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 1.2-miles to the south and the Hollywood Freeway (US-101) via 7th Street approximately 0.9-mile mile 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 6th Street, Central Avenue, and 7th Street 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.

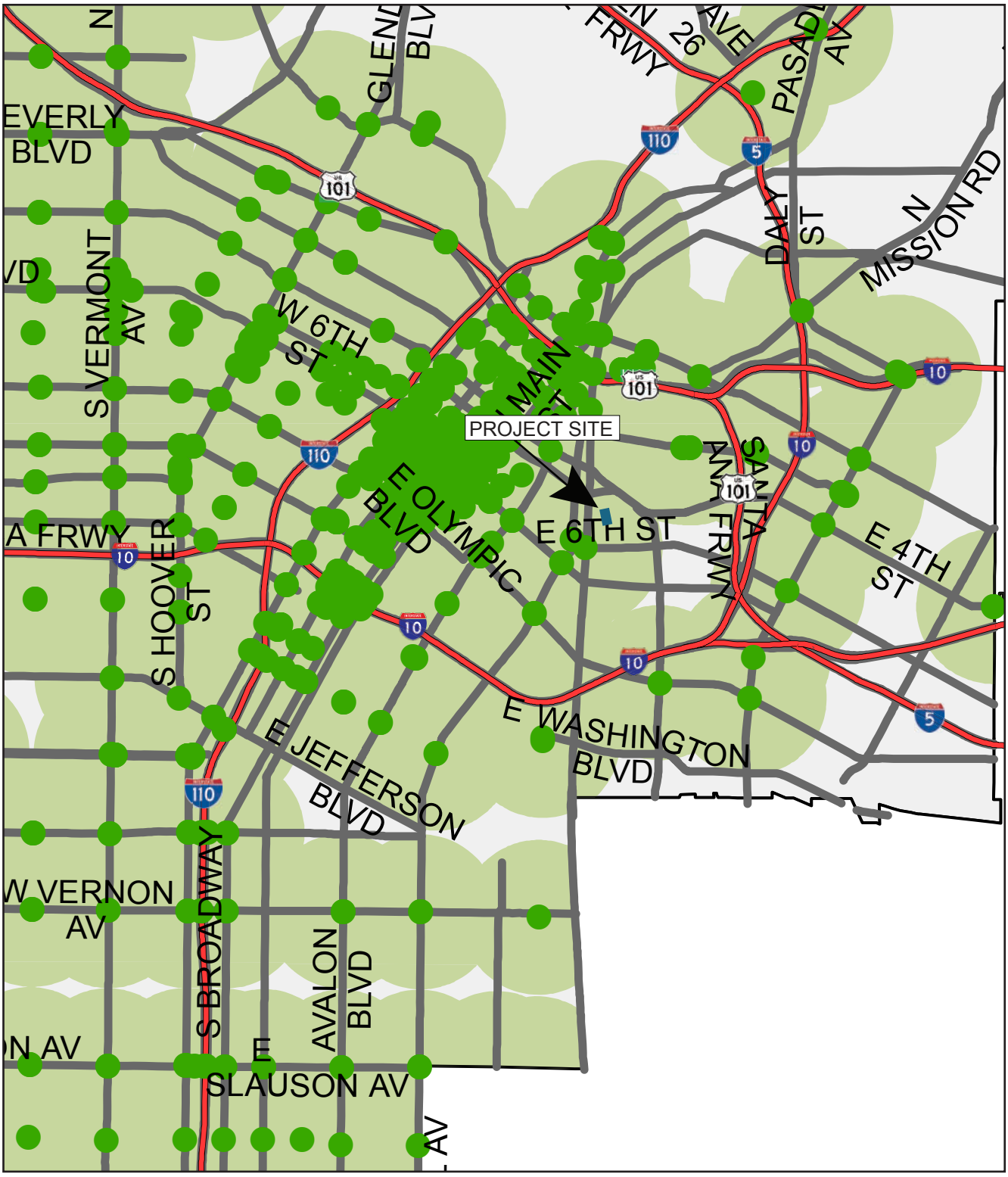
- Metro Rapid 720, which travels from Downtown Los Angeles/Commerce to Downtown Los Angeles/Santa Monica (via Wilshire Boulevard & Whittier Boulevard). This line travels along 6th Street near the Project Site.
- Metro Rapid 760, which travels from Downtown Los Angeles to Long Beach Boulevard Station (via Long Beach Boulevard & Pacific Boulevard). This line travels along 7th Street near the Project Site.
- MBL Line 40, which travels from the city of Whitter and Downtown Los Angeles (primarily via Beverly Boulevard, 4th Street and 3rd Street). This line travels along 4th Street near the Project Site.
- MBL Line 90 Express, which travels from the city of Whittier and Downtown Los Angeles (primarily via Beverly Boulevard, State Route 60, US-101, 4th Street and 3rd Street). This line travels along 4th Street near the Project Site.
- LADOT DASH Route A, which travels from the Arts District and Little Tokyo to the Financial District and City West (via 1st Street and Figueroa Street). This line travels along Alameda Street, Palmetto Street, and Seaton Street near the Project Site.

