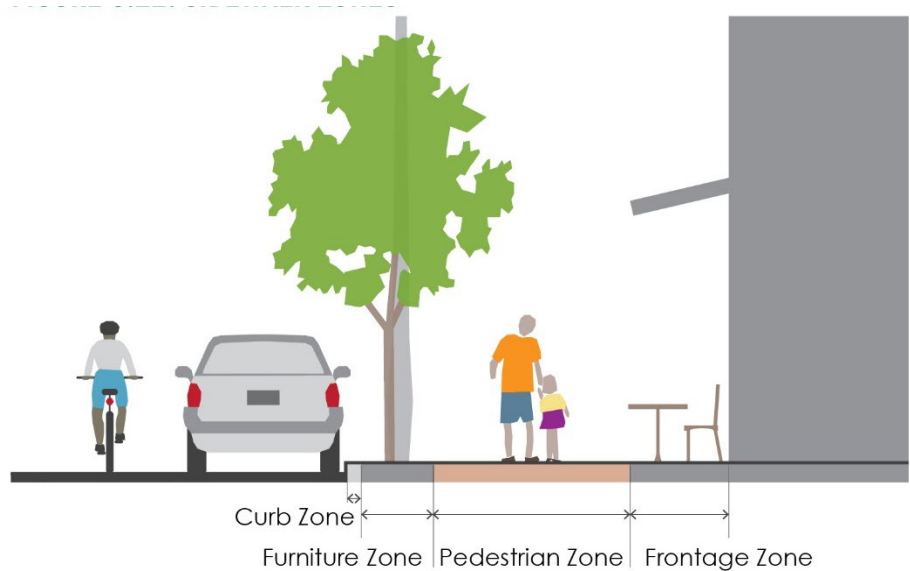
### 6.5.1 SIDEWALK HIERARCHY

Although sidewalks exist along major corridors within the Specific Plan area, most are narrow, uninviting, and unable to support high levels of pedestrian activity.

The Specific Plan proposes a sidewalk hierarchy to establish a framework for future sidewalk design. The sidewalk hierarchy is composed of three levels that correspond with the Metro Pathways hierarchy.

Each level varies in their allocation of space to the Frontage Zone, Pedestrian Zone, Furniture Zone, and Curb Zone, which are illustrated in Figure 6.21.



**FIGURE 6.21: SIDEWALK ZONES**

*Illustrative photo of a Level 1 sidewalk showing all sidewalk zones.*



*Example of pedestrian seating in the sidewalk Furniture Zone.*

- **Curb Zone:** The curb zone separates the sidewalk from the street. It prevents vehicles from driving onto the sidewalk and directs water away to storm drains.
- **Furniture Zone:** The area of the sidewalk between the pedestrian zone and the street curb that provides space for utilities such as fire hydrants and amenities like bus shelters.
- **Pedestrian Zone:** The area of the sidewalk exclusively reserved for pedestrian travel. It should be free of obstacles, well-lit, and have a smooth, slip-resistant surface suitable for all weather conditions and with minimal gaps.
- **Frontage Zone:** The area of the sidewalk that separates pedestrians from the property line or building/store fronts. It can provide space for outdoor seating, store entrances, street vendors, and provides a space for doors to open.

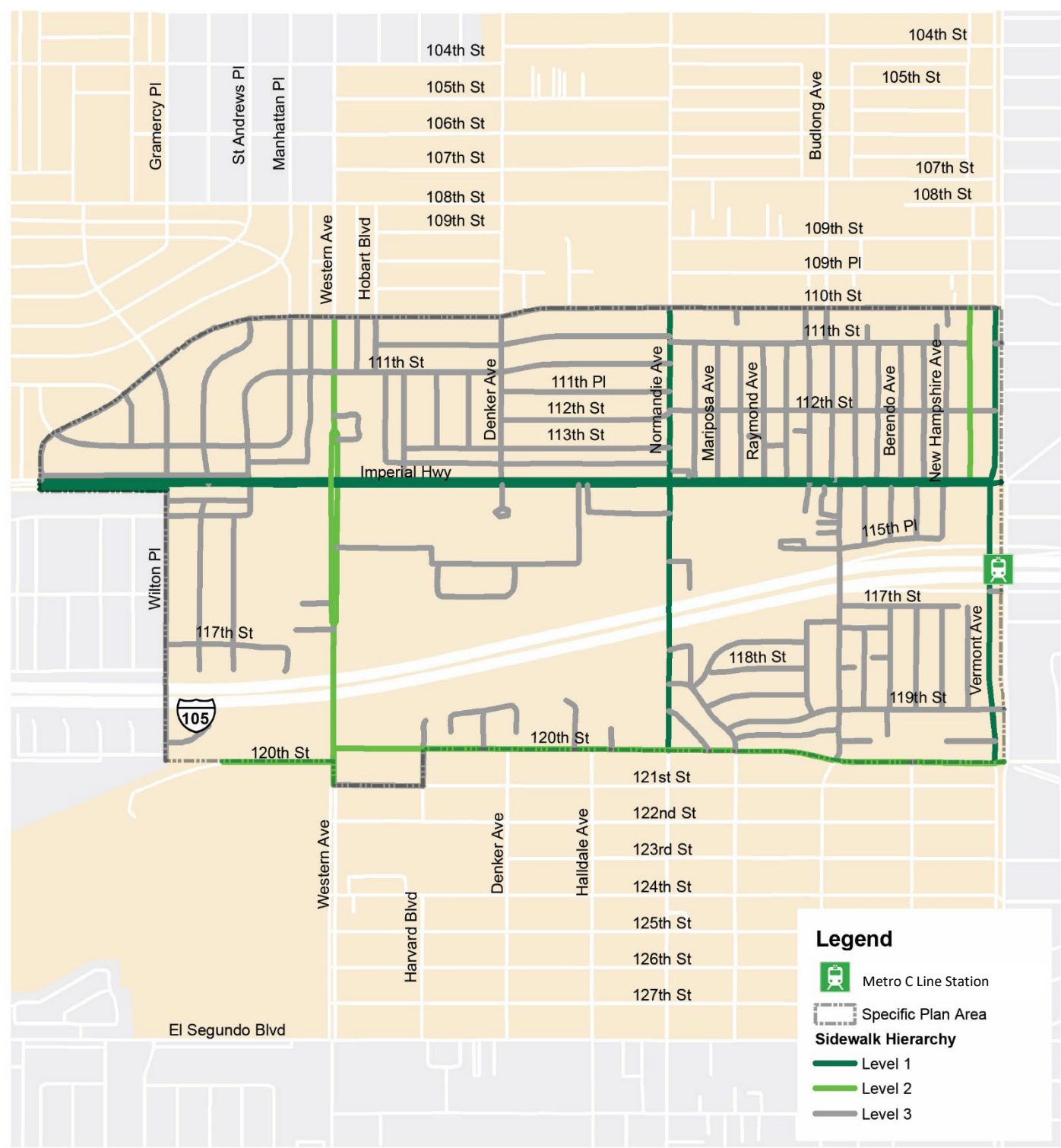
The locations of the Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 sidewalks of the Specific Plan sidewalk hierarchy, described as follows, are illustrated in Figure 6.22.

- **Level 1** sidewalks should have a minimum width of ten feet to support high pedestrian volumes favoring the pedestrian and frontage zones with room for street trees, benches, outdoor seating, and other amenities. They should be located along pathway arterials and in areas with higher density mixed-use or commercial land uses.
- **Level 2** sidewalks should have a minimum width of seven feet to support moderate pedestrian volumes and favor the pedestrian and furniture zones with room for some amenities. They should be located along pathway collectors.
- **Level 3** sidewalks should have a minimum width of five feet favoring the pedestrian zone to support lower pedestrian volumes and meet accessibility standards.



*Illustrative photo of shade trees, parking meters and pedestrian-scale lighting in the sidewalk Furniture Zone. A driveway is clearly indicated for both pedestrians and drivers in the Curb Zone.*

FIGURE 6.22: PEDESTRIAN NETWORK MAP



## 6.5.2 PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

Enhancing the pedestrian environment helps advance the County's Vision Zero Initiative to reduce traffic fatalities involving pedestrians. The Specific Plan recommends the following design guidelines to facilitate safe pedestrian crossing:

1. **Marked Crosswalks.** Crosswalks help pedestrians identify where it is safe to cross and alert drivers to watch for pedestrians. Crosswalks have basic requirements for visibility as set in the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Crosswalks should be in place at the following locations whenever possible:

- » All signalized intersections
- » Near key transit stops and stations
- » Locations with heavy pedestrian volumes
- » Along routes to schools

The Specific Plan recommends the following crosswalk improvements:

**TABLE 6.1: INTERSECTIONS RECOMMENDED FOR MARKED CROSSWALKS**

LOCATION	CORNER/LEG	PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Western Ave/110th Street	East/West leg	Stripe as continental crosswalk
Western Ave/111th Street	All legs	Restripe as continental crosswalk
Western Ave/Imperial Hwy	All legs	Restripe as continental crosswalk
Western Ave/LASC	North/East/West legs	Stripe as continental crosswalk
Vermont Ave/ Vermont/Athens Station	Mid-block	Stripe continental crosswalk; add pedestrian signage.

