

3.0 Environmental Setting



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This section of the Draft EIR provides an overview of the existing regional and local setting in which the Project Site is located, and a brief description of the existing conditions at the Project Site. Detailed environmental setting information is provided in each of the environmental issue analyses found in Section 4.0 (Environmental Impact Analysis) of this Draft EIR. In addition, Section 2.0, Project Description, of this Draft EIR, provides additional information regarding existing conditions at the Project Site.

3.1 Regional Setting

The 1.277-acre Project Site is located in the City of Beverly Hills, which is located approximately six miles inland from the coastline of the Pacific Ocean. The Project Site is located at 456 and 468 North Rodeo Drive, 461 through 465 North Beverly Drive, and 449, 451, and 453 North Beverly Drive in the Business Triangle of the City of Beverly Hills, California (a total of seven lots). The Project Site also includes a portion of the existing north-south alley located east of North Rodeo Drive and west of North Beverly Drive as well as subterranean encroachments into the public right-of-way for subsurface utility improvements and parking spaces.¹ Figure 2-1 in Section 2.0, Project Description, of this Draft EIR, shows the location of the Project Site in the region.

A grid system of generally east-west and north-south roadways, including arterials, collectors, and local streets, provides vehicular access throughout the City. Major roadways in the City of Beverly Hills include North Santa Monica Boulevard, Wilshire Boulevard, Sunset Boulevard, Whittier Drive, Beverly Drive, West Olympic Boulevard, and La Cienega Boulevard. The freeways closest to the Project Site are Interstate 405 (I-405) and Interstate 10 (I-10). I-405 is located approximately 2.8 miles southwest of the Project Site and I-10 is located approximately 2.6 miles south of the Project Site.

¹ As provided in Section 2.0, Project Description, of this Draft EIR, Encroachment Permits are requested as part of the Project to allow: (i) subsurface utility vaults to encroach into the public right-of-way; (ii) parking spaces and aisles to extend under the public sidewalk from ten (10) feet below grade and out no farther than to the line of the existing curb; (iii) installation and maintenance of landscaped parkways and special paving in the public right of way along North Rodeo Drive, South Santa Monica Boulevard and North Beverly Drive.

3.2 Local Setting

As shown in Figure 2.0-1 in Section 2.0, Project Description, of this Draft EIR, the Project Site is bounded by South Santa Monica Boulevard to the north, North Beverly Drive to the east, commercial buildings to the south, and by North Rodeo Drive to the west. As illustrated in Figure 2.0-2 in Section 2.0, Project Description, of this Draft EIR, an existing alley bisects the Project Site. The alley runs north-south through the Project Site and currently is accessible from South Santa Monica Boulevard.

The Project Site is currently occupied by commercial and institutional uses comprising approximately 56,787 square feet. Specifically, 456 North Rodeo Drive is developed with a two-story, 6,895-square-foot commercial structure and nine surface parking spaces, 468 North Rodeo Drive is currently developed with a two-story, 20,265-square-foot commercial structure and six surface parking spaces, 461–465 North Beverly Drive is currently developed with a two-story, 23,351-square-foot institutional use and five surface and 45 underground parking spaces, and 449, 451, and 453 North Beverly Drive is developed with a one-story, 6,276-square-foot commercial structure.

The existing structure at 456 North Rodeo Drive was constructed in 1948. The building has been occupied by a variety of commercial tenants over the years, including electronics retailers, art galleries, and clothing and accessories boutiques. The building at 456 North Rodeo Drive is currently occupied by luxury retailer Celine. The existing structure at 468 North Rodeo Drive was constructed in 1997 as a flagship retail store for the clothing brand Tommy Hilfiger Corp., and later served as a flagship retail store for the Brooks Brothers clothing brand. The existing structure at 468 North Rodeo Drive is currently vacant. The existing structure at 461–465 North Beverly Drive was constructed in 1994-1996 as an extensive remodel of two previously-existing structures. The building formerly housed The Paley Center for Media and is currently leased to an art exhibitor. The existing structure at 449, 451, and 453 North Beverly Drive was constructed in 1921 and appears to have been significantly expanded around 1926. This building has been used for retail uses and is currently leased for art storage.

