

III. Environmental Setting

Section 15125 of the *State CEQA Guidelines* requires that an EIR include a description of the existing environment. This chapter provides a general overview of the environmental setting for the Project. Detailed information on existing conditions is provided for each environmental topic studied in Chapter IV, Environmental Impact Analysis. This chapter also provides an overview of related projects that are considered in evaluating cumulative impacts.

1. Overview of Environmental Setting

a) Regional Setting

The Project Site is located within the Central City North Community Plan area of the City of Los Angeles in Los Angeles County, in an area of the City known as the Arts District (see **Figure II-1, Vicinity and Regional Map**). The Arts District is located on the eastern edge of downtown Los Angeles, adjacent to the Los Angeles River and approximately 13.5 miles from the Pacific Ocean. This area of Downtown has been developed since the early 1900s, and the Arts District encompasses an area that has been transitioning from predominantly industrial warehouses to also include creative spaces, including live/work units, commercial uses (e.g., retail shops, restaurants, and studios), multi-family residential uses, etc.

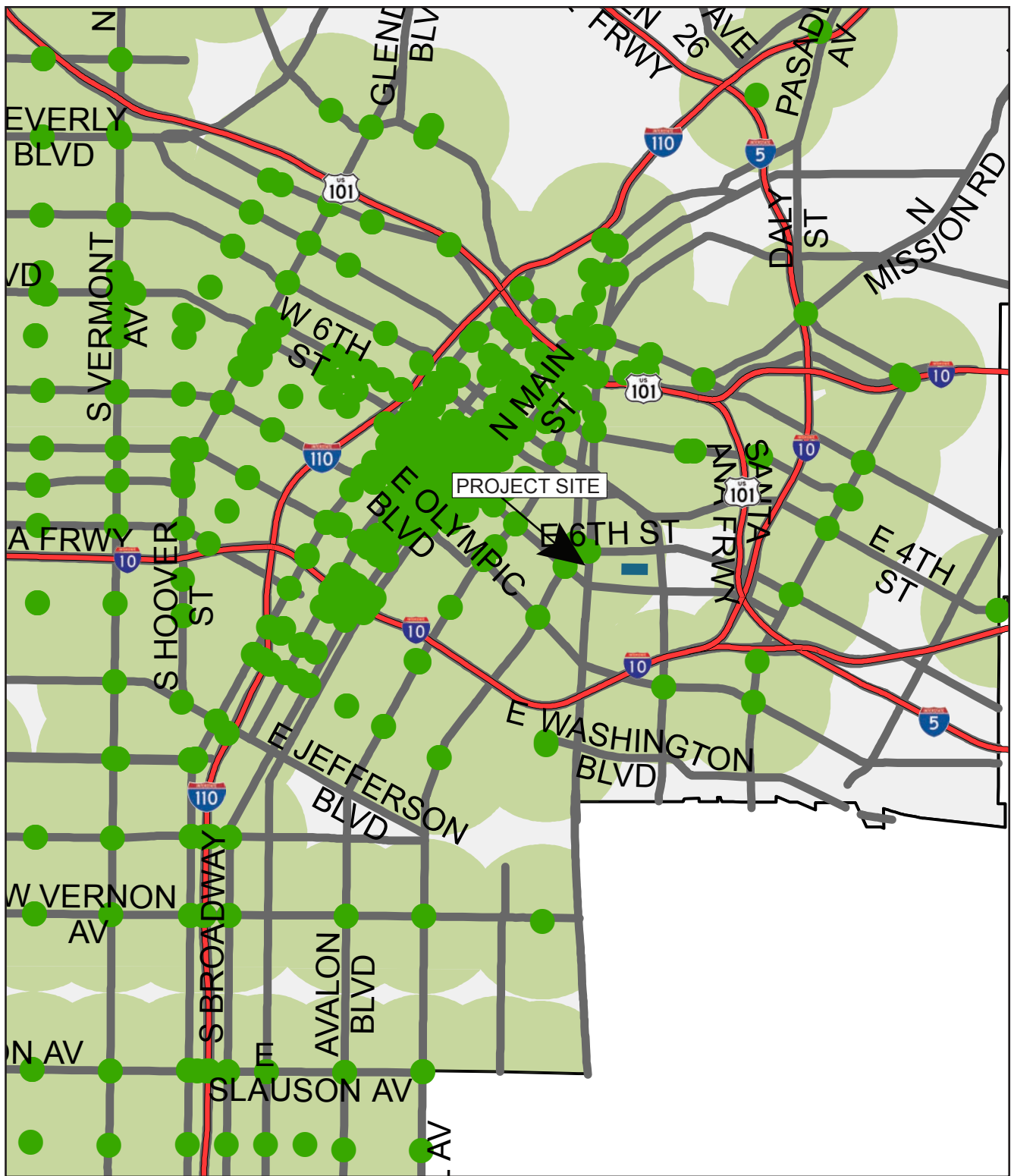
Regional access to the area of the Project Site is provided by the Santa Monica Freeway (I-10) via Alameda Street approximately 0.84-mile to the southwest and the Hollywood Freeway (US-101) via E. 7th Street approximately 0.63-mile miles to the east. The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) provides local bus service in the Project Site area. Metro runs multiple bus lines, including local and rapid lines, along E. 6th Street, E. 7th Street, Alameda Street, and Santa Fe Avenue in the area.