Additionally, the Little Tokyo/Arts District Metro L line (formerly Gold Line) Light Rail Station is located approximately 0.6-mile to the north of 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 interval 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.

b) On-Site Conditions

The Project Site consists of seven contiguous lots associated with Los Angeles County Assessor Parcel Numbers 5163-024-009 and 5163-024-014, comprising approximately 1.2 acres. The Project Site is bounded by 5th Street to the north, Seaton Street to the west, a paved surface lot to the south, and one- and four-story warehouse buildings and surface parking lot to the east. 5th Street and Seaton Street are both two-lane thoroughfares with two-way traffic (see **Figure II-1,**



Source: City of Los Angeles, March 2016.

Figure III-1
Project Site and Transit Priority Area

Vicinity and Regional Map). The Project Site is relatively flat and currently developed with three vacant single-story industrial warehouses that occupy approximately 35,445 square feet of floor area, and an associated surface parking lot. Nearly the entire site is paved by concrete and asphalt except for an approximately 450-square-foot planter consisting of four queen palm trees and an avocado tree along a portion of the eastern façade of the warehouse fronting 5th Street. Warehouses fronting 5th Street and Seaton Street are built to the lot line, and vehicular access to the Project Site is restricted by security gates at 5th Street and Seaton Street. **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 5th Street and Seaton 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 Project Site is bounded by industrial warehousing that has been converted to commercial, non-industrial uses to the north across 5th Street; the Wisdome.LA Immersive Art Park and Palmetto Street to the south; industrial warehousing, a surface parking lot, and Colyton Street to the east; and commercial uses and industrial warehousing to the west across Seaton Street.

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. The Arts District Park and a 5-story multi-family residential use are located approximately 365 and 590 feet to the east, respectively, at the corner of 5th Street and S. Hewitt 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 2020-2045 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 Plan), 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 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 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 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 reflects "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 17 projects (Related Projects) has been prepared (see **Table III-1, List of Related Projects**) which includes recently completed, 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 the buildout of the Project 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 2025 (the Project's buildout year) assumes that all of the Related Projects are also fully built out by 2025. 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 2025, 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.