The Project Site has a General Plan land use designation of Low Density General Commercial and is zoned C-3 Commercial. Uses permitted in the C-3 zone include a wide range of commercial uses such as restaurants, hotels, parking garages, offices and retail. Project consistency with the General Plan and existing Project Site zoning is discussed in Section 4.7, Land Use and Planning, of this Draft EIR.

3.3 Baseline and Cumulative Project Setting

3.3.1 EIR Baseline

Section 15125(a) of the CEQA Guidelines states that an EIR “must include a description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the Project.” Section 15125(a)(1) states that generally the lead agency should describe these conditions, as they exist at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is published. Section 15125(a) states that this approach “normally constitute[s] the baseline physical conditions by which a Lead Agency determines whether an impact is significant.”

This Draft EIR evaluates impacts against existing or baseline conditions, which are generally conditions existing at the time of the release of the NOP (November 2020) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15125(e). For certain issue areas (including air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, and transportation), changes to baseline conditions would occur as a result of background population growth, urbanization, and volume of average daily traffic increases in the region, resulting in increases in air emissions, noise, and traffic volumes that would occur by 2026 (Project buildout year), with or without the Project. Thus, for these issue areas, a comparison to a future 2026 baseline is provided.

On March 4, 2020, the Governor proclaimed a State of Emergency in California as a result of the threat of the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). On March 19, 2020, the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health issued a Safer at Home Order for the County of Los Angeles. The County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health Order, subsequently titled “Reopening Safer at Work and in the Community for the Control of COVID-19” has been revised as recently as December 6, 2020, with the new Revised Temporary Targeted Safer at Home Health Officer Order for Control of COVID-19: Tier 1 Substantial Surge Updated Response which placed new restrictions on gatherings and businesses. On March 15, 2020, the City Manager of the City of Beverly Hills declared a local emergency in response to the ongoing public health concerns surrounding COVID-19 and the Beverly Hills City Council ratified the declaration on March 17, 2020. State and local public health orders regarding COVID-19 have undergone numerous revisions since the onset of the pandemic and future revisions are likely to occur as circumstances continue to evolve. The analysis in this Draft EIR considers the impact of COVID-19 and the State of Emergency at the time of NOP publication. Future changes to local and State orders related to COVID-19 are not anticipated to impact the results of the analysis contained in this Draft EIR.

The threat of COVID-19, as well as the subsequent State, County, and local proclamations and orders, including revisions to the previously mentioned State and County orders, have resulted in temporary changes to the existing economic and physical

conditions in California and Los Angeles County regionally and in Beverly Hills locally. Temporary changes to existing environmental conditions have included reduced vehicle traffic and associated noise and pollutant emissions, and reduced electricity consumption. In addition, the timing and likelihood of cumulative development and regional buildout assumptions may be affected during or after the threat of COVID-19. Where appropriate, the analysis in this Draft EIR includes adjustments to baseline, where possible, to account for the temporary change in activity caused by COVID-19 and reflect pre-State of Emergency conditions, as detailed in the Methodology subsections of each environmental impact analysis. These include: Section 4.1, Air Quality; Section 4.6, Greenhouse Gas Emissions; Section 4.8, Noise; and Section 4.9, Transportation, of this Draft EIR.

The magnitude and duration of the State of Emergency and associated State, County, and local orders, or future orders related to the threat of COVID-19 cannot be ascertained. Accordingly, while some adjustments to baseline have been made where possible as described above to reflect pre-State of Emergency conditions, the effect of COVID-19 on future environmental conditions is currently speculative as it is unknown how and when the future phases of the pandemic will unfold. CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(d)(3) states that: “An indirect physical change is to be considered only if that change is a reasonably foreseeable impact which may be caused by the Project. A change which is speculative or unlikely to occur is not reasonably foreseeable.” Furthermore, CEQA Guidelines Section 15145 states that: “If, after thorough investigation, a [L]ead [A]gency finds that a particular impact is too speculative for evaluation, the agency should note its conclusion and terminate discussion of the impact.” It would be speculative for the EIR to assume what changes might result from COVID-19 or the subsequent State and County proclamations and orders. Therefore, this topic is discussed only where appropriate in this Draft EIR.

3.3.2 Cumulative Development

The California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (Section 15130(a)) require that an Environmental Impact Report discuss the cumulative impacts of a project when the project’s incremental effect is “cumulatively considerable.” As set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15065(a)(3), “cumulatively considerable” means 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.”