Specifically, the Project Site area is served by the following lines:

- Metro Local Line 18, which travels from Downtown Los Angeles/Montebello to Downtown Los Angeles/Wilshire/Western Station (via 6th Street & Whittier Boulevard). This line travels along 6th Street near the Project Site.
- Metro Local Line 53, which travels from Downtown Los Angeles to California State University Dominguez Hills (via Central Avenue). This line travels along Central Avenue near the Project Site.

- Metro Local Line 60, which travels from Downtown Los Angeles to Artesia Station (via Long Beach Boulevard). This line travels along 7th Street near the Project Site.
- Metro Local Line 62, which travels from Downtown Los Angeles to Hawaiian Gardens (via Telegraph Road). This line travels along 6th Street near the Project Site.
- Metro Local Line 66, which travels from Downtown Los Angeles/Montebello to Downtown Los Angeles/Wilshire Center (via 8th Street & Olympic Boulevard). This line travels along Olympic Boulevard near the Project Site.
- Metro Rapid 720, which travels from Downtown Los Angeles/Commerce to Downtown Los Angeles/Santa Monica (via Wilshire Boulevard & Whittier Boulevard). This line travels along 6th Street near the Project Site.
- Metro Rapid 760, which travels from Downtown Los Angeles to Long Beach Boulevard Station (via Long Beach Boulevard & Pacific Boulevard). This line travels along 7th Street near the Project Site.

Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21099 (added by Senate Bill [SB] 743), the Project Site is located within a Transit Priority Area (TPA) (see also City Zoning Information File No. 2452 and **Figure III-1, Project Site and Transit Priority Area**). A TPA is defined to be an area within one-half mile of a major transit stop that is existing or planned. Section 21064.3 of the Public Resources Code defines a “major transit stop” as a site containing a rail transit station, a ferry terminal served by either a bus or rail transit service, or the intersection of two or more major bus routes with frequency of service internal of 15 minutes or less during the morning and afternoon peak commute periods. In addition to addressing how transportation impacts are evaluated under CEQA, SB 743 limits the extent to which aesthetics and parking are defined as impacts under CEQA. Specifically, Section 21099(d)(1) of the Public Resources Code states that a project’s aesthetic and parking impacts shall not be considered a significant impact on the environment if (1) the project is a residential, mixed-use residential, or employment center project, and (2) the project is located on an infill site within a TPA.



- Project Site
- Major Stop
- Freeway
- Transit Priority Area
- City Limits



Source: City of Los Angeles, March 2016.