2. **Pedestrian Safety Islands.** Pedestrian safety islands break up the crossing distance at wide intersections and are recommended whenever pedestrians have to cross three lanes of traffic in one direction. The Specific Plan recommends pedestrian islands at the following locations:



*Pedestrian crossing Vermont Avenue from a main bus stop adjacent to Ralphs supermarket.*



*Example of paving designs highlighting a special intersection.*

**TABLE 6.2: LOCATIONS RECOMMENDED FOR PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ISLANDS**

LOCATION	CORNER/LEG
Imperial Hwy/Western Ave	East/West legs
Imperial Hwy/Normandie Ave	East/West legs
Imperial Hwy/Vermont Ave	East/West legs
Imperial Hwy/Denker Ave	East/West legs
Imperial Hwy/Budlong Ave	West leg

3. **Curb Extensions.** Curb extensions are traffic calming treatments that narrow the roadway to create a shorter crossing distance and improve visibility of pedestrians by placing them in alignment with on-street parking. They are recommended on streets with high pedestrian volumes and along wide streets that are difficult to cross. The Specific Plan recommends curb extensions at the following locations:

**TABLE 6.3: LOCATIONS RECOMMENDED FOR CURB EXTENSIONS**

LOCATION	CORNER/LEG
Western Ave/110th Street	South leg
Western Ave/111th Street	North/South legs

4. **Curb Ramps.** Curb ramps improve accessibility for people with disabilities and should be in place at all crosswalks. All existing crosswalks in the Specific Plan area have curb ramps.
5. **Pedestrian Crossing Signage.** Pedestrian crossing signage alerts motorists of the presence of pedestrians along roadways and is recommended at uncontrolled crossings. Nearly all uncontrolled crossings in the Specific Plan area have pedestrian crossing signage. The Specific Plan recommends adding pedestrian crossing signage at the following additional location:

**TABLE 6.4: LOCATION RECOMMENDED FOR PEDESTRIAN CROSSING SIGNAGE**

LOCATION	CORNER/LEG
110th Street/Budlong Ave	East/West legs



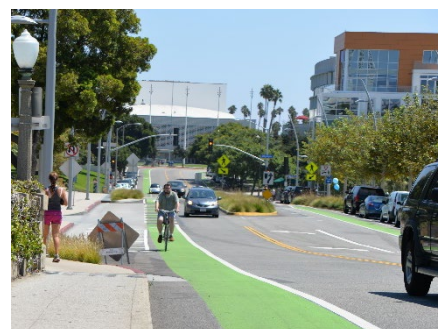
## 6.6 BICYCLE CIRCULATION

Poor infrastructure and connectivity affect a person's decision to bike to and from transit. The following section describes recommended improvements to bicycle network to promote bicycling within the Specific Plan area.

### 6.6.1 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 or “Cycle Track”) – 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.



Example Bicycle Lane – Class II.

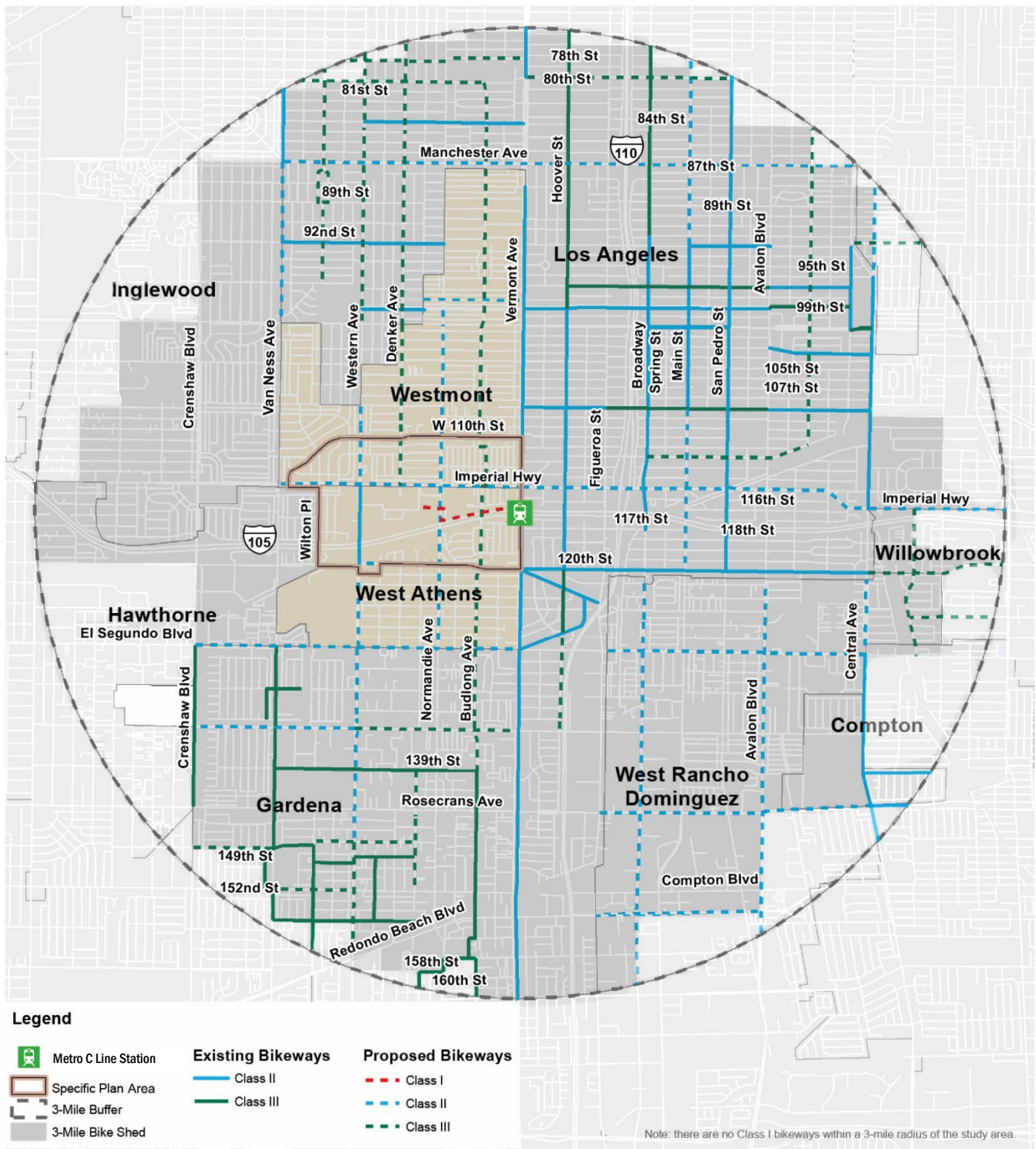
### 6.6.2 BICYCLE NETWORK

Figure 6.23 illustrates bicycle accessibility within a three-mile radius of the Vermont/Athens Station. All bicycle routes were mapped 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/Athens Station, there is only a half-mile of existing bikeways (Class II) located within the Specific Plan area indicating limited accessibility and opportunities for better connectivity particularly west of the Vermont/Athens Station and north-south throughout.



Example Bicycle Route with Sharrow – Class III

FIGURE 6.23: BICYCLE NETWORK MAP



The Specific Plan proposes an additional eleven miles of bike lanes exceeding the proposed bike routes in the 2012 Los Angeles County Master Plan.

### 6.6.3 MULTI-USE PATH TO LASC

To provide a faster, safer connection between LASC and Vermont/Athens Station, the Specific Plan proposes construction of a Class I bicycle and pedestrian multi-use path. Suggested routes are as conceptually illustrated in Figure 6.24.

Alternative 1 would provide the most direct route onto the campus using land that is already under public ownership. It would be located along the top outer-most northern edge of the existing Caltrans freeway right of way. This area is at street level well above the freeway providing a mostly flat and direct path to LASC. From the freeway right of way, it would cross through the campuses of LASD Southwest Station and the County offices and service center, and then across another Caltrans-owned parcel and onto the LASC campus. Pathway infrastructure and amenities would be needed as well as pedestrian-activated crosswalks and traffic signals at the two street crossings.

Alternatives 2 and 3 also provide advantageous connections to LASC. Either could be considered in a large-scale, unified development that incorporates the multi-use path as a key project feature.

For security and natural surveillance, construction of any multi-use pathway should occur only following or in concert with supportive new development and after a mechanism for ongoing maintenance, including full-time security patrols along the entire length, can be provided.



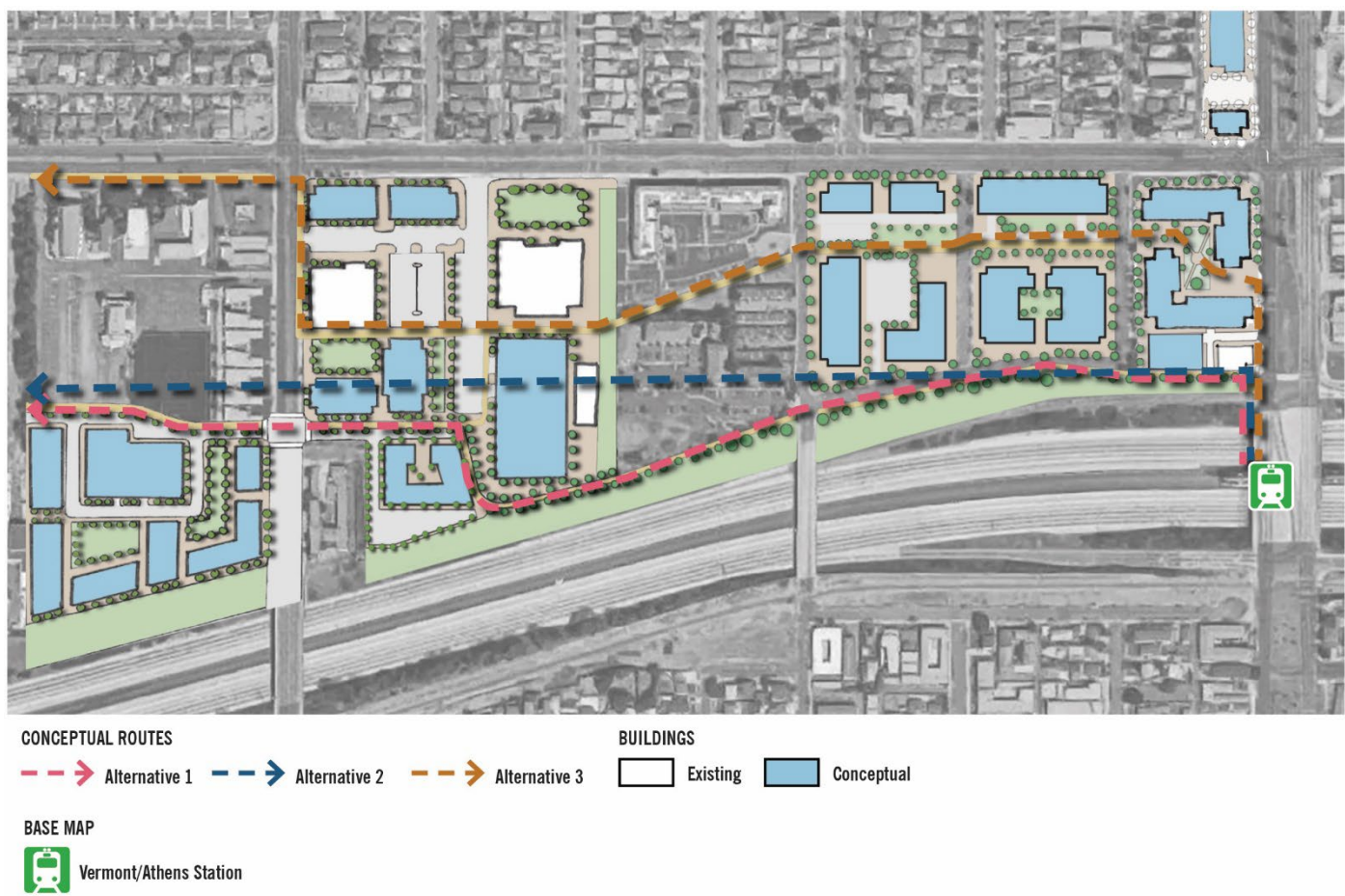
*Bike lockers and bike corral at a transit station.*



