

# **Appendix E**

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## **Cultural and Historic Resource Evaluation**



# Los Angeles River Valley Bikeway and Greenway Project

## Cultural Resources Assessment Report

*prepared for*

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**August 5, 2021**



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Please cite this report as follows:

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*2021 Los Angeles River Valley Bikeway and Greenway Project, Vanalden Avenue to Balboa Boulevard- Cultural Resources Assessment, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California*. Rincon Consultants Project No. 15-02547. Report on file at the South Central Coastal Information Center, California State University, Fullerton

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# Executive Summary

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## Purpose and Scope

Rincon Consultants, Inc. (Rincon) was retained by Terry A. Hayes & Associates to prepare a cultural resources study for the Vanalden Avenue to Balboa Boulevard section of the Los Angeles River Valley Bikeway and Greenway Project (proposed project), located in the City and County of Los Angeles, California. The proposed project will require Clean Water Act permits from the US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) and is therefore considered a federal undertaking subject to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) with the ACOE as the lead federal agency. A cultural resources study in compliance with the NHPA was produced separately from this study. This cultural resources study was prepared to support the project's compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The proposed project will involve the installation of bicycle and pedestrian pathways along the banks of the Los Angeles River (LA River). Features associated with the bike and pedestrian paths to be constructed as part of the proposed project include undercrossings, street-end parks, and necessary fencing, lighting, drainage and landscaping. The proposed project will additionally construct on-street improvements aimed at increasing connectivity of the bicycle and pedestrian pathways to surrounding communities. On-street improvements, to be implemented in existing rights-of-ways (ROW), include minor activities such as the restriping of existing roadways and the addition of wayfinding signage, mini-traffic circles, and crosswalk enhancements.

The following cultural resources study was prepared to identify historical resources that have the potential to be impacted by the proposed project. The study included a cultural resources records search, Native American outreach, archival and background research, and an intensive-level archaeological and built environment pedestrian survey summarized in this report.

## Dates of Investigation

Rincon conducted an archaeological and built environment field survey of the project site on August 6, 2018. Background and archival research in support of this study were completed in January and February 2019. Subsequent tribal consultation and report updates were completed in July 2021.

## Summary of Findings

A search of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) identified 44 previously conducted cultural resources studies and eight previously recorded cultural resources within a 1-mile radius of the project site. None of the studies or the previously recorded cultural resources identified by the records search are located within the project site.

A search of the Sacred Lands File (SLF) at the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) returned negative results. Rincon subsequently conducted outreach efforts with local Native American groups to obtain information on known Native American resources that may be located in the project site or its vicinity. As of February 6, 2019, six responses had been received from local Native American groups including the Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians, San Manuel



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Band of Mission Indians, Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation, Barbareno/Ventureno Band of Mission Indians, Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians, and the Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians.

An updated SLF search was requested in July of 2021 as the project transitioned from a Categorical Exemption to a Mitigated Negative Declaration. The SLF results were returned on July 21, 2021 indicating positive finding.

Under AB 52, consultation efforts were initiated with the requesting tribes by the City. Only the FTBMI responded to the City requesting consultation. On July 19, 2021, City representatives held a meeting with Mr. Jairo Avila of the FTBMI. During the consultation meetings, it was revealed that the Los Angeles River is considered a Tribal Cultural Resource by the FTBMI and other Los Angeles area tribes which would likely lead to positive SLF searches for any projects in proximity to the river. Mr. Avila acknowledged that the project occurs within a highly disturbed area and that monitoring may not be required during construction and that standard unanticipated discovery measures were to be implemented for the project. Mr. Avila requested that the unanticipated discovery measure be amended to reflect that the consulting tribes (i.e., FTBMI) be notified of along with an archaeologist of unanticipated discoveries to assist in the identification and significance evaluations of any such resources. The City agreed to this request and the measure was amended to include these changes.

An archaeological resources survey was conducted of the project site. Visibility of native ground surface was low (less than 5 percent), as most of the project site has been developed with urban infrastructure and the LA River channel. Inspection of isolated areas of exposed ground surface by Rincon's archaeologist indicates extensive disturbance of surficial deposits. Given the developed nature of the project site and its proximity to the LA River, it is likely that subsurface sediments have been extensively disturbed. This finding suggests that there is a relatively low potential for substantial intact cultural deposits to be present in the project site.

A built environment study, inclusive of background and site-specific archival research and a pedestrian survey of the project site, was completed by a Rincon Architectural Historian. A review of National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), and City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) listings indicated that there are no listed built environment resources located within the project site.

A review of the applicable SurveyLA findings (Encino-Tarzana and Reseda-West Van Nuys Community Plan Areas) indicated that portions of two historical resources, Reseda Park and Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area, are located within the project site. Additionally, although not previously evaluated, SurveyLA identified three pedestrian bridges within the project site. Reseda Park, Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area, and the pedestrian bridges, at Vanalden and Amigo Avenues and within Reseda Park, were evaluated as part of this study. Concurring with SurveyLA's findings, this study found that Reseda Park and Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area appear eligible for listing in the NRHP, CRHR, and as City of Los Angeles HCMs, making them resources for the purposed of CEQA. The Vanalden Avenue, Amigo Avenue, and Reseda Park Pedestrian Bridges were also evaluated for this study; they appear ineligible for historic designation and are not considered resources for the purposes of CEQA.

Six vehicular bridges cross over the LA River in the area of the project site. While bridges cross at Wilbur Avenue, Reseda Boulevard, Victory Boulevard, Lindley Avenue, White Oak Avenue, and Balboa Boulevard, only that at White Oak Avenue (Bridge Number 53-1054) is included within the project site. A review of the findings of a comprehensive bridge survey completed and maintained by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) indicated that all bridges in the area of

the project site, including the White Oak Avenue Bridge, were evaluated by Caltrans and found to be ineligible for listing in the NRHP (Caltrans 2018). Although not formally evaluated, this study noted that the White Oak Avenue additionally appears ineligible for the CRHR and as a City of Los Angeles HCM. It is not a resource for the purposes of CEQA.

Rincon conducted an intensive-level built environment pedestrian survey of the project site on August 6, 2018. The built environment survey identified two built environment resources within the project site, the previously mentioned White Oak Avenue Bridge and portions of the LA River. The LA River is a 51-mile long system that was channelized under the direction of the ACOE between 1939 and 1959. It represents a primary component of the Los Angeles County Drainage Area (LACDA) Project, an undertaking that included the construction of permanent flood control measures throughout the Los Angeles Basin to regulate seasonal floodwaters historically impacting the area. As a component of the LACDA Project, the channelization of the LA River represents a major feat of engineering that has had broad impacts on the development of the Los Angeles Metropolitan Area. The LA River has not been formally recorded and evaluated in its entirety; however recent projects completed for the ACOE have presumed the LA River eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A and C.

The proposed project site encompasses the western half (from Reseda to Balboa Boulevard) of part six and the eastern two-thirds of part seven (from Vanalden Avenue to Reseda Boulevard) of the LA River. For the purposes of this study, it is presumed that the portions of River included in the project site are eligible resources contributing to the (presumed) Potential Los Angeles River Historic District. The (presumed) Potential LA River Historic District appears eligible for the NRHP, the CRHR, and as a City of Los Angeles HCM under Criteria A/1/1 and C/3/3/. Although eligible as contributing resources, this study found that the portions of the River within the project site appear ineligible for listing in the NRHP, CRHR, or for local historic designation as individual resources.

## Recommendations

The cultural resources records search, Native American outreach, and archaeological field survey did not identify any prehistoric or historic archaeological resources within or adjacent to the project site. Known historical resources located with the project site include portions of the LA River, Reseda Park, and Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area. Analysis of the available project information indicates that these historical resources will not be impacted by the proposed project. Rincon recommends a finding of ***less than significant impact to historical and archaeological resources*** under CEQA. No further cultural resources work is recommended.

Rincon presents the following best management practices in case of the unanticipated discovery of cultural resources during project development. The project is also required to adhere to existing regulations regarding the unanticipated discovery of human remains, detailed below.

## Unanticipated Discovery of Cultural Resources

If cultural resources are encountered during ground-disturbing activities, work in the immediate area shall halt and an archaeologist meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for archaeology (National Park Service 1983) shall be contacted immediately to evaluate the find. The consulting tribes (including the Ferndandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians) shall also be notified of the find to assist in the evaluation. Following evaluation, an appropriate treatment should be developed to ensure that archaeological resources are not impacted.