Figure III-1
Project Site and Transit Priority Area

b) On-Site Conditions

The Project Site consists of eight contiguous lots associated with Los Angeles County Assessor Parcel Number 5164-020-021, comprising approximately 1.03 acres. The Project Site is bounded by Mateo Street to the west, Imperial Street to the east, a one-story warehouse building that has been converted into a small grocery/market use, associated surface parking lot and Jesse Street to the north, and single-story industrial and commercial buildings, associated surface parking lots, and E. 7th Street to the south. Mateo Street and Imperial Street are both two-lane thoroughfares with two-way traffic (see **Figure II-1, Vicinity and Regional Map**). The Project Site is relatively flat and currently developed with an industrial building constructed in 1978 as a warehouse and office building that occupies approximately 26,740 square feet of floor area, and an associated surface parking lot. The building is rectangular in plan and one story in height with a flat roof covered in rolled asphalt with a concrete parapet. The exterior of the building consists of concrete material. The main entrance is located on the south elevation near the southwest corner, and is recessed within an arched opening, which is covered by a metal security door. There are two secondary entrances on the south elevation with metal slab doors. There are also secondary entrances on the east and west elevations. The warehouse fronting Mateo Street and Imperial Street is built to the lot line. Security gates at Mateo Street and Imperial Street restrict vehicular and pedestrian access to the Project Site. Nearly the entire Project Site is hardscaped with concrete and asphalt. There are two planters in the southwestern portion of the Project Site with a Hollywood Juniper in one planter and a Yucca tree in the other planter. There is one Silk Oak street tree along Mateo Street and five Crape Myrtle street trees along Imperial Street adjacent to the Project Site boundaries. **Figures II-2 and II-3, Views of the Project Site**, show the existing built conditions of the Project Site.

c) Surrounding Land Uses

The Project Site is located within the Arts District, on the eastern portion of downtown Los Angeles and in an area that has been developed since the early 1900s. The Arts District is located to the east of the Little Tokyo District and the Central City East/Toy District, west of the Los Angeles River, south of the US-101, and north of the I-10. The Arts District encompasses an area that has been transitioning from predominantly industrial warehouses to also include creative spaces, including live/work units, commercial uses (e.g., retail shops, restaurants, and studios), multi-family residential, etc. The Project Site has frontage along Mateo Street and Imperial Street, which are lined with industrial, commercial, and live/work uses.

The land uses within the Property's general vicinity are characterized by a mix of low- to medium-intensity industrial, commercial, and live/work uses, which vary widely in building

style and period of construction (i.e., 1920s through the 1990s). In general, the properties in the area are zoned M3 allowing heavy industrial and manufacturing uses, and have General Plan land use designations of Heavy Manufacturing/Industrial. The surrounding properties include industrial, commercial retail, studio, bar, café, restaurant, low-rise and mid-rise adaptive reuse buildings with live/work components, and surface parking lots.

The six-story mixed-use Toy Factory Lofts and the seven-story mixed-use Biscuit Company Lofts are located across Mateo Street to the west. To the north of the Project Site is a grocery store, an adapted reuse of a warehouse structure, and the store's associated surface parking lot. Immediately to the south of the Project Site is a warehouse use that is being renovated for creative office space and surface parking lot as well as structures fronting E. 7th Street that have been adaptively reused for office and retail uses.

While the majority of properties in the surrounding area are designated and zoned heavy industrial and manufacturing, the implementation of the Adaptive Reuse Ordinance has allowed for residential uses within the live/work components, with neighborhood commercial uses to complement the residential population. Additionally, a new seven-story mixed-use building with 320 joint living and work quarters and 20,000 square feet of ground floor retail space was constructed, known as the Amp Lofts, on a parcel directly east of the Project Site, across Imperial Street. **Figures II-4 through II-6, Views of the Surrounding Uses**, in **Section II, Project Description**, of this Draft EIR, show the existing built conditions around the Project Site.

d) Land Use Plans

Regional plans that are applicable to the Project Site include: California Green Building Standards Code, Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) 2008 Regional Comprehensive Plan, SCAG's 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS), South Coast Air Quality Management District's 2016 Air Quality Management Plan, and Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's 2010 Congestion Management Plan for Los Angeles County.