*Example of a Class I multi-use path.*



FIGURE 6.24: CONCEPTUAL FIRST/LAST MILE CONNECTION TO LASC



## 6.7 SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING

Signage and wayfinding provide 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 Vermont/Athens stop, should be identified with directional signage located along pathway arterials and collectors.

## 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 Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, is illustrated in Figure 6.26. The Specific Plan proposes the following design guidelines to promote safer routes to school:

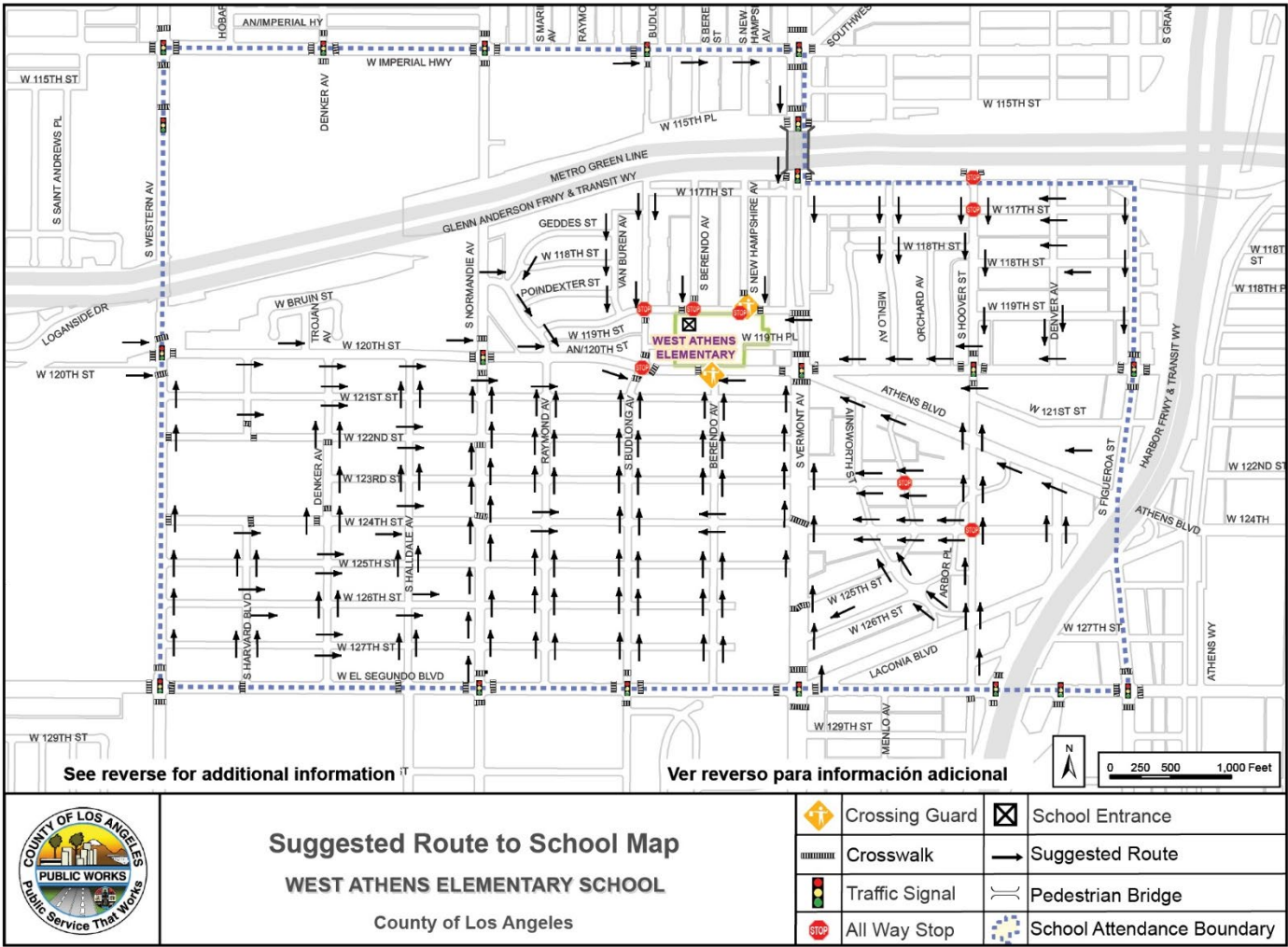
1. Appropriate levels of street lighting should be installed on both sides of wide streets.
2. Appropriate traffic controls, such as marked crosswalks, traffic signals, and warning signs or flashers should be utilized at pedestrian crossing locations.
3. Curb ramps with warning strips, such as truncated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



Wayfinding example.



FIGURE 6.25: WEST ATHENS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL MAP



## 6.9 FIRST/LAST MILE STRATEGIES

In 2014, Metro approved its First/Last Mile Strategic Plan, which identifies design strategies to improve active transportation access and connections to public transit. The Specific Plan recommends streetscape improvements, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements, as well as signage and wayfinding improvements to improve first/last mile connections.

### 6.9.1 PATHWAYS

The Metro Pathways concept establishes a hierarchy of pathways that extend to and from a transit station to support active modes of transportation. Figure 6.27 illustrates the Metro Pathway network surrounding the Vermont/Athens Station. These pathways consider the existing street network, key destinations, feeder transit services, existing and planned infrastructure, existing bike and pedestrian volumes, and surrounding land uses. The Metro Pathways concept is comprised of two types of pathways.

#### Pathway Arterials

Pathway arterials are primary routes that extend from stations and are designed to accommodate high levels of active transportation and a broad range of users. They typically include features such as separated bike lanes, signal and crossing improvements, wayfinding, and bike shares. They typically radiate out a half-mile to three miles from a station in at least four directions and integrate the regional bikeway network at opportune points beyond the half-mile access shed.

#### Pathway Collectors

Pathway collectors serve as feeder routes to pathway arterials. They provide efficient access to pathway arterials. and include intersection improvements and mid-block crossings.



*Example Pathway.*

FIGURE 6.26: FIRST/LAST MILE PATHWAY NETWORK



## 6.10 PARKING

Parking policies play a significant role in the viability and success of TODs. These policies can help to shape an area's travel behavior, community design, and local economic growth.