As set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15130, 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 need only briefly 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. CEQA Guidelines Section 15065(a)(3) 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 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.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b) further provides that the discussion of cumulative impacts should 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."

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b) states that one of the following two elements is necessary to provide an adequate discussion of significant cumulative impacts:

- (A) A list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency; or*
- (B) 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. Such plans may include: a general plan, regional transportation plan, or plans for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. A summary of projections may also be contained in an adopted or certified prior environmental document for such a plan. Such projections may be supplemented with additional information such as a regional modeling program. Any such document shall be referenced and made available to the public at a location specified by the lead agency.*

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 in the vicinity of a project site, while a cumulative air quality impact may affect the entire South Coast Air Basin. The

specific boundaries and the projected growth within those boundaries for the cumulative study area of each environmental issue are identified in the applicable environmental issue section in Section 4.0, Environmental Impact Analysis, of this Draft EIR.

A list of proposed development projects in the vicinity of the Project Site that could affect conditions in the Project area (e.g., by adding traffic and/or generating population increases) was prepared based on information obtained from the City of Beverly Hills. A total of 47 potential related development projects have been identified in the vicinity of the Project Site for inclusion in the cumulative impact analysis for this EIR. These related projects are in varying stages of the approval/entitlement/development process and reflect the diverse range of land uses in the vicinity of the Project Site, including commercial, institutional, and residential uses. In particular, projects at 100 North Crescent Drive, 250 North Crescent Drive, 140 South Lasky Drive, 370 North Rodeo Drive, and 400-408 N. Rodeo Drive are located in close proximity to the Project Site and/or along the same major arterials as the Project Site and may have construction schedules that overlap with that of the Project. In addition, construction of the Metro Westside D Line (formerly Purple Line) Rodeo Station North Portal project, an extension of the D Line subway and construction of a new belowground station that will be located approximately 0.4 mile from the Project Site, is planned to commence in early 2022. The potential related development projects listed in Table 3.0-1 on page 3.0-7 are considered in the cumulative analyses in Section 4.0, Environmental Impact Analysis. Table 3.0-1 identifies the location of each related project along with the types of land uses. The locations of the related projects are shown in Figure 3.0-1 on page 3.0-11. It is noted that some of the related projects may not be built out by 2026 (i.e., the Project buildout year), may never be built, or may be approved and built at reduced densities. To provide a conservative forecast, the future baseline forecast assumes that the related projects are fully built out by 2026, the anticipated buildout year of the Project.

**Table 3.0-1
Related Projects**

No.	Project Name	Description	Unit/Area
City of Beverly Hills Related Projects			
1	100 North Crescent Drive	Restaurant	4,330 sf
		Screening Room	2,489 sf (11 sf net decrease)
		Office	154,336 sf (50,801 sf net increase)
2	250 North Crescent Drive	Residential	8 du (12,400 sf)
3	154–168 North La Peer Drive	Condominiums	16 du (10 du net increase)
		Residential	39,084 sf
4	140 South Lasky Drive	Hotel	36,760 sf (22,135 sf net increase) 66 rm (12 rm net increase)
		Restaurant	1,845 sf (898 sf indoor and 947 sf outdoor)
5	457 North Oakhurst Drive	Condominiums	6 du (2 du net increase)
6	9212 Olympic Boulevard	Retail/Restaurant	6,900 sf
		Office	13,344 sf
7	9120 Olympic Boulevard	School (Expansion)	80,719 sf (26,457 sf net increase)
8	9230 Olympic Boulevard	Restaurant	1,359 sf
		Office	16,804 sf (9,231 sf net increase)
9	425 North Palm Drive	Multi-Family Residential	20 du (2 du net increase)
10	340 South Rexford	Condominiums	3 du
11	370 North Rodeo Drive	Retail	15,250 sf (5,663 sf net increase)
12	400–408 N. Rodeo Drive	Retail	29,767 sf (1,639 sf net increase)
13	9220 N. Santa Monica Boulevard	Office	114,202 sf
14	9900–9908 S. Santa Monica Boulevard	Condominiums	25 du
		Commercial	13,036 sf
15	8600 Wilshire Boulevard	Residential	18 du
		Retail	6,355 sf
		Public Use	3,412 sf