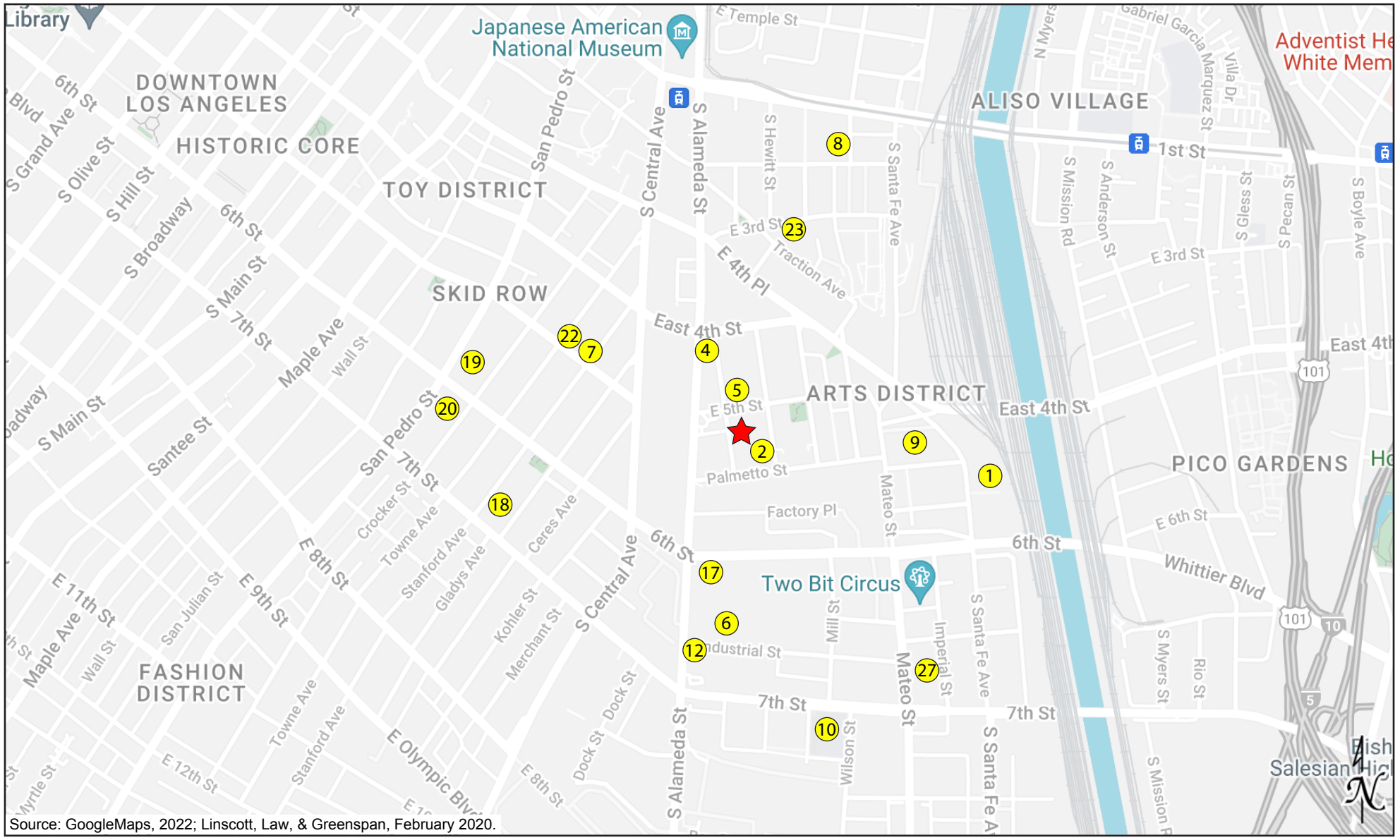
Table III-1
List of Related Projects

ID	Status	Address	Land Use	Size
1	Completed	540 S. Santa Fe Avenue	Office	89,825 sf
2	Proposed	527 S. Colyton Street 1147 E. Palmetto Street	Apartments Retail Production Space	310 du 11,375 sf 11,375 sf
4	Approved	400 S. Alameda Street	Hotel Retail Restaurant	66 rooms 840 sf 2,130 sf
5	Approved	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
6	Approved	1525 E. Industrial Street	Apartments Creative Office Retail Restaurant	328 du 27,300 sf 6,400 sf 5,700 sf
7	Proposed	719 E. 5th Street	Apartments Retail	160 du 7,500 sf
8	Approved	929 E. 2nd Street	Retail Private Retail Private Event Space Private Drinking Place Private Office Private Health Club Private Movie Theater	36,955 sf 1,024 sf 8,157 sf 10,784 sf 45,759 sf 6,378 sf 49 seats
9	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
10	Approved	1800 E. 7th Street	Apartments Retail Office Restaurant	122 du 3,245 sf 2,700 sf 4,605 sf
12	Under Construction	668 S. Alameda Street	Live-Work Apartments	475 du

Table III-1
List of Related Projects

ID	Status	Address	Land Use	Size
		1562 Industrial Street	Live-Work Office	25,200 sf
			Specialty Retail	17,500 sf
			Office	7,900 sf
			Restaurant	16,300 sf
			Supermarket	15,300 sf
17	Proposed	1206-1278 E. 6th Street 640 S. Alameda Street	Apartments	1,305 du
			Condominiums	431 du
			Hotel	514 rooms
			Quality Restaurant	22,639 sf
			High-Turnover Restaurant	22,639 sf
			Retail	82,332 sf
			Office	253,514 sf
			Art Museum	22,429 sf
			Warehouse	316,632 sf
			School	300 students
18	Approved	656 S. Stanford Avenue	Apartments	82 du
19	Under Construction	554 S. San Pedro Street	Affordable Housing	378 du
			Apartments	4 du
			Retail	1,758 sf
			Office	4,410 sf
			Flexible Space	5,932 sf
20	Approved	600 S. San Pedro Street	Affordable Housing	298 du
			Apartments	5 du
			Retail	3,136 sf
			Office	16,773 sf
22	Approved	713 E. 5th Street	Affordable Housing	51 du
23	Completed	810 E. 3rd Street	Live-Work Apartments	4 du
			Drinking Place	3,047 sf
			Quality Restaurant	285 sf
			High-Turnover Restaurant	209 sf
			Retail	6,171 sf
27	Proposed	676 Mateo Street	Live-Work Apartments	185 du
			Live-Work Office	3,900 sf
			Retail	8,375 sf
			Restaurant	15,005 sf

Table Notes: sf = square-feet; du = dwelling units
*Source: Linscott, Law & Greenspan, Engineers, Transportation Assessment Report, 1100 East 5th Street Project, City of Los Angeles, California, April 21, 2020. See **Appendix L.1** of this Draft EIR.*



Source: GoogleMaps, 2022; Linscott, Law, & Greenspan, February 2020.

★ PROJECT SITE

(#) RELATED PROJECT LOCATION

Figure III-2
Location of Related Projects