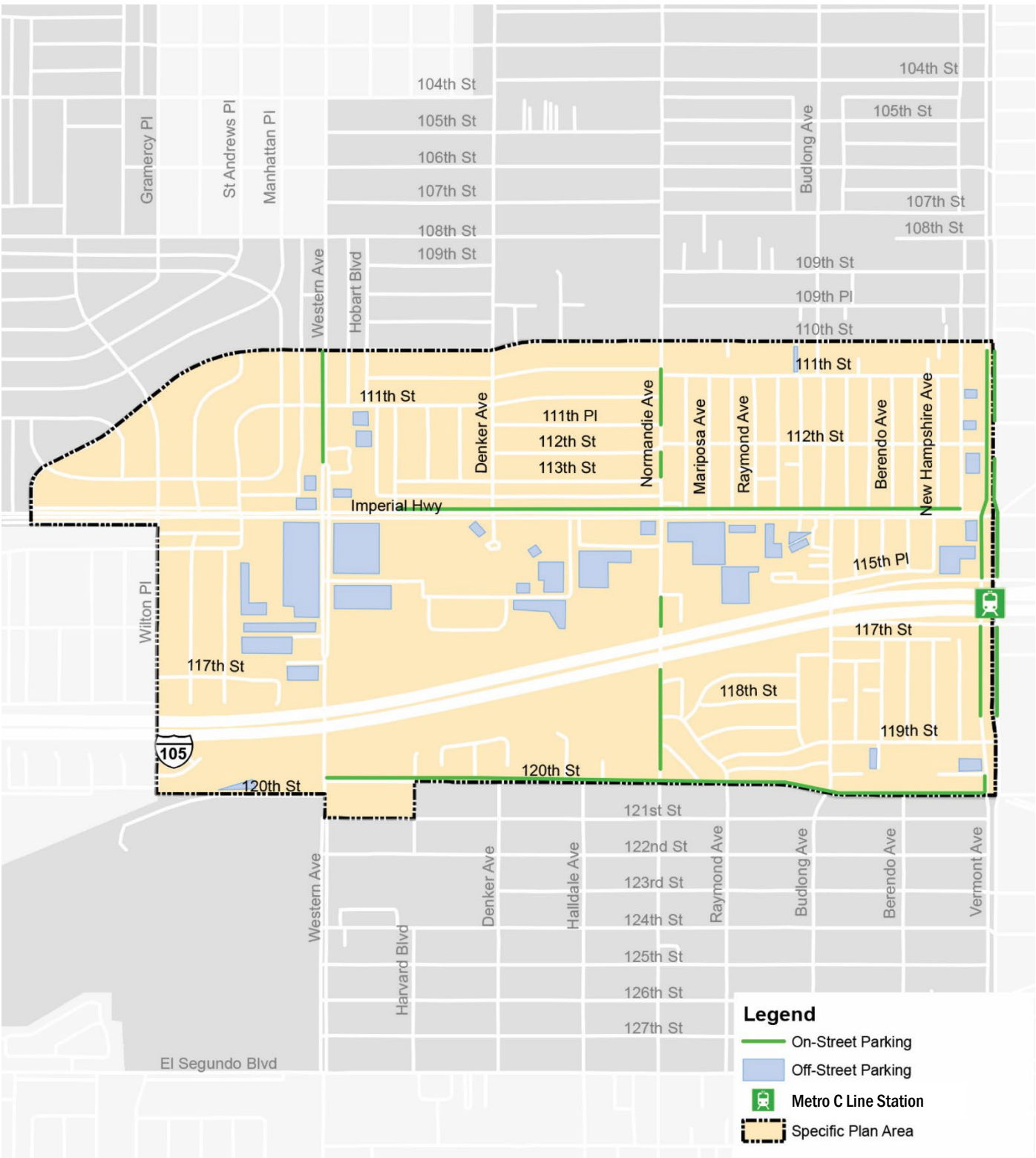
### 6.10.1 EXISTING PARKING SUPPLY

On-street and off-street parking is currently free throughout the study area. Individual properties are responsible for providing their own required off-street parking. On-street parking and off-street parking associated with nonresidential uses (generally surface lots) are illustrated in Figure 6.27.

An existing Park & Ride lot is located on Vermont Avenue north of the Vermont/Athens Station. It contains 155 parking spaces and is owned by Caltrans but operated by Metro. A consent decree established during the planning of the 105 freeway requires that free parking be maintained adjacent to the station and the lot satisfies that decree. The lot is currently underutilized with occupancy consistently observed to be well below 50% of capacity during weekdays.

Although the LASC campus is one of the largest generators of parking demand within the Specific Plan area, evaluations of existing parking demand show it does not exceed provided supply. LASC has no plans to increase parking supply in their Campus Master Plan as most students take public transit to get to the campus.

FIGURE 6.27: EXISTING PARKING LOCATIONS





## PROPOSED PARKING STRATEGIES

The Specific Plan proposes a set of parking strategies to manage short and long-term parking demands. The modifications summarized in Table 6.1 represent a proposed "toolbox" of parking strategies. These strategies allow for greater flexibility and a parking supply that supports TOD development.

**TABLE 6.5: PARKING STRATEGIES**

MODIFICATIONS TO PARKING REQUIREMENTS		
MODIFICATIONS TO PARKING REQUIREMENTS	STRATEGY	CONCEPT
Decreased Parking Requirements	Decreasing minimum parking	Implement minimum parking requirement reductions for multi-family residential, commercial office, and small-scale retail land uses within the TOD Specific Plan area.
	Establishing maximum parking	Implement maximum parking standards in place of minimum parking standards to discourage overbuilding of parking supply.
	Commercial parking credits	Minimum parking requirements can be partially or completely satisfied through a parking credit program that allows new land uses to purchase credits up to the number of underutilized public parking spaces available in the area.
	Parking reductions for TDM measures	Allows for the reduction of off-street parking requirements if transportation demand management measures are implemented, such as the provision of car-share programs, transit passes, etc.
	Shared Parking	Permit mixed-use developments to share parking resources between land use with compatible use patterns. County should retain the right to review and approve a shared use parking plan.
Change of Use	Implementing change of use parking standards	Encourage adaptive reuse of existing buildings that are limited in the number of parking spaces it can provide due to physical constraints for permitted land uses that can activate the district and streetscape, such as restaurants.
Off Site Parking	Option to provide parking off-site	Allows for the provision of parking at an off-site lot located within 1,500 feet of subject parcel.

**TABLE 6.5: PARKING STRATEGIES**

<b>MODIFICATIONS TO PARKING REQUIREMENTS</b>		
	<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>CONCEPT</b>
Pricing	<i>Parking pricing</i>	<i>Charge motorists directly for the use of parking facilities.</i>
	<i>Unbundled parking</i>	<i>Rent or sell parking facilities separately from building space.</i>
Other	<i>In-lieu parking fees</i>	<i>Allows new proposed uses to pay a fee in place of providing all or a portion of the minimum parking required. Revenues from this program would be used to construct new public parking facilities.</i>

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# 07



CHAPTER 7

# INFRASTRUCTURE

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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 Specific Plan area. This section identifies the current conditions of these infrastructure systems, along with recommended upgrades to accommodate potential new development.