City land use plans applicable to the Project Site include: the City of Los Angeles General Plan, the Central City North Community Plan, the Central Industrial Redevelopment Project Area, Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles, the City of Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) (particularly Chapter 1, General Provisions and Zoning, also known as the City of Los Angeles Planning and Zoning Code), the East Los Angeles State Enterprise Zone, the Central City Parking District, the River Improvement Overlay District, and the Walkability Checklist, and the Citywide Design Guidelines.

2. Related Projects

Sections 15126 and 15130 of the *State CEQA Guidelines* require that EIRs consider the significant environmental effects of a project as well as “cumulative impacts.” Cumulative impacts are two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts (*State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15355).

As set forth in Section 15130 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, the determination of cumulative impacts is generally a two-step process. The first step is to determine whether or not the combined effects from the proposed project and related projects, as identified below, would result in a potentially significant cumulative impact. If the answer is no, then the EIR only briefly needs to indicate why the cumulative impact is not significant and is not discussed in further detail in the EIR. If the answer is yes, then the analysis proceeds to the second step, which is to determine whether the proposed project’s incremental effects are cumulatively considerable. Section 15065(a)(3) of the *State CEQA Guidelines* defines “cumulatively considerable” to mean that the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects. In accordance with *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15130(a)(3), a project’s contribution is less than cumulatively considerable if the project is required to implement or fund its fair share of a mitigation measure or measures designed to alleviate the cumulative impact. In addition, the lead agency is required to identify facts and analyses supporting its conclusion that the contribution will be rendered less than cumulatively considerable.

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b) further provides that the discussion of cumulative impacts reflect “the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, but the discussion need not provide as great of detail as is provided for the effects attributable to the project alone.” Rather, the discussion is to “be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness and should focus on the cumulative impact to which the identified other projects contribute.”

The *State CEQA Guidelines* (Section 15130(b)(1)(A) and (B)) explain that either of the following methods are necessary to provide an adequate discussion of significant cumulative impacts:

- A list of past, present, and reasonably anticipated future projects producing related or cumulative impacts; or
- A summary of projections contained in an adopted local, regional, or statewide plan, or related planning document, that describes or evaluates conditions contributing to the cumulative effect.

Cumulative study areas are defined based on an analysis of the geographical scope relevant to each particular environmental issue. Therefore, the cumulative study area for each individual environmental impact issue may vary. For example, a cumulative land use impact generally may only affect the compatibility of uses within the vicinity of a project site, while a cumulative air quality impact may affect the entire air basin.

The analyses in this EIR are primarily based on the List Method for evaluating cumulative effects. A list of 20 projects (Related Projects) has been prepared (see **Table III-1, List of Related Projects**) which includes approved, under construction, proposed, or reasonably foreseeable projects within the vicinity of the Project that could produce a related or cumulative impact on the local environment when considered in conjunction with the Project. The list of Related Projects is based on information provided by the Department of City Planning and City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation, and includes all projects identified within a 0.5-mile radius of the Project Site.

The list of Related Projects is intended to demonstrate the reasonably anticipated magnitude of development that may occur in the vicinity of the Project during this period based on projects currently on file. Analysis of the Project and the Related Projects is conservative because it is unlikely that all of the Related Projects would be developed due to various circumstances such as changes in economic conditions or delays in obtaining entitlements; nevertheless, the analysis of future conditions in 2023 (the Project's buildout year) assumes that all of the Related Projects are also fully built out by 2023. This buildout year is assumed for all cumulative impact analyses in this Draft EIR. The Related Projects are shown on **Figure III-2, Location of Related Projects**.

In addition, the Central City and Central City North Community Plan Update, known as the DTLA 2040 Plan, is currently being prepared by the Department of City Planning. Only the initial period of any projected growth associated with the plan would overlap with the Project's future baseline forecast, as the Project is anticipated to be completed by 2023, well before the Community Plan Update's horizon year of 2040. As such, it can be assumed that the projected growth reflected by the list of cumulative development projects located within the Central City North Community Plan area, itself a conservative assumption as discussed above, would account for any overlapping growth that may be assumed by the Community Plan Update upon its adoption.