## Unanticipated Discovery of Human Remains

The discovery of human remains is always a possibility during ground disturbing activities. If human remains are found, the State of California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. In the event of an unanticipated discovery of human remains, the County Coroner must be notified immediately. If the human remains are determined to be prehistoric, the Coroner will notify the NAHC, which will determine and notify a Most Likely Descendant (MLD). The MLD shall complete the inspection of the site within 48 hours of notification and may recommend scientific removal and nondestructive analysis of human remains and items associated with Native American burials.

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# 1 Introduction

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Rincon was retained to conduct a Cultural Resources Assessment Report for the construction of the Los Angeles River Valley Bikeway and Greenway Project, Vanalden Avenue to Balboa Boulevard. The proposed project traverses the western San Fernando Valley neighborhoods of Reseda and Encino in the City and County of Los Angeles, California (Figure 1). This assessment included a cultural resources records search, Native American outreach, an archaeological and built environment pedestrian survey of the project site, an assessment of impacts, and the preparation of this report following the California Office of Historic Preservation's *Archaeological Resource Management Report: Recommended Contents and Format* (1990). The study has been prepared in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act and applicable local regulations.

## 1.1 Project Description

The proposed project includes the construction from Vanalden Avenue to Balboa Boulevard of a bicycle and pedestrian pathway that will eventually extend approximately 30 linear miles along the LA River (Figure 2). The proposed path extensions for Vanalden Avenue to White Oak Avenue and White Oak Avenue to Balboa Boulevard include the installation of bicycle and pedestrian pathways along the banks of approximately three miles of the LA River. Associated with the bicycle and pedestrian paths, the project will additionally install small-scale elements such as gateways, signage, lightening, drinking fountains, benches and seating, gabion retaining walls, bioswale plantings, landscaping, and staging areas.

To facilitate further mobility among pedestrians and bicyclists, on-street improvements outside the River corridor will be necessary. On-street improvements include the installation of wayfinding signage, signalized crosswalks, and mini traffic circles, in addition to re-stripping existing roadways. Mini traffic circles are proposed to be constructed at Kittridge Streets intersection with Vanalden, Balcom, and Etiwanda Avenues in addition to the Zelzah Avenue and Erwin Street Intersection. Bikeway links, separating bikeway and pedestrian paths from vehicular traffic, grade-separated undercrossings are to be constructed at Wilbur Avenue, Reseda Boulevard, Victory Boulevard, Lindley Avenue, and White Oak Avenue and at the Metro Orange Line Busway. Existing pedestrian bridges, at Vanalden, Amigo, and Etiwanda Avenues are to be maintained, and a new bridge would be constructed over Caballero Creek. Four street end river parks, ranging in size from approximately 700 to 1600 square feet, are to be developed where Vanalden, Amigo, Etiwanda, and Zelzah Avenues meet the banks of the River. Parks will establish habitat planting and rest areas, and connect pedestrians and bicyclists traveling from either direction on the LA River.

Disturbance associated with the construction of the bicycle path and other project elements is expected to be less than 10 feet in depth. Deeper excavations, which may extend up to 80 feet, are anticipated for the construction of the bridge across Caballero Creek. The vertical height throughout much of the project area will be limited to the surface of the existing paved service road. However, visual elements including fencing, up to 5 feet in height, retaining walls of a maximum of 10 feet in height and pedestrian lightening extending up to 12 feet in height will be installed at various points along the bike path route.

## 1.2 Project Site Description & Location

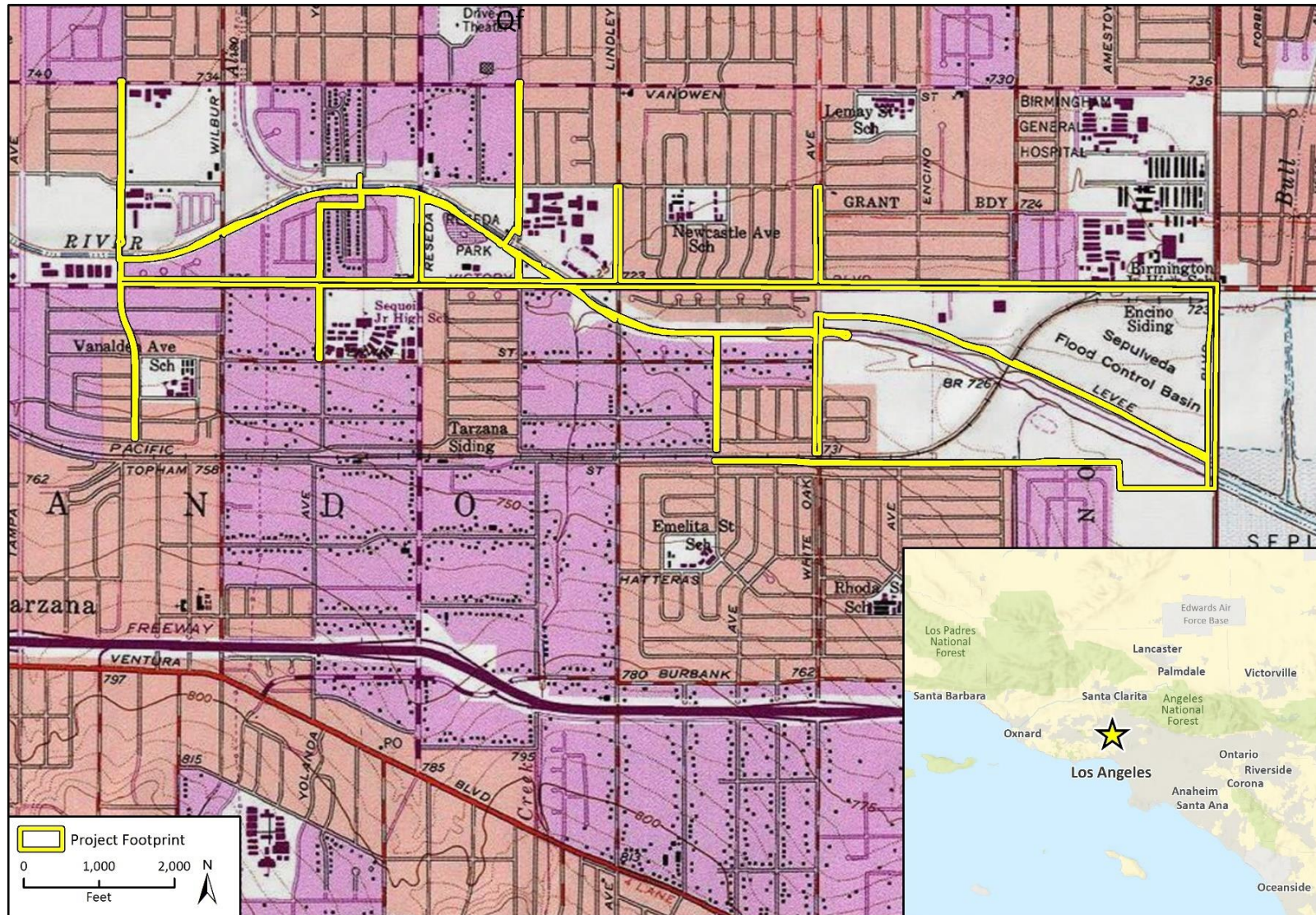
The project site stretches approximately three miles along the LA River between Vanalden Avenue and Balboa Boulevard, to encompass the footprint of proposed bicycle and pedestrian pathways. From the banks of the River, the project site extends in several locations to the north and south within existing road right-of-way (ROW) to include necessary on-street improvements in the River's immediate vicinity (Figure 3).

The project site travels through the neighborhood of Reseda, in the Reseda-West Van Nuys Community Plan Area (CPA) and Encino, in the Encino-Tarzana CPA, in the City of Los Angeles, California. The project encompasses portions of Township 1 North, Range 15 West, Section 7, and Township 1 North, Range 15 West, Sections 10 on the United States Geological Survey (USGS) Canoga Park, CA 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle. Most of the project site is comprised of urban development including the artificial structure associated with the LA River bed and bank, ruderal and paved roads and trails, and adjacent residential development and associated landscaped areas.