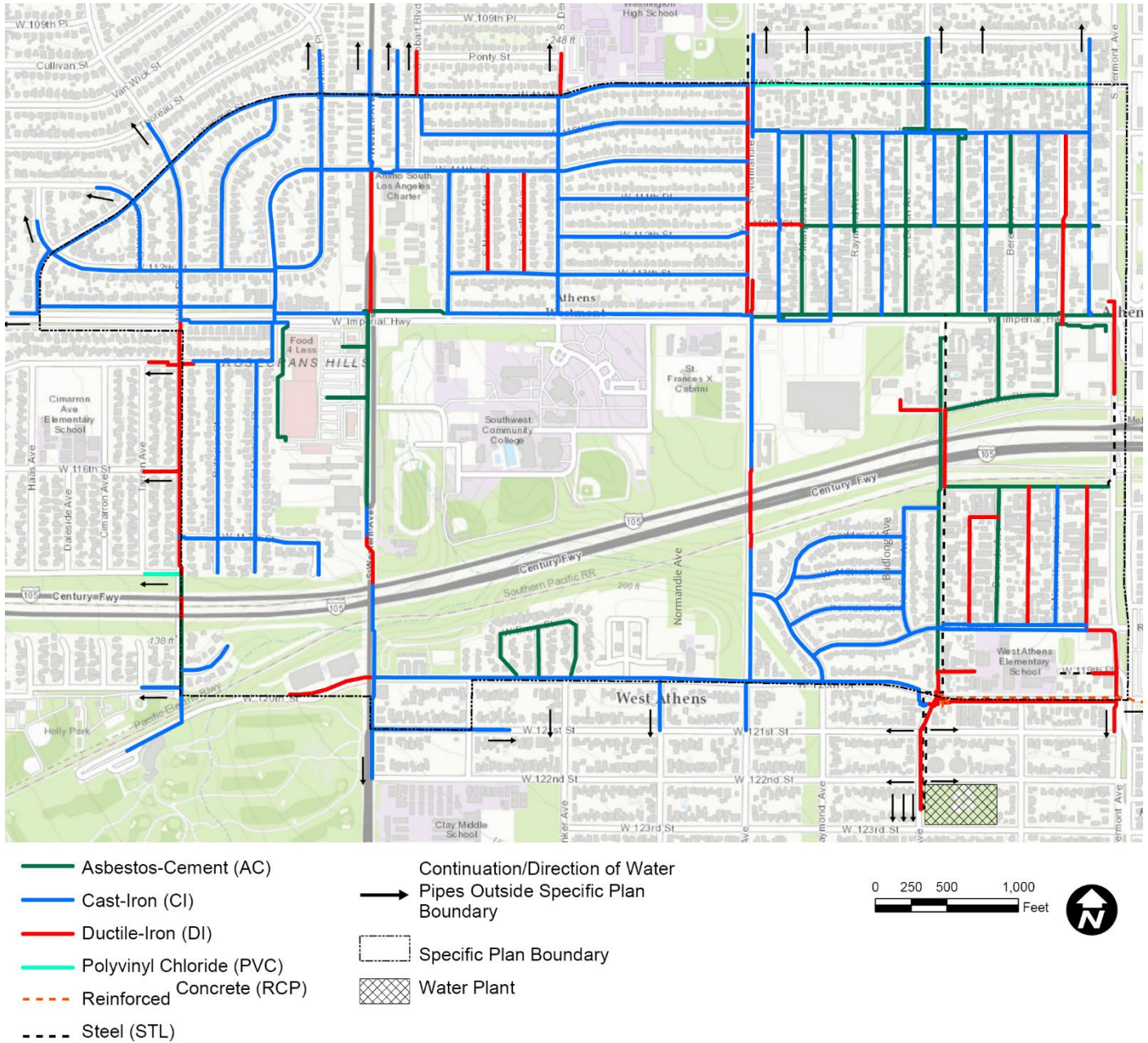
## 7.2 WATER

### 7.2.1 WATER SERVICES EXISTING CONDITIONS

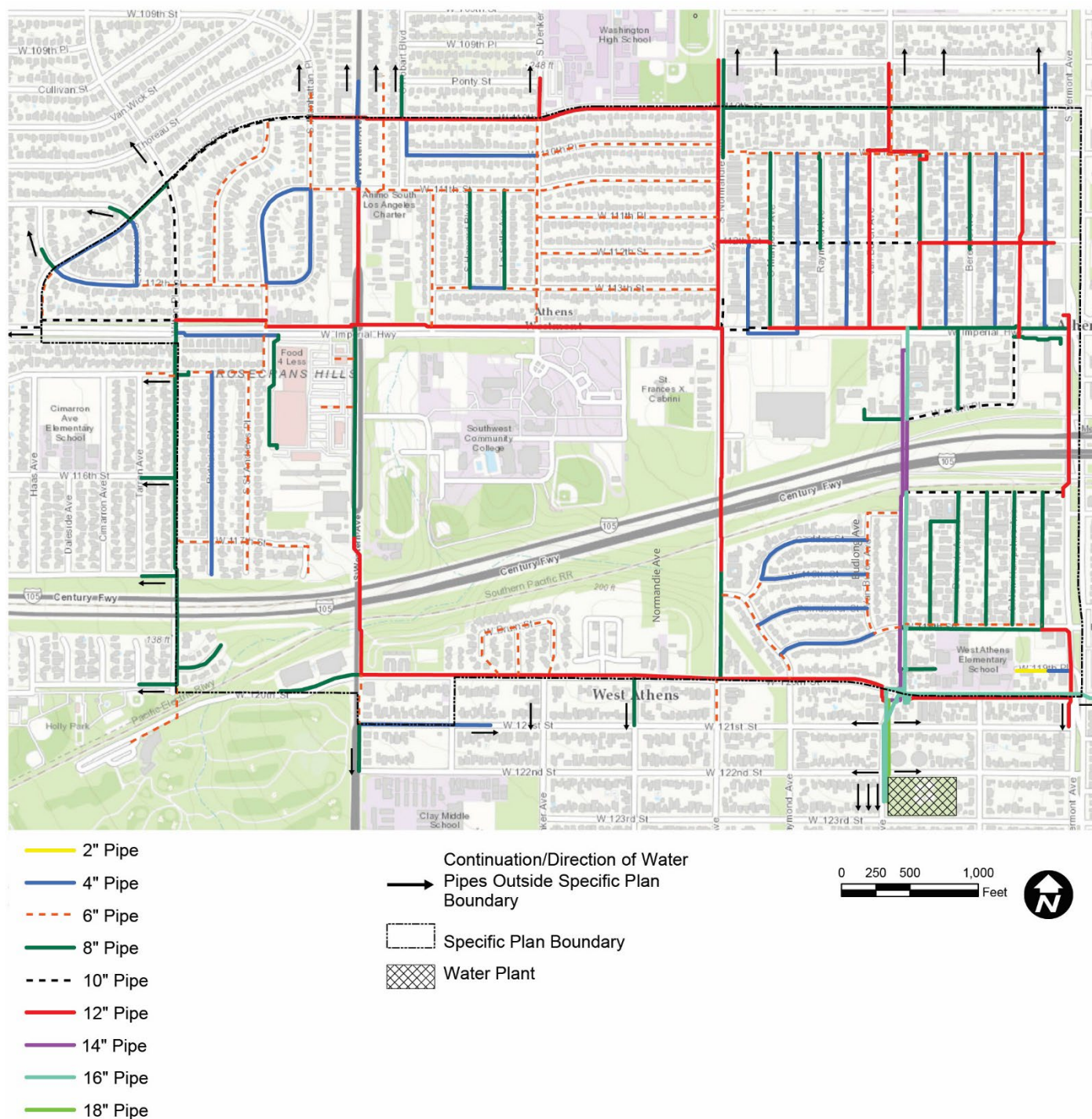
The Southwest District of the Golden State Water Company is the provider of potable water for the Specific Plan area. Water service needs are met by a combination of local groundwater and surface water purchased from both the Central Basin and the West Basin of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern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

The Specific Plan area is serviced by pipe sizes varying from two inch connectors to 18 inch 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 105 freeway via three pipes – an 18 inch water main, a 16 inch water main, and a 14 inch 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 inch and eight inch pipes for the main distribution trunks with six inch and four inch 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 six inch and four inch 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 LASC campus and the southeast region of the Specific Plan area. These two areas' proximity to three large water trunks as well as the interconnectivity of the pipe network allow adequate flow to meet the current demand.





**FIGURE 7.2: WATER SYSTEM PIPE SIZE**

Existing total flow of the Specific Plan area is capable of being carried via a single 16 inch line. Because the Specific Plan area contains multiple water line connections, the water demand to the area will increase due to demand from surrounding areas. 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 Specific Plan land use changes include a heavy influx of households and water flow in the southwest and northeast 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 Specific Plan area – 16 inch and 14 inch - 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 eight-inch 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 inch 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 in Figure 7.3.

## **7.3 SEWER SERVICES**

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

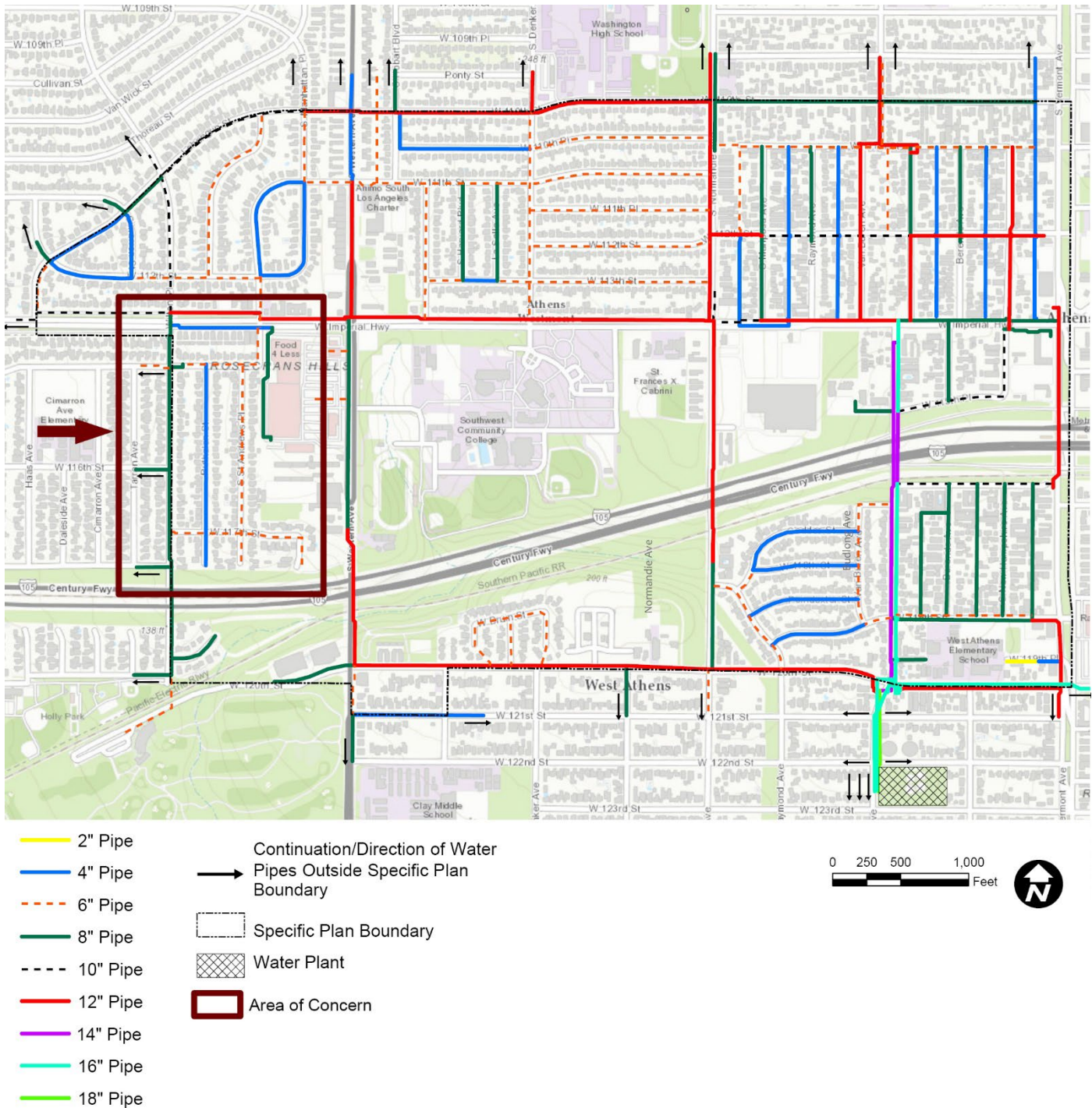
Two sanitary systems exist within the Specific Plan area – local collection lines and trunk sewers. The local collection lines are a series of eight inch gravity mains with laterals connecting to existing houses and buildings. All of these sewers are composed of Vitrified Clay Pipe (VCP), or Lined Clay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

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 five years.



### FIGURE 7.3: WATER SYSTEM AND AREAS OF CONCERN



The Specific Plan area was rated on maintenance and structural defects using this scale. Structurally, 96 percent of pipe inspected was fair to excellent condition. Only two percent of pipes required immediate attention. After the assessment, 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, and other issues excluding structural pipe damage that could potentially cause flow issues. During this inspection, 88 percent of the pipe was in fair to excellent condition with two percent needing immediate attention. The areas requiring attention 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 105 freeway and following the Southern Pacific Railroad line out of the Specific Plan area. The trunk is a 12 inch VCP sewer which has a volumetric carrying capacity twice as high as a 2011 volumetric flow analysis. The Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (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 inch 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 7.4 illustrates the various sewer lines in the Specific Plan area.