**Table III-1
List of Related Projects**

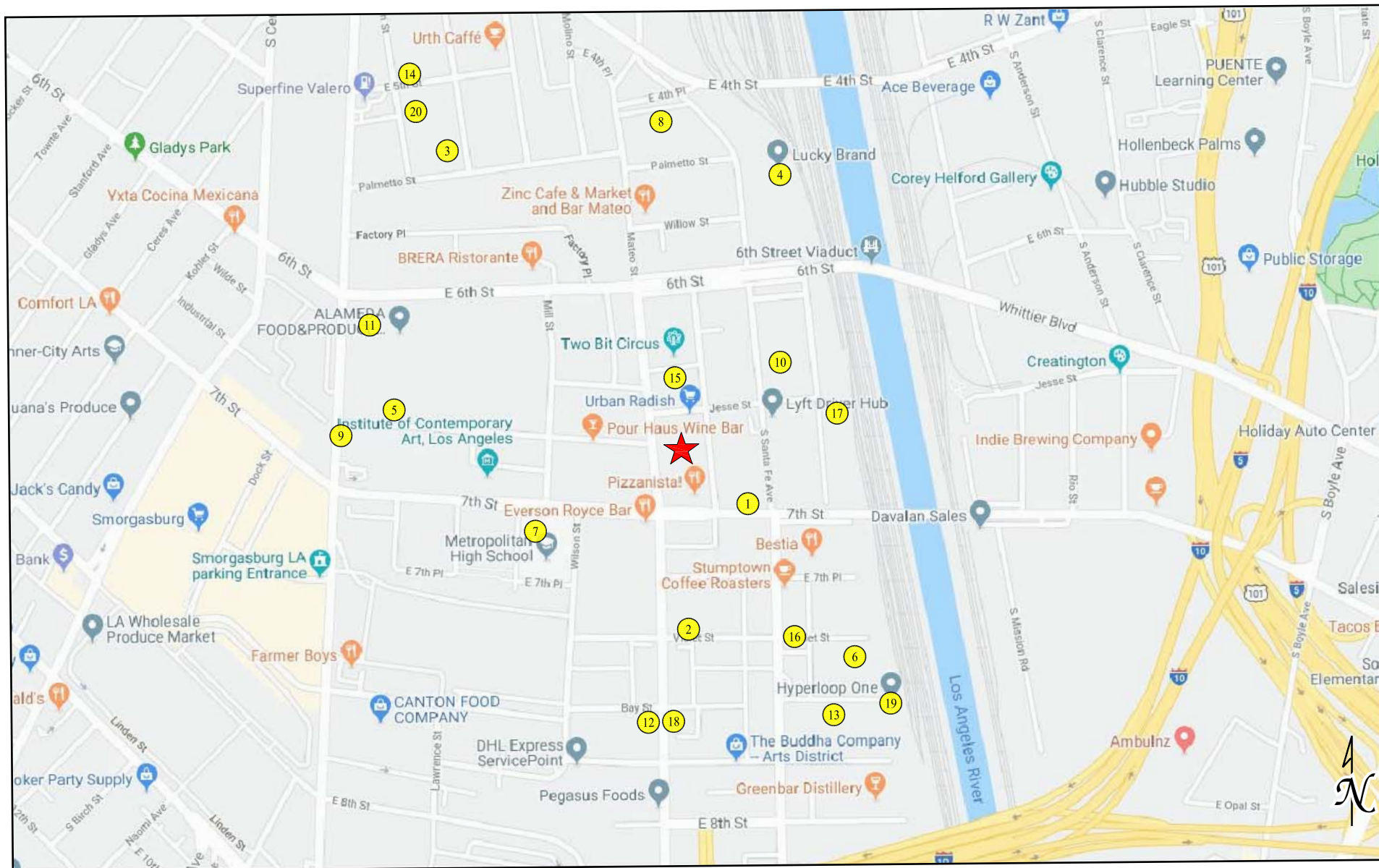
ID	Status	Address	Land Use	Size
1	Under Construction	2051 E. 7 th Street 695 S. Santa Fe Avenue	Apartments Retail Restaurant	320 du 15,000 sf 5,000 sf
2	Proposed	826 S. Mateo Street	Apartments Retail Restaurant	90 du 11,000 sf 5,600 sf
3	Proposed	527 S. Colyton Street 1147 E. Palmetto Street	Apartments Retail Production Space	275 du 11,375 sf 11,375 sf
4	Proposed	540 Santa Fe Avenue	Office	89,825 sf
5	Approved	1525 E. Industrial Street	Apartments Creative Office Retail Restaurant	328 du 27,300 sf 6,400 sf 5,700 sf
6	Proposed	2130 E. Violet Street	Office Retail Restaurant	94,000 sf 3,500 sf 4,000 sf
7	Approved	1800 E. 7th Street	Apartments Retail Office Restaurant	122 du 3,245 sf 2,700 sf 4,605 sf
8	Under Construction	520 S. Mateo Street	Apartments Retail Office Restaurant Museum	600 du 15,000 sf 110,000 sf 15,000 sf 10,000 sf
9	Approved	668 S. Alameda Street 1562 Industrial Street	Live-Work Apartments Live-Work Office Specialty Retail Office Restaurant Supermarket	475 du 25,200 sf 17,500 sf 7,900 sf 16,300 sf 15,300 sf
10	Under Construction	640 S. Santa Fe Avenue	Office Retail Restaurant	91,185 sf 9,430 sf 6,550 sf
11	Proposed	1206-1278 E. 6th Street 640 S. Alameda Street	Apartments Condominiums Hotel Quality Restaurant High-Turnover Restaurant Retail Office Art Museum Warehouse School	1,305 du 431 du 514 rooms 22,639 sf 22,639 sf 82,332 sf 253,514 sf 22,429 sf 316,632 sf 300 students
12	Proposed	1005 S. Mateo Street	Industrial Park	94,849 sf