## 1.3 Project Personnel

All of Rincon's key personnel for this project meet or exceed the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards in their respective fields (National Park Service 1983). Rincon Senior Archaeologist and Project Manager, Tiffany Clark, PhD, Registered Professional Archaeologist (RPA), managed the archaeological resources work effort, conducted portions of the field survey, and coauthored this report. Architectural Historian Rachel Perzel performed the built-environment assessment and was the primary author of the report. Associate Archaeologist Meagan Szromba, MA, RPA, conducted the Native American outreach, performed the initial field survey, and was a co-author on the report. Geographic Information System specialists Allysen Valencia prepared the figures for this report. Rincon Architectural History Program Manager and Principal Shannon Carmack managed this cultural resource assessment and reviewed this report for quality control.

Figure 1 Project Location Map



Imagery provided by National Geographic Society, ESRI and its licensors © 2018. Canoga Park Quadrangle. T01N R15W S07 & T01N R16W S02,03,10-12. The topographic representation depicted in this map may not portray all of the features currently found in the vicinity today and/or features depicted in this map may have changed since the original topographic map was assembled.

CRFig 1 Project Vicinity, CEQA

Figure 2 Extent of Proposed Project



Source: Gruen Associates, 2018.



Figure 3a Project Site



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CRFig 2 APE 11x17\_CEQ4

Figure 3b Project Site

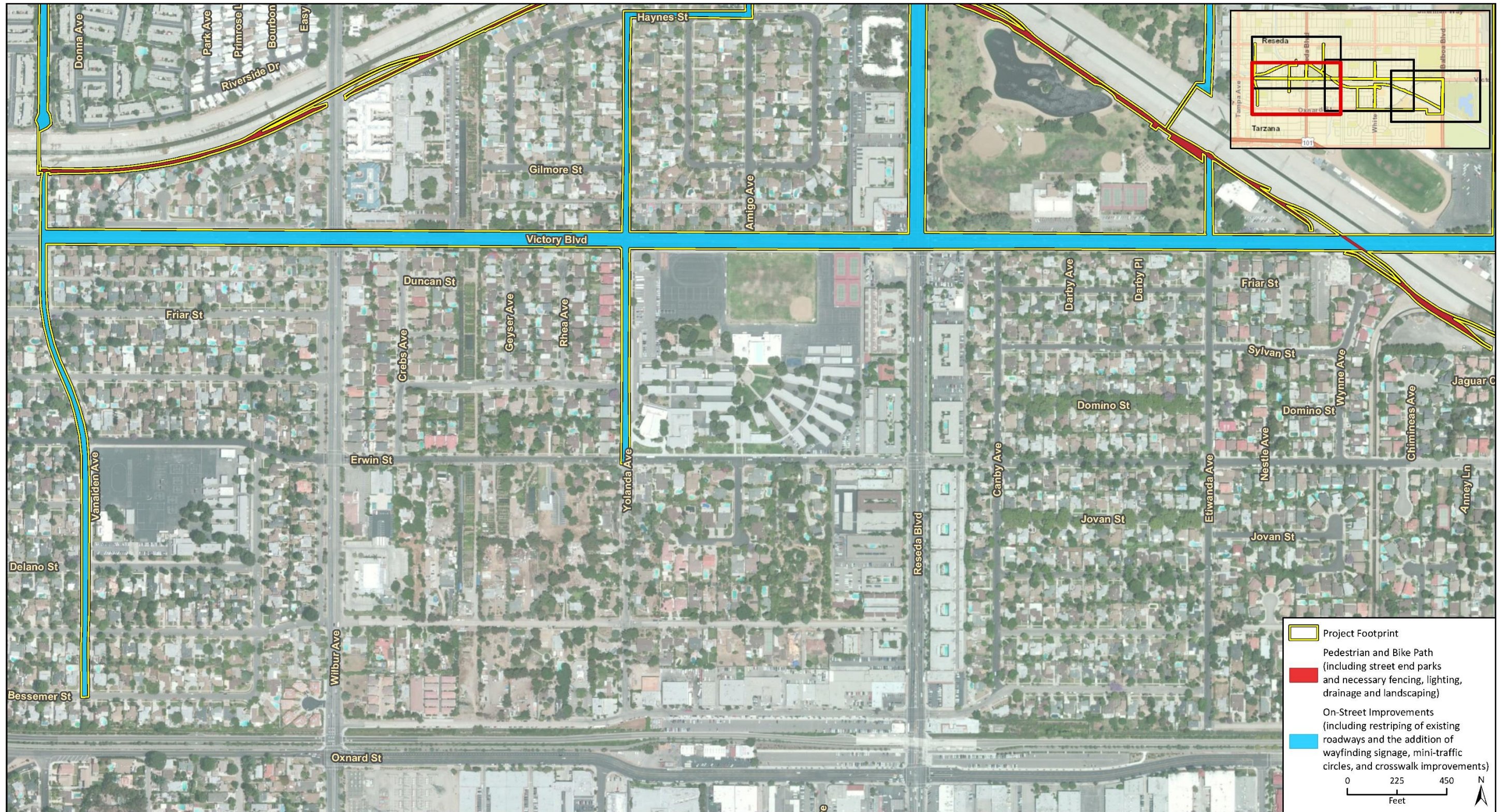


Figure 3c Project Site

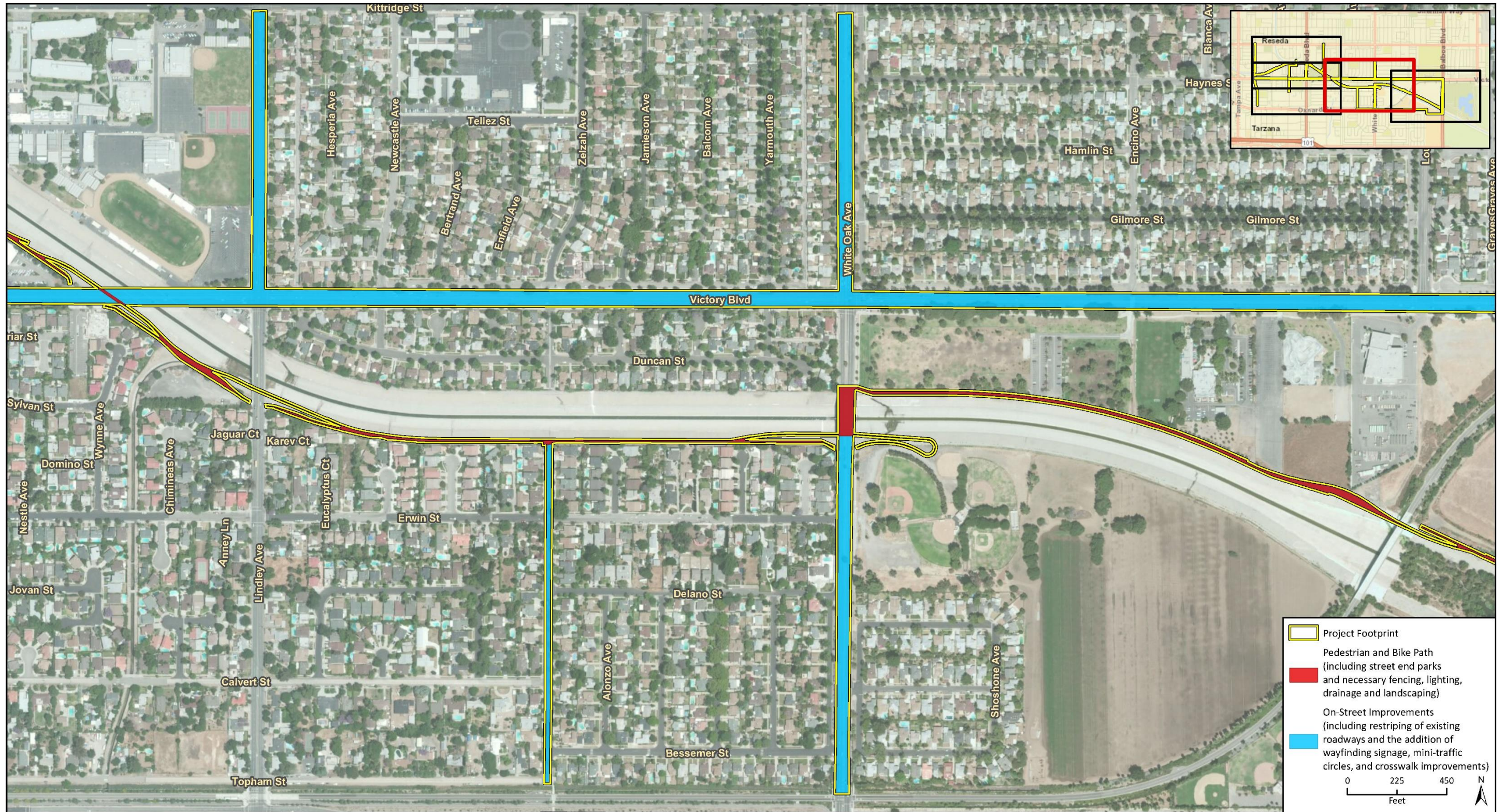
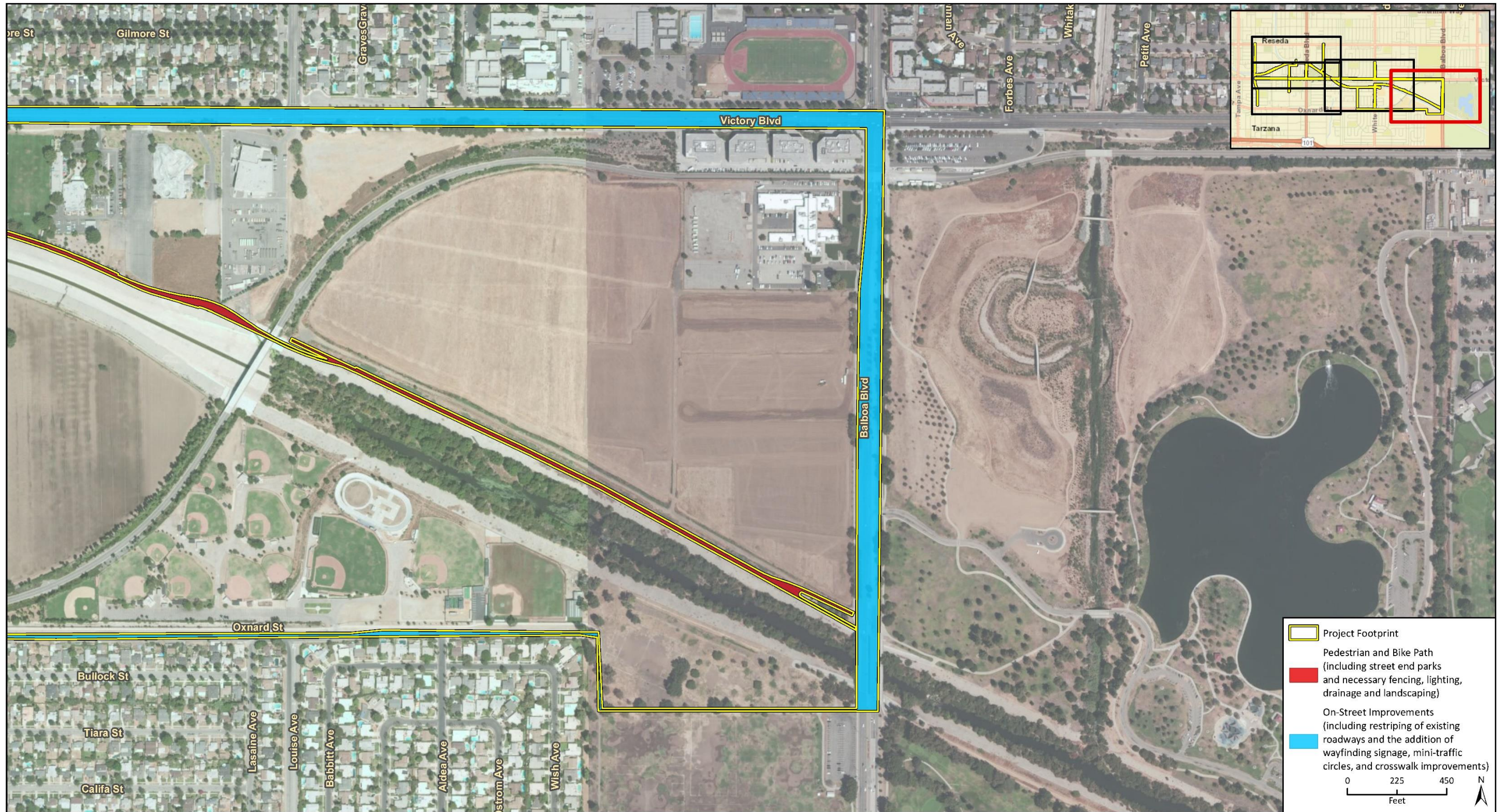


Figure 3d Project Site



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CRFig 2 APE 11x17\_CEQ4

## 2 Regulatory Setting

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This section includes a discussion of the applicable federal, state, and local laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards governing cultural resources, to which the proposed project should adhere before and during implementation. Due to the need for Clean Water Act permits from the ACOE, portions of the proposed project are subject to compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The project's compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA is not addressed in this report; however, federal regulations are included in this section for reference.

### 2.1 Federal Regulations

#### 2.1.1 National Historic Preservation Act

The proposed project is subject to NHPA §106. The definition of a federal undertaking in 36 CFR 800.16(y) includes projects requiring a federal permit, license, or approval. Cultural resources are considered during federal undertakings chiefly under NHPA §106 (as amended) through one of its implementing regulations, 36 CFR 800 (Protection of Historic Properties), and National Environmental Policy Act. Properties of traditional, religious, and cultural importance to Native Americans are considered under both Section 101 (d)(6)(A) and Section 106 36 CFR 800.3-800.10 of NHPA. Other federal laws include the Archaeological Data Preservation Act of 1974, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1989, among others.

Section 106 of NHPA (16 United States Code 470f) requires federal agencies to account for the effects of their undertakings on any district, site, building, structure, or object included in or eligible for inclusion in the NRHP and to afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation a reasonable opportunity to comment on such undertakings (36 CFR 800.1). Under Section 106, the significance of any adversely affected historic property is assessed and mitigation measures are proposed to reduce any impacts to an acceptable level. Historic properties are those significant cultural resources listed in or are eligible for listing in the NRHP per the criteria listed below (36 CFR 60.4):

The quality of significance in American, state, and local history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association and meet one or more of the following criteria:

- a. Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