**Table 3.0-1 (Continued)
Related Projects**

No.	Project Name	Description	Unit/Area
16	8633 Wilshire Boulevard	Office	25,565 sf
17	9000 Wilshire Boulevard	Office (change in use from Retail)	31,702 sf (26,882 sf net increase)
18	9111 Wilshire Boulevard	Hotel (change in use from Office)	112,400 sf (0 sf net change)
19	9145 Wilshire Boulevard	Religious Institution (change in use from Bank/Office)	8,269 sf (0 sf net change)
20	9200 Wilshire Boulevard	Residential	54 du
		Commercial	14,000 sf
21	9596 Wilshire Boulevard	Commercial	48,374 sf
22	9900 Wilshire Boulevard	Condominiums	193 du
		Restaurant/Retail	16,057 sf
		Ballrooms/Conference Rooms	7,942 sf
		Ancillary Uses	18,826 sf
23	9876 Wilshire Blvd (PHASE II—Condominium Building and Conference Center)	Condominiums	140 du
		Staff Residential	10 du
		Conference Center/ Meeting Room	37,409 sf
		Landscaped Gardens	157,843 sf
24	9850, 9876, 9900 and 9988 Wilshire Boulevard.	Hotel	72,697 sf (94,137 sf net decrease) 78 rm (139 rm net decrease)
		Residential	340 du (1,138,038 sf)
		Staff Residential	30 du
		Conference Center	37,562 sf
		Other (Amenity/Support)	127,324 sf
		Service Station	(3,521 sf to be removed)
City of Los Angeles Related Projects			
25	2025 S Ave of the Stars	Condominiums	193 du
		Office	117,947 sf
		Retail	93,814 sf
		Other	32,503 sf (85,114 sf net decrease)
26	10250 W Santa Monica Blvd	Retail	73,008 sf
27	1950 S Ave of the Stars	Office	725,830 sf

**Table 3.0-1 (Continued)
Related Projects**

No.	Project Name	Description	Unit/Area
28	888 S Devon Ave	Apartments	32 du
29	10306 W Santa Monica Blvd	Apartments	116 du
30	10400 W Santa Monica Blvd	Apartments	121 du
City of West Hollywood Related Projects			
31	8713 Beverly	Multi-Family Residential	30 du
		Retail	6,000 sf
		Office	3,000 sf
		Gallery	1,000 sf
32	8816 Beverly	Restaurant	22,000 sf
		Retail	25,000 sf
		Medical Office	77,000 sf
		Research and Development	9,000 sf
33	8899 Beverly	Multi-Family Residential	12 du
		Condominiums	69 du
		Retail	20,000 sf
		Restaurant	4,000 sf
		Office	11,000 sf
34	1120 Larrabee	Multi-Family Residential	22 du
35	417 Robertson	Retail	8,000 sf
36	645 Robertson	Retail	18,000 sf
		Restaurant	33,000 sf
		Hotel	241 rm
		Design Showroom	10,000 sf
		Bar	4,000 sf
37	9001 Santa Monica	Retail	10,000 sf
		Restaurant	10,000 sf
38A	9040 Santa Monica (Approved)	Multi-Family Residential	76 du
		Retail	73,000 sf
		Office	137,000 sf
		Restaurant	8,000 sf
38B	9040 Santa Monica (Proposed)	Multi-Family Residential	41 du
		Retail	57,000 sf
		Office	245,000 sf
		Restaurant	8,000 sf

Table 3.0-1 (Continued)
Related Projects

No.	Project Name	Description	Unit/Area
39	8920 Sunset	Retail	10,000 sf
		Restaurant	2,000 sf
		Office	46,000 sf
		Museum	2,000 sf
		Arts Club	7 members
40	8850 Sunset	Multi-Family Residential	41 du
		Restaurant	29,000 sf
		Hotel	115 rm
		Night Club	5,000 sf
41	9034 Sunset	Multi-Family Residential	10 du
		Restaurant	11,000 sf
		Hotel	237 rm
42	910 Wetherly	Multi-Family Residential	93 du
43	8650 Melrose	Multi-Family Residential	7 du
		Retail	15,000 sf
44	923 Palm	Multi-Family Residential	49 du
45	8555 Santa Monica	Multi-Family Residential	123 du
		Retail	15,000 sf
		Restaurant	4,000 sf
		Office	7,000 sf
		Personal Services	4,000 sf
46	8430 Sunset	Multi-Family Residential	125 du
		Retail	35,000 sf
47	8497 Sunset	Restaurant	10,000 sf
		Office	12,000 sf
<hr/> <div><div>du = dwelling units</div><div>rm = rooms</div><div>sf = square feet</div><div>Source: City of Beverly Hills, 2021.</div></div>			