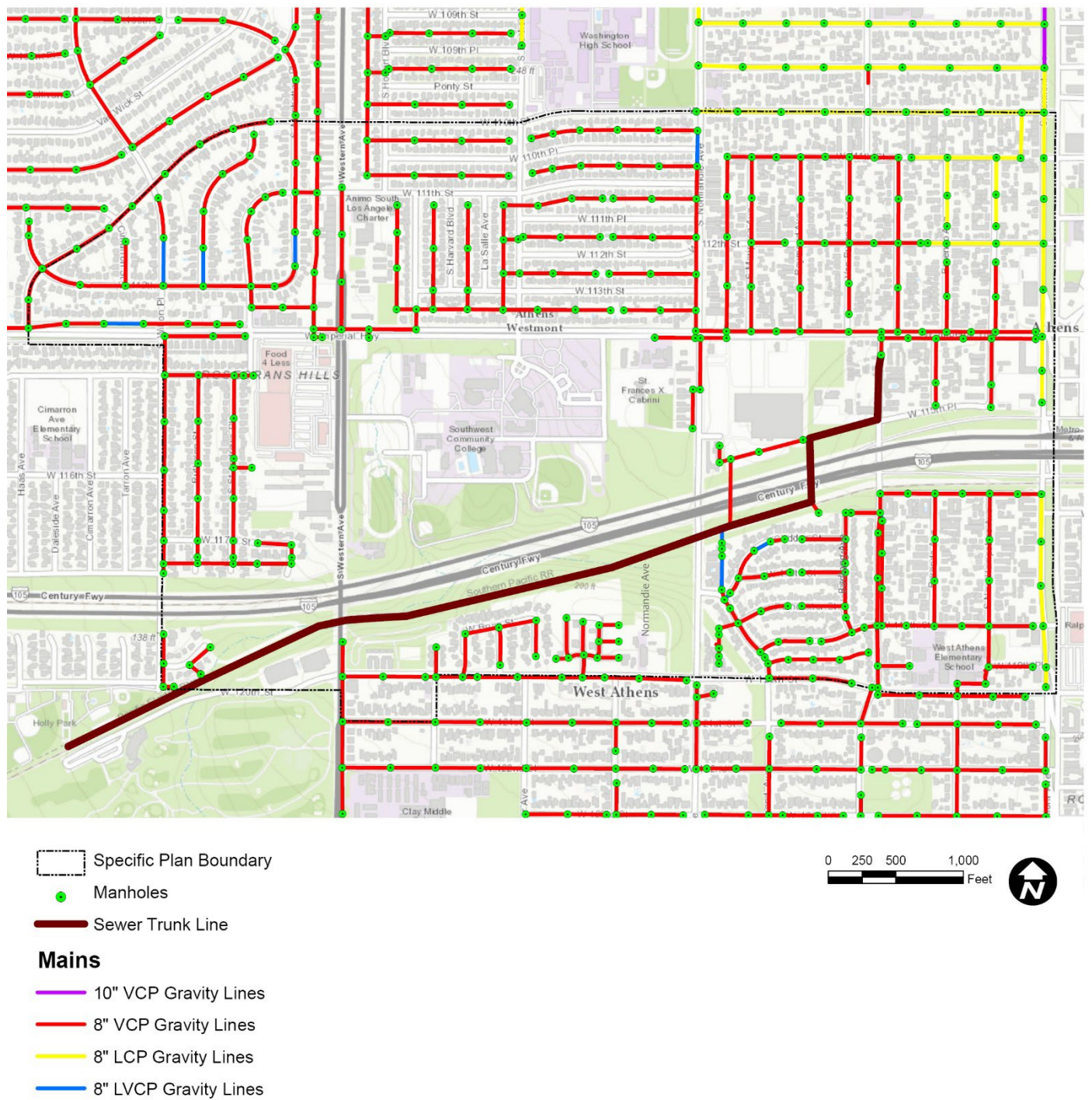
### **7.3.2 SEWER SERVICES FUTURE CONDITIONS**

Sewer services in the Specific Plan area would require updating in order to accommodate for the proposed land use buildout in the Specific Plan. The existing 12 inch 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.

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 CSLA R-1 Zone, which proposes little to no change, these sewers were determined to have adequate capacity support the proposed buildout.

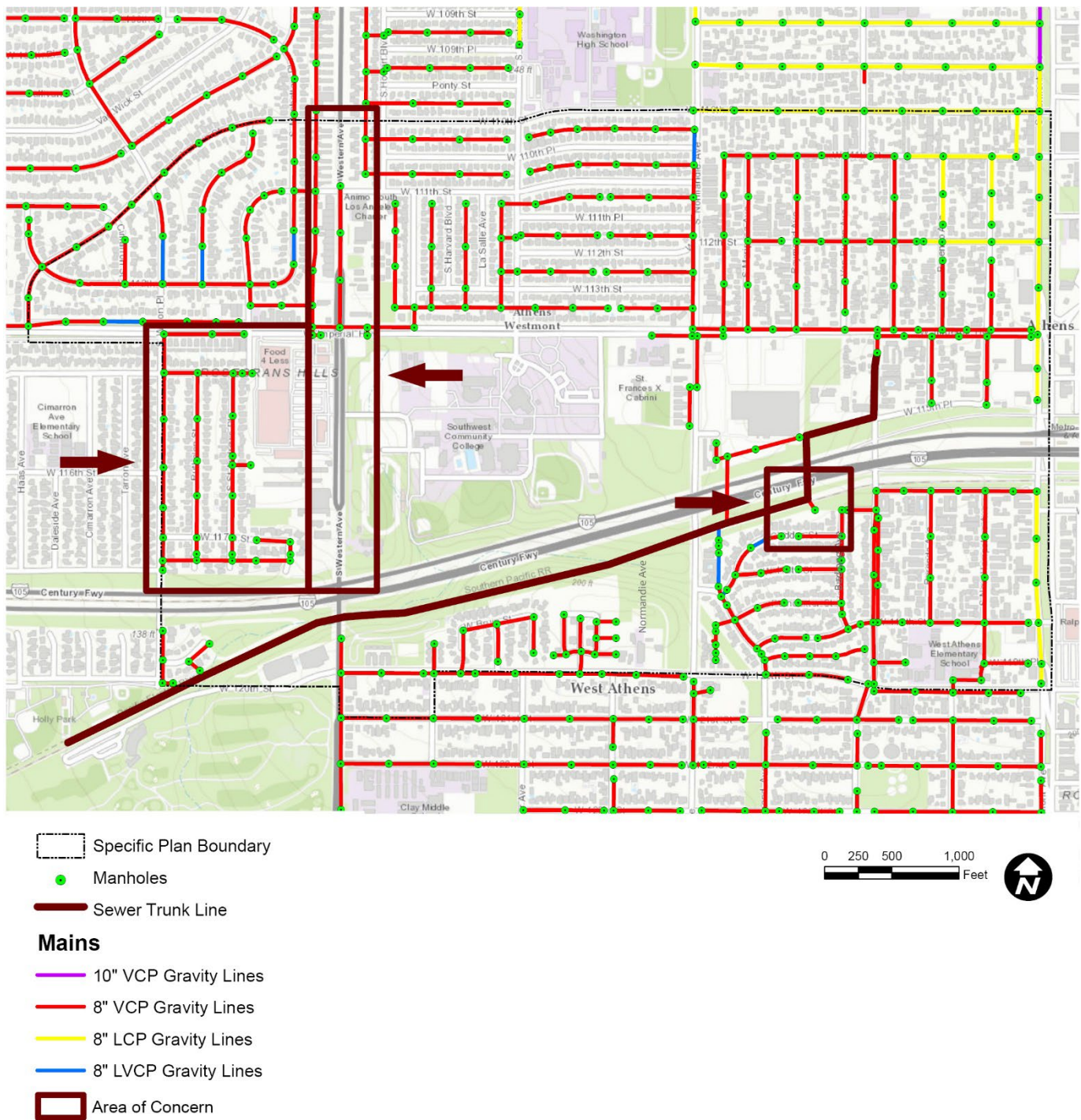


### FIGURE 7.4: SANITARY UTILITIES





### FIGURE 7.5: SANITARY UTILITIES AND AREAS OF CONCERN



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

The proposed mixed-use and commercial corridor along Western Avenue, north of the 105 freeway, was identified as an area of concern. The proposed land use buildout, which includes the CSLA MXD-2 located in the southwest region of the Specific Plan area, would generate an increase in flow and would exceed the capacities of the 8 inch 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.

Additionally, school owned sewers from the LASC campus collect into a 10 inch 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 Caltrans. The Specific Plan area is sloped towards the 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 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 foot x 14 foot 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 inch to 48 inch 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 related to the potential reduction of existing pervious surfaces as highlighted in Figure 7.7.

One area of concern has to do with 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 onsite recapture and 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 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 7.6: STORM DRAIN SYSTEM