- b. Are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past
- c. Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of installation, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction
- d. Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history

In addition to meeting at least one of the above designation criteria, resources must also retain integrity, or enough of their historic character or appearance to be “recognizable as historical resources and to convey the reasons for their significance” (California Office of Historic Preservation 2006). The National Park Service recognizes seven aspects or qualities that, considered together, define historic integrity. To retain integrity, a property must possess several, if not all, of these seven qualities, defined in the following manner:

1. **Location.** The place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred
2. **Design.** The combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property
3. **Setting.** The physical environment of a historic property
4. **Materials.** Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property
5. **Workmanship.** The physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory
6. **Feeling.** A property’s expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time
7. **Association.** The direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property (National Park Service 2002)

## 2.2 State

### 2.2.1 California Environmental Quality Act

CEQA requires a lead agency to determine if a project may have a significant effect on historical resources (PRC §21084.1) or tribal cultural resources (PRC §21074[a][1][A]-[B]). A historical resource is a resource listed or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR); a resource included in a local register of historical resources; or an object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript that a lead agency determines to be *historically significant* (State CEQA Guidelines §15064.5[a][1-3]).

A resource shall be considered *historically significant* if it meets any of the following criteria:

- 1) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California’s history and cultural heritage
- 2) Is associated with the lives of persons important to our past
- 3) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values
- 4) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history

If it can be demonstrated that a project will cause damage to a *unique archaeological resource*, the lead agency may require reasonable efforts be made to permit any or all of these resources to be preserved in place or left in an undisturbed state. To the extent that resources cannot be left undisturbed, mitigation measures are required (PRC §21083.2[a], [b]).

PRC §21083.2(g) defines a *unique archaeological resource* as an artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that, without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it meets any of the following criteria:

- 1) Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and that there is a demonstrable public interest in that information
- 2) Has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type
- 3) Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person

A historical resource is one listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the CRHR, a resource included in a local register of historical resources or any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript that a lead agency determines to be historically significant (CEQA Guidelines §15064.5[a][1-3]). Section 15064.5(a)(3) also states that a resource shall be considered by the lead agency to be “historically significant” if the resource meets the criteria for listing on the CRHR.

### 2.2.1.1 *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*

In accordance with the California Code of Regulations and CEQA Guidelines, a project that has been determined to conform with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (*Secretary’s Standards*) is generally considered to be a project that will not cause a significant adverse impact to a historical resource (14 California Code of Regulations {CCR} Section 15126.4). If a project meets the *Secretary’s Standards*, the project can qualify for a potential categorical exemption from CEQA (14 CCR Section 15331).