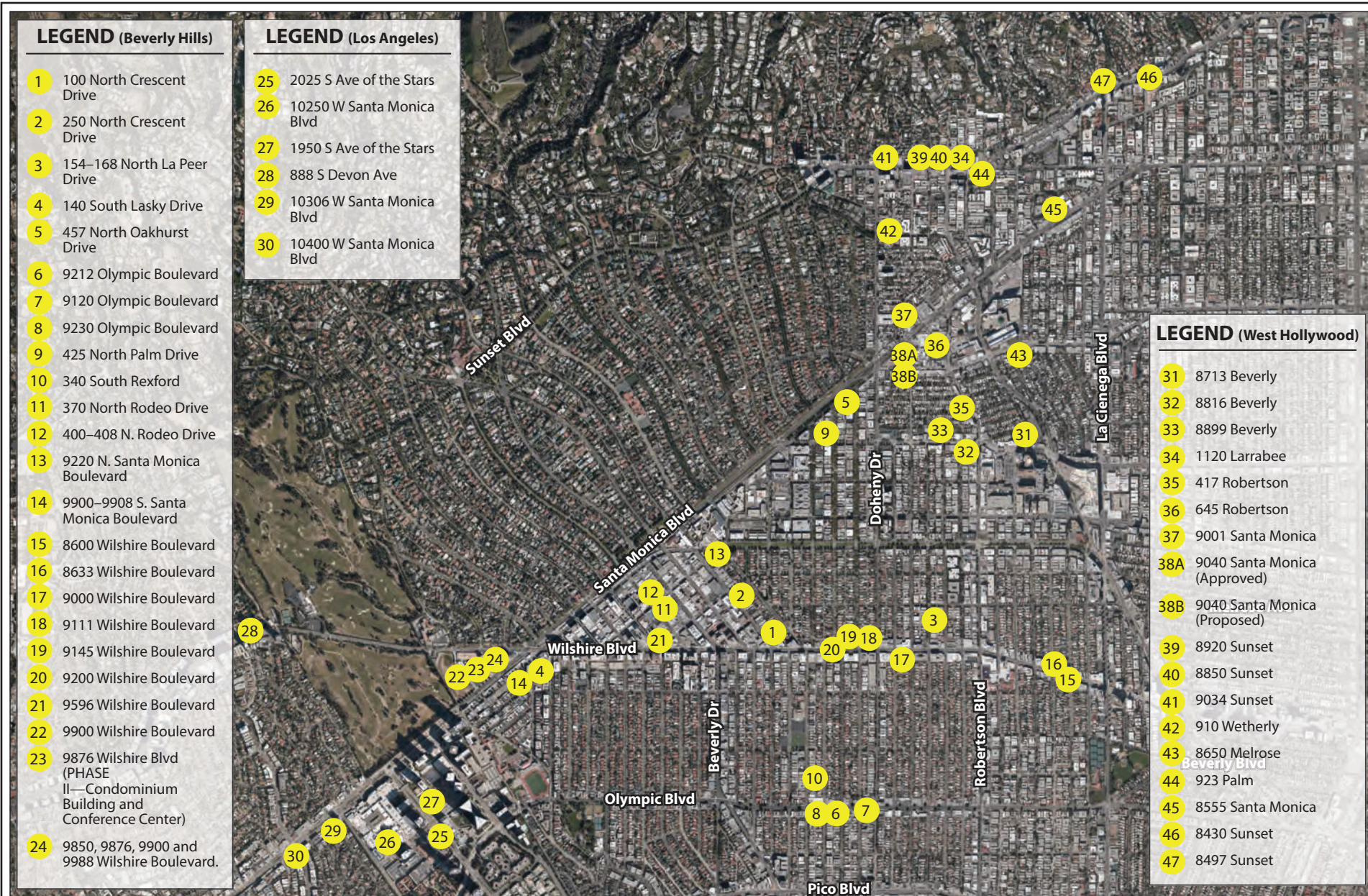


Figure 3.0-1
Related Project Location Map