**Table III-1
List of Related Projects**

ID	Status	Address	Land Use	Size
13	Approved	2110 Bay Street	Apartments Retail Creative Office	110 du 43,657 sf 113,350 sf
14	Proposed	1101-1129 E. 5th Street 445 S. Colyton Street	Apartments Retail Hotel Quality Restaurant High-Turnover Restaurant Fast-Food Restaurant Art Gallery Design Incubator	129 du 26,979 sf 113 rooms 15,197 sf 13,634 sf 2,888 sf 10,341 sf 3,430 sf
15	Proposed	641 S. Imperial Street	Apartments Retail Office	140 du 7,375 sf 7,375 sf
16	Proposed	2117-2143 E. Violet Street	Apartments Retail Office	347 du 21,858 sf 187,374 sf
17	Proposed	670 S. Mesquit Street	Apartments Retail Hotel Restaurant Event Space Gym Grocery Creative Office	308 du 79,240 sf 236 rooms 89,576 sf 93,617 sf 62,148 sf 56,912 sf 944,055 sf
18	Proposed	1024 Mateo Street	Live-Work Apartments Live-Work Office Retail Office Restaurant	106 du 2,250 sf 13,979 sf 92,740 sf 13,126 sf
19	Proposed	2159 E. Bay Street	Office Meeting Space Quality Restaurant High-Turnover Restaurant	202,954 sf 3,235 sf 10,860 sf 10,860 sf
20	Proposed	1100 E. 5 th Street	Live-Work Apartments Live-Work Office Office Retail Restaurant	220 du 4,350 sf 17,810 sf 19,609 sf 9,129 sf

Table Notes: sf = square-feet; du = dwelling units

Source: Linscott, Law & Greenspan, Engineers, Transportation Assessment Report, 676 Mateo Street Project, City of Los Angeles, California, February 18, 2020.



MAP SOURCE: GOOGLE MAPS

★ PROJECT SITE

○ RELATED PROJECT

Source: Linscott, Law, & Greenspan, January 2020.

Figure III-2
Location of Related Projects