The goal of the *Secretary’s Standards* is to outline treatment approaches that allow for the retention of and/or sensitive changes to the distinctive materials and features that lend a historical resource its significance. When changes are carried out according to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, the historical resource retains its historic integrity and thereby continues to convey the reasons for its significance. The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and associated Guidelines (36 CFR 67) are “neither technical nor prescriptive but are intended to promote responsible preservation practices that help protect” cultural resources (Weeks and Grimmer, 2017). The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines offer general recommendations for preserving, maintaining, repairing, and replacing historical materials and features, as well as designing new additions or making alterations. The *Secretary’s Standards* also provide guidance on new construction adjacent to historic districts and properties, in order to ensure that there are no adverse impacts to integrity as a result of a change in setting.

Under the Secretary’ Standards, there are four distinct but interrelated approaches to the treatment of historic properties: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. Considered the most flexible treatment approach, rehabilitation is deemed appropriate “when repair and replacement of deteriorated features are necessary; when alterations or additions to the property are planned for a new or continued use; and when its depiction at a particular period of time is not appropriate, rehabilitation may be considered as a treatment” (Weeks and Grimmer, 2017).

The ten *Secretary’s Standards* for Rehabilitation are:

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

In order to determine whether a project complies with the *Secretary's Standards*, the analysis must consider the "character-defining," or historically significant, features of the historical resource. Alterations and replacement of character-defining features over time can impair a historic property's integrity and result in a loss of historic status. Therefore, to ensure that a historic property remains eligible after implementation of projects, character-defining features should be identified and preserved.

The National Park Service Preservation Brief 17 (Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character) provides a three-step process to identifying character-defining features. Step 1 involves assessing the physical aspects of the building exterior as a whole, including its location and setting, shape and massing, orientation, roof and roof features, projections, and openings. Step 2 looks at the building more closely—at materials, trim, secondary features, and craftsmanship. Step 3 encompasses the interior, including individual spaces, relations or sequences of spaces (floor plan), surface finishes and materials, exposed structure, and interior features and details.

### 2.2.2 Assembly Bill 52

As of July 1, 2015, California Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52) expanded CEQA by defining a new resource category called Tribal Cultural Resources (TCR). AB 52 establishes "a project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a TCR is a project that may have a



significant effect on the environment” (PRC §21084.2). It further states the lead agency shall establish measures to avoid impacts that would alter the significant characteristics of a TCR, when feasible (PRC §21084.3).

PRC §§21074(a)(1)(A),(B) define TCRs as “sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe” that meet either of the following criteria:

- 1) Listed or eligible for listing in the CRHR, or in a local register of historical resources, as defined in PRC §5020.1(k)
- 2) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of PRC §5024.1

In applying these criteria, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

AB 52 also establishes a formal consultation process for California tribes regarding TCRs. The consultation process must be completed before a CEQA document can be certified. Under AB 52, lead agencies are required to “begin consultation with a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the proposed project.” Native American tribes to be included in the process are those that have requested notice of projects subject to CEQA and proposed in the jurisdiction of the lead agency.

## 2.3 Local

### 2.3.1 Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments

Local landmarks in the City of Los Angeles are known as Historic Cultural Monuments (HCMs) and are managed under the aegis of the City of Los Angeles Planning Department, Office of Historic Resources (OHR). A monument or local landmark is defined in the Cultural Heritage Ordinance as follows:

Historic-Cultural Monument (Monument) is any site (including significant trees or other plant life located on the site), building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles, including historic structures or sites in which the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, State or community is reflected or exemplified; or which is identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, State or local history; or which embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period, style or method of construction; or a notable work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age (Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 22.171.7 Added by Ordinance No. 178,402, Effective 4-2-07).

### 2.3.2 Historic Preservation Overlay Zones

The City of Los Angeles General Plan, Conservation Element: Chapter II Resource Conservation and Management, Section 3 outlines an objective and policy for the protection of paleontological resources:

As described by the City of Los Angeles OHR, the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) Ordinance was adopted in 1979 and amended in 2004:

To identify and protect neighborhoods with distinct architectural and cultural resources, the City ... developed an expansive program of Historic Preservation Overlay Zones ... HPOZs, commonly known as historic districts, provide for review of proposed exterior alterations and additions to historic properties within designated districts.

## 3 Natural and Cultural Setting

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The proposed project site is located in a densely suburbanized area of the western San Fernando Valley, in central Los Angeles County at approximately 225 meters above sea level. The area experiences a Mediterranean climate with hot dry summers and cool rainy winters. The project site is located on the banks of the LA River and additionally extends into the neighborhoods surrounding the River in existing ROWs. In this area, vegetation is limited and primarily consists of non-native grasses, trees, and modern landscaping consistent with surrounding suburban development. While the River no longer features native habitat, prior to its channelization, it would have been a favorable location for prehistoric settlement due to its once rich habitat for plants and animals.

### 3.1 Cultural Setting

#### 3.1.1 Prehistoric Context

During the twentieth century, many archaeologists developed chronological sequences to explain prehistoric cultural changes within all or portions of southern California (c.f., Moratto 1984; Jones and Klar 2007). Wallace (1955, 1978) devised a prehistoric chronology for the southern California coastal region based on early studies and focused on data synthesis that included four horizons: Early Man, Milling Stone, Intermediate, and Late Prehistoric. Though initially lacking the chronological precision of absolute dates (Moratto 1984), Wallace's (1955) synthesis has been modified and improved using thousands of radiocarbon dates obtained by southern California researchers over recent decades (Koerper and Drover 1983; Koerper et al. 2002; Byrd and Raab 2007). The prehistoric chronological sequence for southern California presented below is a composite based on Wallace (1955, 1978) as well as later studies, including Koerper and Drover (1983).

#### **Early Man Horizon (10,000 – 6000 B.C.)**

Numerous pre-8000 B.C. sites have been identified along the mainland coast and Channel Islands of southern California (c.f., Moratto 1984; Erlandson 1991; Rick et al. 2001; Johnson et al. 2002; Jones and Klar 2007). The Arlington Springs site on Santa Rosa Island produced human remains dated to approximately 13,000 years ago (Johnson et al. 2002; Arnold et al. 2004). On San Miguel Island, human occupation at Daisy Cave (CA-SMI-261) has been dated to nearly 13,000 years ago and included basketry greater than 12,000 years old, the earliest recorded on the Pacific Coast (Arnold et al. 2004).

Although few Clovis or Folsom style fluted points have been found in southern California (e.g., Erlandson et al. 1987; Dillon 2002), Early Man Horizon sites are generally associated with a greater emphasis on hunting than later horizons. Recent data indicate that the Early Man economy was a diverse mixture of hunting and gathering, including a significant focus on aquatic resources in coastal areas (e.g., Jones et al. 2002) and on inland Pleistocene lakeshores (Moratto 1984). A warm and dry 3,000-year period called the Altithermal began around 6,000 B.C. The conditions of the Altithermal are likely responsible for the change in human subsistence patterns at this time, including a greater emphasis on plant foods and small game.

### **Milling Stone Horizon (6000 – 3000 B.C.)**

Wallace (1955:219) defined the Milling Stone Horizon as “marked by extensive use of milling stones and mullers, a general lack of well-made projectile points, and burials with rock cairns.” The dominance of such artifact types indicate a subsistence strategy oriented around collecting plant foods and small animals. A broad spectrum of food resources were consumed including small and large terrestrial mammals, sea mammals, birds, shellfish and other littoral and estuarine species, near-shore fishes, and seeds and other plant products (Kennett 2005). Variability in artifact collections over time and from the coast to inland sites indicates that Milling Stone Horizon subsistence strategies adapted to environmental conditions (Jones 1996; Byrd and Raab 2007). Lithic artifacts associated with Milling Stone Horizon sites are dominated by locally available tool stone. Ground stone tools, including manos and metates were quite common, as were chopping, scraping, and cutting tools. The mortar and pestle, associated with acorns or other foods processed through pounding, were first used during the Milling Stone Horizon and increased dramatically in later periods (Wallace 1955, 1978; Jones 1996).