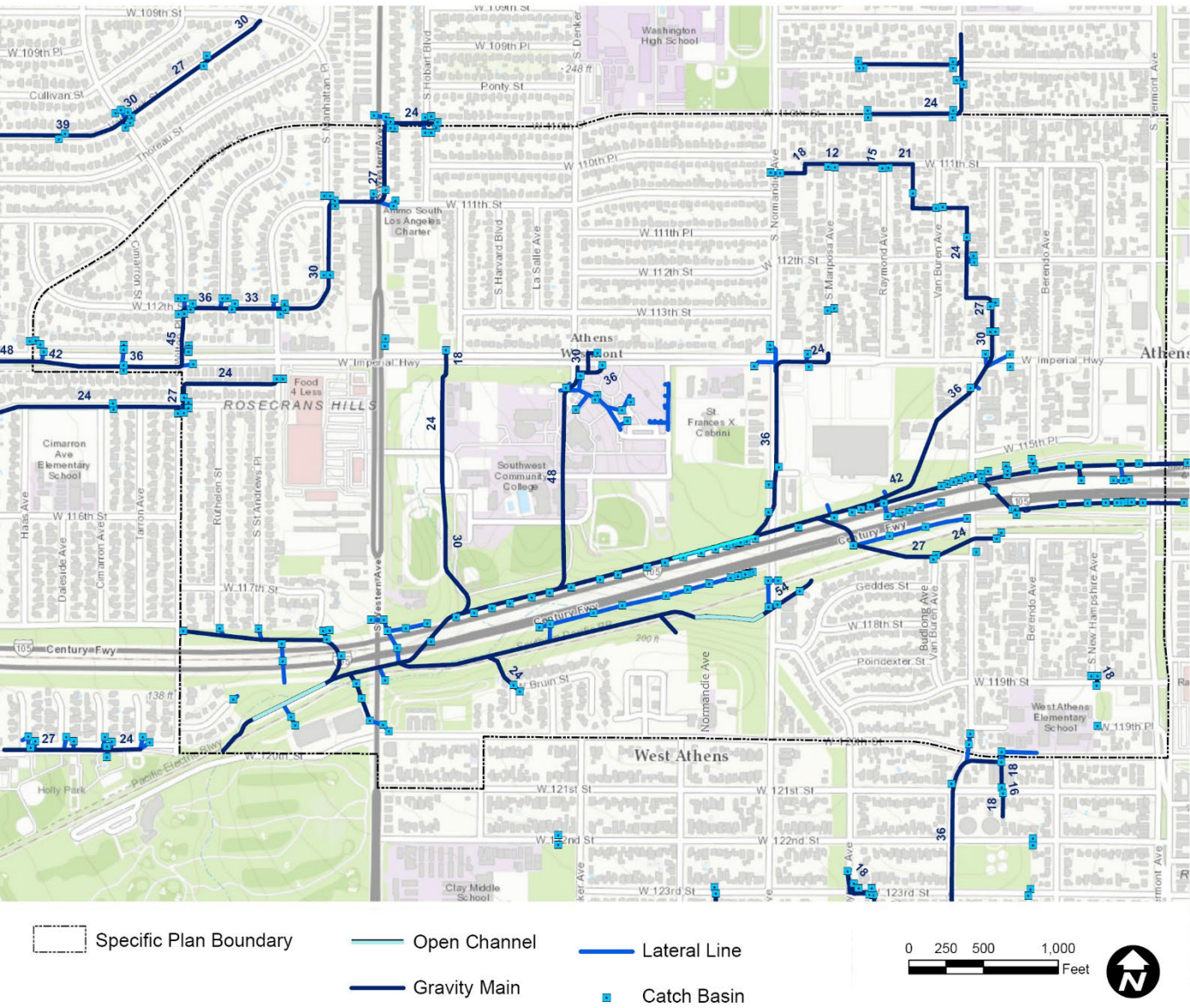
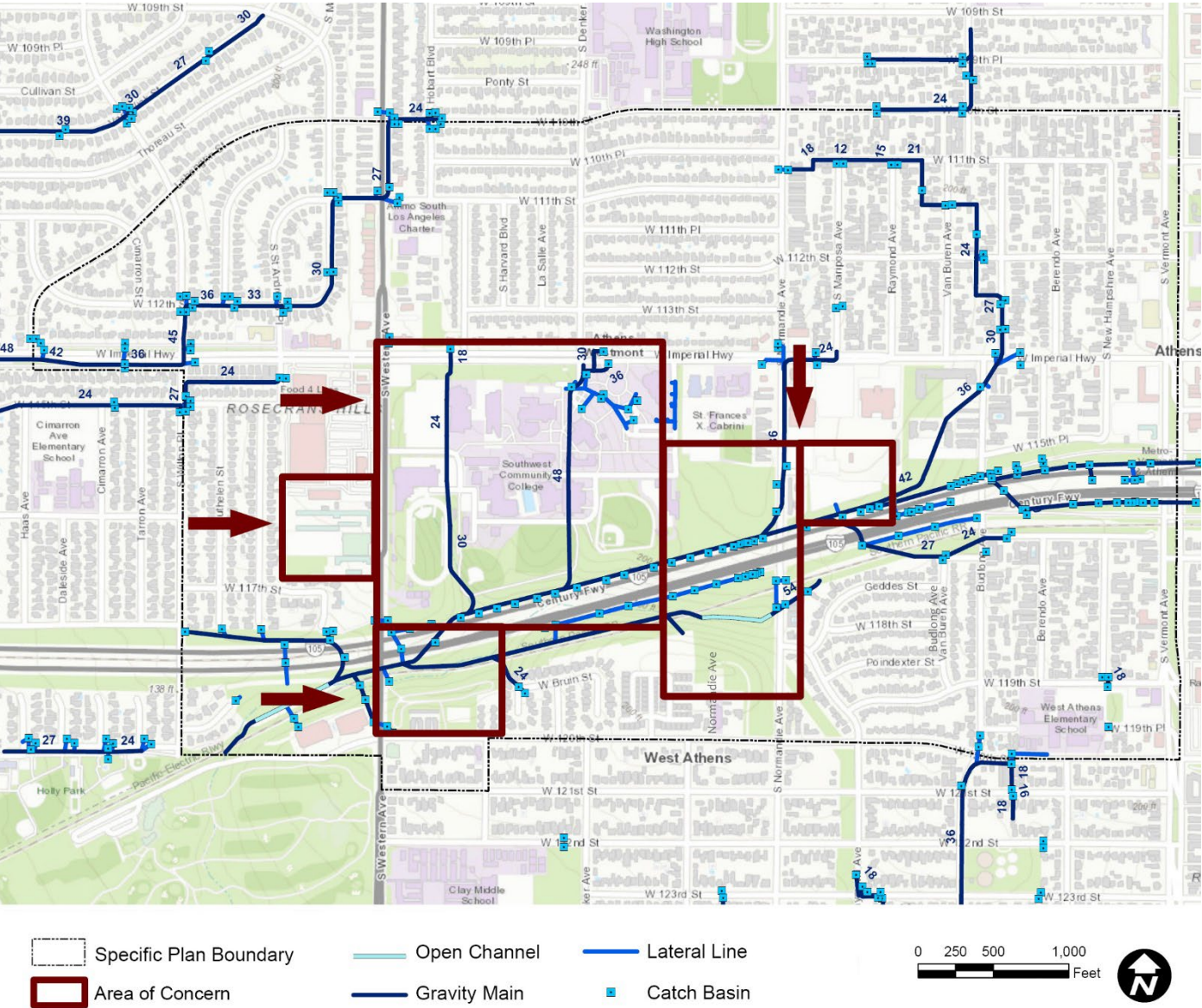




FIGURE 7.7: STORM DRAIN SYSTEM AND AREAS OF CONCERN



## 7.5 GREEN STREETS

As a part of the Specific Plan, consideration should be given to incorporating Green Streets principles to improve the stormwater quality from streets. Stormwater runoff from impervious roadways washes pollutants, such as dirt, oil, grease, toxic chemicals, and trash, into nearby water bodies.

Green Streets feature a variety of stormwater management and landscaping strategies intended to improve water quality and drainage. Some examples include bioswales, sidewalk planters, street trees, and permeable pavements. These amenities improve drainage and the overall quality of stormwater runoff and can help improve the pedestrian environment and overall mobility.

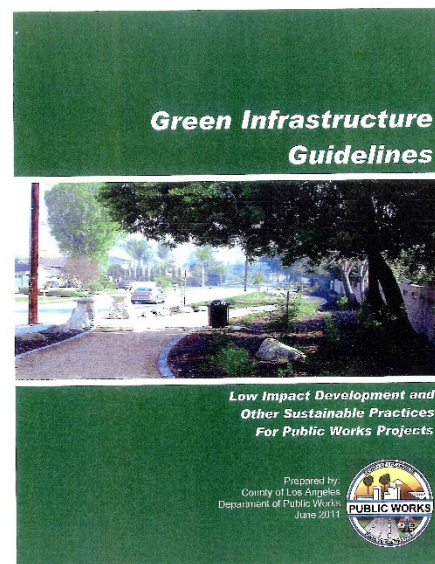
DPW has developed Green Infrastructure Guidelines to guide new construction and reconstruction of road and flood projects. The goal of the guidelines is to incorporate sustainable practices into the design, construction, and operation of DPW's infrastructure. The guidelines provide low-impact development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

All new development in the Specific Plan area shall meet or exceed 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. All new development shall incorporate the following best management practices as identified by the Green Infrastructure Guidelines:

### 7.5.1 PERMEABLE SURFACES

Permeable surfaces shall be incorporated unless demonstrated infeasible to allow infiltration of rainfall and to reduce the total volume of runoff, replenish groundwater, and improve water quality. Some of the guidelines for the application of permeable surfaces based on DPW's Green Infrastructure Guidelines are as follows:

1. Permeable sidewalks shall adhere to existing Public Works standards for sidewalk design.
2. Permeable access roads are not recommended for roadways with high volume of heavy vehicles, as heavy equipment and trucks can damage permeable surfaces.





3. Permeable pavement and underdrain systems for parking lots shall be directed toward LID-type best management practices when needed to achieve the required volume reduction.

## 7.5.2 VEGETATION AND LANDSCAPING



*Example bioswale.*

Vegetation and landscaping elements such as bioswales, vegetated buffers, planter/tree box filters, bioretention, and filter strips maximize available permeable space in an area to reduce runoff rates and pollutant concentrations in stormwater runoff. Some of the guidelines for the application of vegetation and landscaping based on DPW's Green Infrastructure Guidelines are as follows:

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 the slope is between one and six percent.
3. Plant species for vegetates 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 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 Los Angeles County.

Key issues surrounding waste management include larger volumes of waste being 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 Specific Plan area 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 Charter Communications, two separate private utility companies, both provide local and long distance telecommunications services in the Specific Plan area. Charter Communications provides cable and high-speed internet services. Various wireless carriers provide service within the Specific Plan area.



# 08



## CHAPTER 8

# IMPLEMENTATION



## CHAPTER 8 IMPLEMENTATION

### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

Facilitating economic growth within the Specific Plan area 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 area 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 actions are identified for Los Angeles 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 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 and higher concentrations of people experiencing homelessness and high crime rates, as compared to the rest of Los Angeles 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., Food4Less, HD Supply, Baskin Robbins, Burger King, 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, 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 Vermont/Athens Station, future transit expansion would further increase the connectivity with regional employment centers. Metro is exploring transit investment along the Vermont Avenue corridor and extensions of the Green Line to Torrance and LAX on the west and the Norwalk Metrolink station on the east. 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> (Viable Square Feet)	<b>Office</b> (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 image.