Two types of artifacts that are considered diagnostic of the Milling Stone Horizon are the cogged stone and discoidal, most of which have been found within sites dating between 4,000 and 1,000 B.C. (Moratto 1984), though possibly as far back as 5500 B.C. (Couch et al. 2009). The cogged stone is a ground stone object that has gear-like teeth on the perimeter and is produced from a variety of materials. The function of cogged stones is unknown, though ritualistic or ceremonial uses have been postulated (Eberhart 1961). Similar to cogged stones, discoidals are found in the archaeological record subsequent to the introduction of the cogged stone. Cogged stones and discoidals were often purposefully buried, or “cached.” Cogged stones have been collected in Los Angeles County though their distribution appears to center on the Santa Ana River basin (Eberhart 1961).

### **Intermediate Horizon (3000 B.C. – A.D. 500)**

Wallace’s Intermediate Horizon dates from approximately 3000 B.C. – A.D. 500 and is characterized by a shift toward a hunting and maritime subsistence strategy, as well as greater use of plant foods. During the Intermediate Horizon, a noticeable trend occurred towards a greater adaptation to local resources including a broad variety of fish, land mammals, and sea mammals along the coast. Tool kits for hunting, fishing, and processing food and materials reflect this increased diversity, with flake scrapers, drills, various projectile points, and shell fishhooks being manufactured.

Mortars and pestles became more common during this transitional period, gradually replacing manos and metates as the dominant milling equipment. This change in milling stone technology is believed to signal a transition from the processing and consumption of hard seed resources to the increased reliance on acorns (Jones 1996). Mortuary practices during the Intermediate typically included fully flexed burials oriented toward the west (Wallace 1955).

### **Late Prehistoric Horizon (A.D. 500 – Historic Contact)**

During Wallace’s (1955, 1978) Late Prehistoric Horizon, the diversity of plant food resources and land and sea mammal hunting increased even further than during the Intermediate Horizon. More classes of artifacts were observed during this period and high quality exotic lithic materials were used for small, finely worked projectile points associated with the bow and arrow. Steatite containers were made for cooking and storage and an increased use of asphalt for waterproofing is noted. More artistic artifacts were recovered from Late Prehistoric sites and cremation became a

common mortuary custom. Larger, more permanent villages supported an increased population size and social structure (Wallace 1955). This change in material culture, burial practices, and subsistence focus coincides with the westward migration of Uto-Aztecan language speakers from the Great Basin region to Los Angeles, Orange, and western Riverside counties (Sutton 2008; Potter and White 2009). This tradition manifested in the Los Angeles Basin and adjacent areas as the Angeles Pattern of the Del Rey Tradition, which ultimately led to the ethnographic Gabrieliño (Sutton 2008:36).

### 3.1.2 Ethnographic Context

The project is located in the traditional territory of the Native American group known as the Gabrieliño, Tongva, or Kizh (Bean and Smith 1978:538; Johnston 1962; Kroeber 1976: Plate 57; McCawley 1996). What the Native Americans who inhabited southern California called themselves has long been a topic of discussion among scholars and living descendants of these people (Johnston 1962; Dakin 1978; McCawley 1996). While the name Gabrieliño was applied by the Spanish to those natives that were associated with the Mission San Gabriel Arcángel (Bean and Smith 1978), that name does not necessarily correlate to how the inhabitants of the region referred to themselves. Today, most contemporary Gabrieliño prefer to identify themselves as Tongva, though some use the name Kizh. Generally, the names Tongva and Kizh are derivatives of placenames or village names in and around Mission San Gabriel, or referents to inhabitants of those villages. The name Tongva is used throughout the remainder of this report as it is currently most commonly used by present day descendants (McCawley 1996).

Tongva territory included a large area in and around Los Angeles County, as well as the southern Channel Islands and coastlines from Aliso Creek in the south to Topanga Creek in the north. Their territory encompassed several biotic zones, including coastal marsh, coastal strand, prairie, chaparral, oak woodland, and pine forest (Bean and Smith 1978; McCawley 1996). The watersheds of the Rio Hondo, the Los Angeles, and the Santa Ana Rivers as well as many tributaries and creeks such as Ballona Creek, Tujunga Wash, Arroyo Seco and others were within the territory of the Tongva. The Tongva territory was bordered by several different Native American groups including the Serrano to the north and northeast, the Tataviam to the north, the Chumash to the northwest, the Cahuilla to the east, and the Luiseño and Juaneño to the south and southeast.

The Tongva language belongs to the Takic branch of the Uto-Aztecan language family (Campbell 2016), which can be traced to the Great Basin region. This language family includes dialects spoken by the nearby Juaneño and Luiseño but is considerably different from those of the Chumash people living to the north and the Diegueño (including Ipai, Tipai, and Kumeyaay) people living to the south.

Tongva society was organized along patrilineal non-localized clans, a common Takic pattern. Each clan had a ceremonial leader and contained several lineages. The Tongva established permanent villages and smaller satellite camps throughout their territory. At the time of Spanish contact, there were an estimated 5,000 mainland Tongva, and village populations ranged from approximately 50 to 100 people (Bean and Smith 1978). Tongva subsistence was oriented around acorns supplemented by the roots, leaves, seeds, and fruits of a wide variety of plants and animals. Meat sources included large and small mammals, freshwater and saltwater fish, shellfish, birds, reptiles, and insects (Kroeber 1976; Bean and Smith 1978; McCawley 1996; Langenwalter et al. 2001).

The Tongva employed a wide variety of tools and implements to gather and hunt food. The digging stick, used to extract roots and tubers, was frequently noted by early European explorers (Rawls 1984). Other tools included the bow and arrow, traps, nets, blinds, throwing sticks and slings,

spears, harpoons, and hooks. Like the Chumash, the Tongva made oceangoing plank canoes (known as a *ti'at*) capable of holding six to 14 people used for fishing, travel, and trade between the mainland and the Channel Islands. Tule reed canoes were employed for near-shore fishing (Miller 1991; McCawley 1996).

The Tongva lived in circular domed structures made up of thatched tule covering a frame of wooden poles usually of willow. Size estimates vary for these houses, and very few have been identified in archaeological contexts; however, some are said to have been able to house up to 50 people (Bean and Smith 1978). In cases where houses have been identified and recovered archaeologically, extramural features such as hearths and storage pits have been identified (Vargas et al. 2016).

Chinigchinich, the last in a series of heroic mythological figures, was central to Tongva religious life at the time of Spanish contact (Kroeber 1976). The belief in Chinigchinich was spreading south among other Takic-speaking groups at the same time the Spanish were establishing Christian missions. Elements of Chinigchinich beliefs suggest it was a syncretic mixture of Christianity and native religious practices (McCawley 1996). Prior to European contact, deceased Tongva were either buried or cremated, with burial more common on the Channel Islands and the adjacent mainland coast and cremation on the remainder of the coast and in the interior (Harrington 1942; McCawley 1996). However, after pressure from Spanish missionaries, cremation essentially ceased during the post-contact period (McCawley 1996).

### 3.1.3 History

#### **Spanish Period (1769 – 1821)**

Spanish exploration of California began when Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo led the first European expedition into the region in 1542. For more than 200 years after his initial expedition, Spanish, Portuguese, British, and Russian explorers sailed the California coast and made limited inland expeditions, but they did not establish permanent settlements (Bean 1968; Rolle 1987). In 1769, Gaspar de Portolá and Franciscan Friar Junípero Serra established the first Spanish settlement in what was then known as Alta (upper) California at Mission San Diego de Alcalá. This was the first of 21 missions erected by the Spanish between 1769 and 1823. It was during this time that initial Spanish settlement of the project vicinity began. Mission San Fernando Rey de España, approximately seven miles to the northeast of the current project area, was founded in 1797 as the 17th mission to be established in California. Mission San Fernando Rey de España's location closed the gap between Mission San Buenaventura on the Ventura coast, and Mission San Gabriel Arcángel in the Los Angeles interior (California Missions Foundation, n.d.).

**Mexican Period (1821 – 1848)** The Mexican Period commenced when news of the success of the Mexican War of Independence (1810 – 1821) against the Spanish crown reached California in 1822. This period saw the privatization of mission lands in California with the passage of the Secularization Act of 1833. This act federalized mission lands and enabled Mexican governors in California to distribute former mission lands to individuals in the form of land grants. Successive Mexican governors made approximately 700 land grants between 1833 and 1846 (Shumway 2007), putting most of the state's lands into private ownership for the first time. During this era, a class of wealthy landowners known as *rancheros* worked large ranches based on cattle hide and tallow production.

The beginnings of a profitable trade in cattle hide and tallow exports opened the way for larger, commercially driven farms. Land grants owned by the Spanish crown and clergy were distributed to mostly Mexican settlers born in California, or the "Californios." During this period, the San Fernando

Valley was divided into the following ranchos: Rancho Ex-Mission San Fernando, Rancho Cahuenga, Rancho Los Encinos, and Rancho Tajunga. This shift marked the beginning of the rancho system that would “dominate California life for nearly half a century” (Poole 2002:13). Ranchos were largely self-sufficient enterprises (partly out of necessity, given California’s geographic isolation), producing goods to maintain their households and operations.

In 1846, the Mexican-American War was initiated following the annexation of Texas by the United States and a dispute over the boundary of the state between the U.S. and Mexico. Governor Pío de Jesus Pico, the last governor of Alta California, began selling off 12 million acres of public land to financially support the war (Los Angeles Almanac 2018a). Mexican forces fought and lost to combined U.S. Army and Navy forces in the Battle of the San Gabriel River on January 8 and in the Battle of La Mesa on January 9 (Nevin 1978). On January 10, leaders of the pueblo of Los Angeles surrendered peacefully after Mexican General Jose Maria Flores withdrew his forces. Shortly thereafter, newly appointed Mexican Military Commander of California Andrés Pico surrendered all of Alta California to U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel John C. Fremont in the Treaty of Cahuenga (Nevin 1978).

### **American Period (1848 – Present)**

The Mexican Period officially ended in early January 1848 with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, formally concluding the Mexican-American War. Per the treaty, the United States agreed to pay Mexico \$15 million for conquered territory, including California, Nevada, Utah, and parts of Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, and Wyoming. California gained statehood in 1850, and this political shift set in motion a variety of factors that began to erode the rancho system. Given the size of their holdings, the initiation of property taxes proved onerous for many southern California ranchers. In addition, the creation of the U.S. Land Commission in 1851 required that property owners prove the validity of their property titles, many of which had been granted relatively informally and without the benefit of formal survey. Ranchers often paid for legal debts with portions—or all—of their ranchos. During this period, 40 percent of rancho-held lands in the County of Los Angeles passed to the U.S. government. The large-scale rancho system also suffered greatly from the 1860s droughts, which decimated the cattle industry upon which southern Californian ranchers depended.

The following sections are excerpted from the Historic Resources Survey Reports for the Reseda-West Van Nuys and the Encino-Tarzana CPA, completed by SurveyLA in 2013 and 2015 respectively. Together, they describe the development of the area surrounding the project (San Fernando Valley) beginning in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, many of Southern California’s rancho owners were beginning to sell off portions of their lands, and those in the Valley were no exception. In 1869, pioneer Isaac Lankershim led a small cohort of other German Jewish immigrants to form the San Fernando Valley Homestead Association; the group acquired a sizable portion of Rancho Ex-Mission San Fernando land, comprising much of the southern half of the San Fernando Valley, for \$2 an acre. The men had intended to use the land for sheep farming, but a severe drought in the 1870s led them to experiment with dry wheat farming, which proved to be a huge success.

The San Fernando Valley’s first town, San Fernando, was established by state senator Charles Maclay in 1874 in anticipation of the Southern Pacific Railroad’s completion through the Valley. In that same year, Isaac Newton Van Nuys moved to California and became a stockholder in the San Fernando Valley Homestead Association. Soon after, he became a business partner and son-in-law of Isaac Lankershim (he married Lankershim’s daughter Susanna). Van Nuys played a

large role in mapping the Valley and establishing boundaries between the Lankershim, Maclay and Porter townships. What became known as the Lankershim-Van Nuys ranch extended across the Valley and from south of present-day Roscoe Boulevard to present-day Mulholland Drive. When Lankershim died in 1882, his son, James B. Lankershim, went into business with Van Nuys. Together, they platted the town of Toluca near the Southern Pacific railroad tract in 1882. In 1896, the town was renamed Lankershim; and, in an effort to capitalize on the glamour of Hollywood, the community later adopted the name North Hollywood.

The construction of a Southern Pacific Railroad line through the Valley in the early 20th century brought increased commercial opportunities to the area. The corridor was built as a part of Southern Pacific's Coast Line, which connected Los Angeles and San Francisco via a route that bisected the San Fernando Valley and crossed over the Santa Susana Pass. Its right-of-way runs largely north of the Reseda-West Van Nuys CPA. (City of Los Angeles 2015)

By the turn of the twentieth century, the Survey Area remained sparsely populated and predominantly agricultural, with an abundance of fruit and walnut orchards, grazing lands and wheat fields. The first major developmental changes began in the 1910s in anticipation of the construction of the Owens Valley aqueduct in 1913, bringing water to Los Angeles via the San Fernando Valley, and the annexation of the area into the city of Los Angeles in 1915. Anticipating the eventual real estate boom of the San Fernando Valley, landowners began to plat and prepare for residential settlement and commercial development. The Los Angeles Suburban Homes Company, headed by Los Angeles Times publisher Harrison Gray Otis, purchased large tracts of land throughout the Survey Area and other newly annexed sections of the Valley. Before dividing the land, the partners of the company chose acreage for themselves. Otis later sold his acreage to Tarzan author Edgar Rice Burroughs in 1919.

The south San Fernando Valley felt the effects of the boom of the 1920s, which had a tremendous impact on the development of Los Angeles as a whole. The 1920s saw major road improvements in the Valley, including work on the Cahuenga Pass and, later, the Sepulveda Tunnel, which provided vehicular access between the San Fernando Valley and West Los Angeles. This coincided with the paving of Ventura Boulevard and the establishment of Mulholland Drive. Improved vehicular access spurred residential development in the southeast San Fernando Valley. Sherman Oaks Circle, which is located at the far eastern edge of the Survey Area, was subdivided in the 1920s. Though it was not entirely built out until the postwar era, the platting of Sherman Oaks Circle near the Sepulveda Tunnel and adjacent to Ventura Boulevard is indicative of the impact of these improvements on the development of the area.

Despite a surge of residential development in the eastern communities of the San Fernando Valley in the 1920s, Encino and Tarzana remained somewhat rural due to their relatively remote location. As such, these areas became attractive to potential homeowners seeking large properties and a quiet, rustic lifestyle while remaining within Los Angeles city limits. Melody Acres, a 1920s subdivision in Tarzana north of Ventura Boulevard, featured large lots with rows of citrus trees and equestrian zoning. The former Amestoy family ranch in Encino was also subdivided for residential development and called Encino Acres. This subdivision, which was located north of Ventura Boulevard between Balboa and White Oak Avenues, featured lots that ranged in size between two and 20 acres. Properties were used for country estates, hobby ranching, and farming, including the cultivation of lemons, oranges and walnuts. The residences and some ancillary buildings from these properties remain in the center of blocks that were later carved up into smaller lots, forming a distinctive pattern of parcels in the Encino Acres subdivision.



The rural and open character of Encino and Tarzana in the 1920s and 1930s also attracted the entertainment industry to the area. Film studios had begun to take advantage of the vast, undeveloped land in the San Fernando Valley starting in the 1910s in places such as Studio City and the city of Burbank. The RKO Studio Ranch came to Encino in 1929. In operation until 1953, the backlot covered approximately 100 acres and contained a variety of film sets. It's a Wonderful Life, filmed in 1946, was one of the most popular films made on the RKO Studio Ranch. In 1955, the Marwill Corporation and architect Martin Stern designed a large subdivision of single-family homes called Encino Village on the former RKO property.

The adjacency to film studios and availability of land enticed a number of film stars to build large estates in Encino and Tarzana; Clark Gable and Carole Lombard, John Wayne and Al Jolson built large estates in the hills south of Ventura Boulevard. The area would continue to attract members of the entertainment community throughout the twentieth century.

After floods ravaged the south San Fernando Valley in 1938, the city began channelizing the Los Angeles River and set aside the Sepulveda Basin in the northeast of the Survey Area as a flood control area. The Army Corps of Engineers designed the Sepulveda Dam, completed in 1941. A small golf course opened in the basin in 1941, but the area remained in the control of the Army for next decade. The flood control infrastructure greatly reduced the risk of catastrophic flooding in the San Fernando Valley and made the area more desirable for wide-spread residential development and federally-insured home loans.

The demand for housing following World War II was central to the development of Encino and Tarzana. In the five years between 1945 and 1950, the population of the San Fernando Valley doubled to just over 400,000. Anticipating postwar growth, the City initially planned for the development of the Valley to follow prevailing regional planning principles, with small urban employment centers and residential subdivisions surrounded by agricultural land. Two planning documents—a 1943 Master Plan and a 1944 Zoning Plan—called for the retention of agricultural zones around self-contained urban communities with designated industrial and commercial areas to supplement the agricultural economy and supply employment for present and future residents. However, due to the area's exponential growth and unprecedented demand for housing, agricultural land was quickly converted into residential subdivisions and the plans were never fully realized.