## Place-Based Initiatives

**The County's Planning and Public Works departments should prioritize the construction of bicycle, pedestrian, and placemaking infrastructure near the Vermont/Athens Station.** In collaboration with Metro, the County can conduct a first/last mile audit of the station area to identify barriers, the strengths of and other observations from the community the Vermont/Athens station is designed to serve. The analysis on safety, accessibility, transfers and aesthetics captured in the survey will prioritize improvements to the sidewalk, crossings, landscape, bike lanes and other amenities surrounding the station.

Improvements such as safe pedestrian connections between the Station and LASC can have a catalytic impact by facilitating a direct connection between the largest economic and educational anchor with the transit stop. DPW should partner with local nonprofit organizations and community artists to design unique public spaces around the station and at other key nodes.

DPW 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, 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.

**LACDC should promote its Façade Improvement Program to reduce blighted commercial buildings through coordination with landowners.** This grant program is administered through the LACDC 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 the Specific Plan area to engage property owners directly to make them aware of the program and offer technical assistance. Initial façade improvements should be targeted towards

existing street front 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.

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

#### **The LASD 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. The South Los Angeles 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.

#### **DPSS and Los Angeles County Consumer and Business Affairs should build partnerships with LASC and others to expand skills training and job readiness classes on the LASC campus for residents to support community workforce development initiatives.**

In addition to expanding specific educational programming, LASC should provide space to nonprofits, and other groups to provide these services. LASC should partner with the Small Business Concierge 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 Environmental Protective Agency (EPA) 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.

**Los Angeles County Military and Veterans Affairs and the LACDC should partner to establish a "motel initiative" to provide homeless housing and stabilize the neighborhood.** In 2016, the City of Los Angeles launched such a program to convert low-quality motels, which are often correlated with illicit behavior, into housing for homeless veterans. 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 the typical 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.

**The formation of a Community Task Force (CTF) is recommended soon after the adoption of the Specific Plan.** This will help encourage continuing local engagement to carry out the community's vision and goals as expressed in the Specific Plan. The CSLA CTF would be an advisory group that focuses on the preservation and beautification of existing single-family neighborhoods, recommending and maximizing enhancements to ensure the compatibility of new development, and recommending specific mobility improvements within the Specific Plan area. The CSLA CTF may be comprised of local residents, subcommittees and/or members of local community advocacy groups such as the Southwest Community Association and the West Athens-Westmont Task Force.

**DRP should encourage developers to offer universal design features, pursuant to the New Home Universal Design Option Checklist (AB 1400).** California law, section 17959.6 of the Health and Safety Code, requires a builder of new for-sale residential units to provide buyers with a list of specific "universal design features" which make a home safer and easier to use for persons who are aging or frail, or who have certain temporary or permanent activity limitations or disabilities. A developer is not required to provide the listed features during construction or at any other time, unless the developer has offered to provide a feature and the buyer has requested it and agreed to provide payment. DRP can further encourage developers of multifamily housing to incorporate universal design features within a portion of their project.

**TABLE 8.2: POTENTIAL ONGOING ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

Outreach Method	Target Audience	Activities
CTF Meetings	CBOs, Interest Groups, Other Community Groups	Regular attendance at standing meetings with informational presentations to discuss community/neighborhood specific issues, challenges, opportunities and assets
Community Events	CBOs, Faith-based Organizations, Advocacy and Interest Groups, Residents, General Public, Youth, Seniors, Local Businesses	Community presentations to increase awareness and participation in CTF activities
Pop-up Workshops	CBOs, Faith-based Organizations, Advocacy and Interest Groups, Residents, General Public, Youth, Seniors, Local Businesses	Tabling Sessions to meet people where they are through pop-ups at community events, public facilities, parks, campuses, and other locations
Online Engagement	General Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blog to share information and update the public on activities within the neighborhood</li> <li>• List of Events/Outreach Calendar to provide information on upcoming events and track past events</li> <li>• Translated materials to assist non-English speakers</li> <li>• Surveys and Feedback for residents who may not be able to attend in-person to provide input at their convenience</li> <li>• Set up <i>map.social</i> for residents to share local knowledge on landmarks, likes, dislikes, needs within the community, etc.</li> <li>• Use of social media – such as Twitter, Facebook and Next Door</li> <li>• Posting of videos on YouTube</li> <li>• Email notification to interested parties for project updates, such as Mad Mimi</li> <li>• Ethnic media to communicate with non-English speakers</li> </ul>
Youth Engagement	Elementary, Middle and High schools, Parent-Teacher Associations	Arts and Storytelling Contest and Planning Academy to mobilize youth to participate in the planning process and build capacity to help students articulate their vision for the future
College Engagement	LASC	Target LASC to get engaged with local planning issues
Collaboration with Arts Community	Arts Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use methods such as Place It! to identify values and guide community development through visioning</li> <li>• Use art and storytelling to close the communication/knowledge gap with people who are not familiar with planning terms and concepts</li> <li>• Promote community identity and placemaking through oral history, photos, and narratives exhibited in various mediums</li> </ul>



**TABLE 8.3: NEAR-TERM STRATEGIES**

	Responsible Parties	Funding Sources
<b>Place-Based Interventions</b>		
Bicycle, pedestrian, and placemaking improvements	DRP & DPW	Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (CA), Transformative Climate Communities Program (CA), Measure M (Los Angeles County), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (US EPA)
Encourage Use of Façade Improvement Program	LACDC	Façade Improvement Program (Los Angeles County)
Implement Specific Plan design guidelines	DRP	
<b>Programmatic Interventions</b>		
Launch community-driven initiative to improve safety in the Specific Plan area	LASD & DPSS	
Expand skills training and job readiness courses at LASC	Los Angeles County Consumer and Business Affairs	Transformative Climate Communities Program (CA), Innovative Transit Workforce Development Programs (US DOT)
Form Community Task Force (CSLA CTF)	DRP	
Encourage developers to offer universal design features	Developers and Builders	
Establish a homeless housing motel initiative	Los Angeles County Military and Veterans Affairs & LACDC	US Department of Veterans Affairs

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

Along with completing near-term strategies, the County should also focus on a series of place-based and programmatic interventions that will bring additional affordable housing to the Specific Plan area and increase opportunities for the local workforce. 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 land and the shared use of parking at a County lot or facility. Relaxed parking requirements by the County's DRP 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 LACDC, 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 public investment or 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 Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD), 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**

**The County 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 street front retail spaces, these uses can also help to activate the streets increase the college's visibility and help new real estate developments get financing by acting as an anchor tenant. The LACDC 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 changes occur in the neighborhood, 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 105 freeway 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 non-

profit organizations are all eligible applicants for this funding which pays for program operating costs and some student stipends.

The Los Angeles County 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 Small Business Concierge supports small businesses to open locations in unincorporated areas. 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 the Specific Plan area could attract companies which might otherwise locate 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 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 105 freeway.

**The County 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 street front retail space in new affordable housing developments, as part of a general requirement for active street fronts.

While affecting uses within private buildings is mostly out of the County's control, as highly credit-worthy tenants, the County and the LACDC 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 DRP should encourage developers to include space for such uses, and the LACDC 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 NMTC allocation to support project gap financing.

The LACDC 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 1/2 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 LACDC 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 Los Angeles – 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 the Specific Plan area.

**The County, in coordination with Metro, should continue to implement appropriate strategies from Metro's Transit Supportive Planning Toolkit and Green Places Toolkit.** The Transit Supportive Toolkit details specific policies and programs that can be used to promote Transit Oriented Communities (TOC). The Toolkit provides strategies to encourage reduced VMT by increasing transit use and rates of walking and biking. The Toolkit includes a wide range of policy and regulatory tools that have successfully been implemented throughout Southern California and across the State. The Green Places Toolkit provides resources to reimagine and reinvent public spaces. Transit-adjacent projects that facilitate access to Metro Bus and Metro Rail enhance the transit rider experience to and from stations and improve neighborhoods.



**TABLE 8.4: 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	DRP, Los Angeles County Consumer and Business Affairs & LASC	Transformative Climate Communities Program (CA), Innovative Transit Workforce Development Programs (US DOT)
Develop small business incentives	Los Angeles County Consumer and Business Affairs	Business Expansion Loan Program (Los Angeles County), Tax subvention agreements
Encourage a mix of job-providing tenants	DRP & LASC	New Markets Tax Credits, Low Income Housing Tax Credits
Affordable housing development, preservation and rehabilitation and infrastructure near station area	LACDC	Affordable Housing & Sustainable Communities Program (CA)
Establish a land banking and/or land trusting strategy for the neighborhood	LAEDC & LACDC	
Continue to implement appropriate strategies from Metro's Transit Supportive Planning Toolkit and Green Places Toolkit	DRP & DPW	

## 8.3 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.

### 8.3.1 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 in 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 the Specific Plan area, 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 the Specific Plan area, 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 streetlights. There have been no LLADs established by the County for amenities like pedestrian lighting; forming such a district in the Specific Plan area 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.

## **8.3.2 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 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 the Specific Plan area, 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**

Los Angeles County adopted Sections 21.24.340 and 21.24.350 and Sections 21.28.120, 21.28.130, 21.28.140 of the 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" (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.

### **8.3.3 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 \$257 million in AHSC funding was announced in FY 2018-2019; potential projects in the Specific Plan could include the acquisition and rehabilitation of affordable housing, or the conversion of nonresidential structures to residential dwelling units. Affordable housing developers, the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles, and/or LACDC (Redevelopment successor agency) are all eligible applicants.

Projects that can show the Strategic Growth Council that they reduce VMTs 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 the Specific Plan area 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 awarded 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 since 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 the Specific Plan area could include stormwater capture, water reuse, providing new open space, and other green streets measures.

### **Caltrans Active Transportation Program**

The Caltrans 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 the Specific Plan area could include developing new bike- and walkways, including a pedestrian bridge, and adding new landscaping, traffic control devices, and enhanced street lighting.

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.

## **8.3.4 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 the Caltrans 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 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.