The postwar boom brought tremendous change to the character of the Encino and Tarzana communities. Large residential subdivisions cropped up on both sides of Ventura Boulevard and, as the demand grew, land value skyrocketed. Fragmented urban development encroached on orchards and ranches. As a result, farmers could no longer make enough profit to cover rising property taxes and most were forced to downsize or sell. The opening of the 101 and 405 Freeways in the early 1960s further bolstered suburban growth, connecting the Survey Area to many of the downtown and Westside business districts in Los Angeles and relieving congestion on city streets. Single family residential development continued south into the hills of the Santa Monica Mountains during the late 1950s through the 1970s. As the engineering technology became available, significant architects, including Ray Kappe, Richard Dorman, Richard Neutra, Dion Neutra, Daniel Saxon Palmer and Edward Fickett designed residences that took advantage of the views from the steep lots of the Encino and Tarzana hills. Upscale subdivisions, including Royal Woods, Royal Oaks, and Castle in the Woods, define the residential character of the Encino Hills in the southeastern portion of the Survey Area and contain a notable concentration of architect-designed, Mid-Century Modern residences.

To meet the needs of the growing population of Encino and Tarzana in the postwar era, new institutional buildings and recreational facilities were built throughout the area. Bond issues in 1946, 1952, and 1955 addressed the need for expanding school facilities, an infusion of resources that resulted in the construction and expansion of numerous schools in the San Fernando Valley. Money went to construction, improvements to existing facilities, and the purchase of land for future construction. In 1951, the city obtained a lease for the Sepulveda Flood Control Basin from the Army and converted the area into a municipal recreation center, featuring areas for golf, tennis, archery, biking, baseball and hiking. A number of private recreational institutions developed in conjunction with postwar suburbanization, including the El Caballero and Braemar Country Clubs and the Lake Encino Racquet Club.

A long history of racially restrictive housing and ownership practices meant that most of the Valley remained “a thoroughly white domain” even through the post-World War II boom. Author Kevin Roderick observed that restrictive covenants had factored into patterns of town building and settlement going back to the Valley’s earliest history. With the exceptions of Pacoima and San Fernando in the northern Valley, which were relatively ethnically diverse from the early twentieth century, members of ethnic minorities who resided in the San Fernando Valley were generally confined to segregated areas. Beginning in 1922, any property sold in Tarzana had a restriction within the deed stating, “that said premises, or any part thereof shall not be leased, sold, or conveyed to or occupied by any person not of the Caucasian race.” Deed restrictions like these were common throughout the greater San Fernando Valley and were not effectively eliminated until well into the 1970s.

Despite the prevalence of restrictive housing practices, many of the young families flocking to the Survey Area in the postwar period were Jewish. The Jewish population was more easily able to obtain housing in middle-class suburban neighborhoods than other “non-white” racial groups and in the decade following World War II the Jewish population of the San Fernando Valley doubled. This influx led to the doubling or tripling in size of existing Valley congregations and the opening of new congregations, including Valley Beth Shalom on Ventura Boulevard in Encino. Many of the Jewish residents of the Survey Area resisted the discrimination and isolation of Jewish communities in other parts of Los Angeles and sought to assimilate into the suburban American lifestyle. In 1956, Jewish businessman Bernard Shapiro purchased El Caballero Country Club in Tarzana and made it one of the first country clubs in Los Angeles to allow both Christian and Jewish members. (City of Los Angeles 2015)

Today, the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles County is one of the state’s largest suburban areas with a population of over 1.7 million residents (Noonan 2017). The Valley is divided into 34 distinct neighborhoods that include Reseda and Encino, through which the proposed project site travels.

## **The Los Angeles River**

In its natural state, the LA River was indefinite in its course. Along with the San Gabriel and Santa Ana Rivers, it meandered across the wide alluvial plane known as the Los Angeles Basin. These Rivers created a fertile environment that supported the early development of Los Angeles County into an agricultural success. Historically, the LA River was known for its unpredictability. Until its channelization (1939-1959), the River altered its course drastically and overflowed its banks with a degree of regularity. Available historical records indicate that Los Angeles County experienced significant floods approximately once every four and a half years during the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; the Los Angeles River flooded 11 times in that period (Gumprecht 2001).

**Los Angeles River Valley Bikeway and Greenway Project**

Today, the Los Angeles Basin is occupied by Metropolitan Los Angeles. The geographic area surrounding the project site specifically is populated with the western San Fernando Valley communities of Reseda and Encino. Metropolitan Los Angeles grew dramatically in the decades that bracketed the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. During this period, development pressure in the San Fernando Valley expanded and the River's unpredictable nature led to increased risk to life and property.

Prior to 1914, attempts to control the flow of the LA River were primarily confined to piecemeal efforts by those directly impacted by its inconsistencies. As the Los Angeles Basin continued to develop and fluctuations impacted larger numbers of people, the scale and coordination of control measures began to increase accordingly. In February of 1914, the then-worst flood in Los Angeles history, causing an estimated \$10 million worth of structural damage, provided an impetus for coordinated control efforts (Figure 4). In 1915, the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD) was created and tasked with flood control and conservation efforts in Los Angeles County.

**Figure 4 The Los Angeles River, January 26, 1914**



Photograph obtained from *A History of the Los Angeles District-U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 1898-1965* by Anthony F. Turhollow

From 1915 through the early 1930s, the LACFCD pursued a variety of control measures aimed at preventing future flooding and associated damage. Measures included the construction of dams and catch basins and the redirection and deepening of rivers. Due in part to a lack of reliable funding and the absence of a comprehensive plan, these measures proved to be marginally effective. Further complicating circumstances was the rapid rate at which the area, including the San Fernando Valley, were experiencing development. The large-scale development of the Los Angeles Basin led to drastic increases in storm water runoff, making it difficult for the LACFCD to keep pace (ACOE 1992).

On New Year's Day in 1934, Los Angeles experienced yet another devastating flood which prompted LACFCD's \$19.3 million request to the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Through the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act, Congress appropriated nearly \$14 million to the LACFCD for the construction of storm drains, permanent channel improvement, and debris basins throughout Los Angeles County. The projects were to be executed by the ACOE with labor provided by unemployed local laborers on WPA relief rolls.

In 1936, the mission of the ACOE was redefined to include the provision of permanent supervision of future flood control plans throughout the United States. Following this time and funded by the WPA, the ACOE and LACFCD acted as partners to design a comprehensive flood plan for the Los Angeles County Rivers (Los Angeles, Santa Ana, and San Gabriel Rivers) and their tributaries. In the decades that followed, the ACOE and LACFCD executed the comprehensive plan for the Los Angeles County Drainage Area (LACDA), known as the LACDA Project. The project was completed by 1959. "The LACDA Project includes within the Los Angeles River Basin 17 debris basins on 53 miles of tributary streams, three major flood control basins (Sepulveda, Hansen, and Lopez), 48 miles of main channel control, and more than 100 bridges over main and tributary channels (Turhollow 1975)".

The LACDA Project is one of the most extensive flood control systems ever to be constructed in a metropolitan area (ACOE 1992). The channelization of the LA River, consisting of vegetation removal, the lowering of the River's bed and straightening of its course, and the application of reinforced concrete to much of its bed and banks (Figure 5 and Figure 6), was completed in segments between 1939 and 1959. The approximately three-mile-long project site spans parts six and seven of the channelized LA River. The construction of part six, from Reseda Boulevard to the Sepulveda Flood Control Basin, was completed in April 1955 and part seven, from Corbin Avenue to Reseda Boulevard, in January 1957 (ACOE 1992).

Today, the LA River stands in stark opposition to the dense urban and suburban development that surrounds its banks throughout most of its 51-mile journey, including that surrounding the proposed project site. While the River no longer represents its natural state, it remains a dominant feature on the landscape of Los Angeles, often representing the city and urbanism generally in popular culture. While it remains a necessary and effective flood control measure, its other potential benefits have often been overlooked due to its aesthetics. In recent decades, the city of Los Angeles has pursued the beautification of the River and is now implementing the Los Angeles River Revitalization Plan, of which the proposed project is a component. Several other portions of the River have been outfitted with bicycle and pedestrian paths consistent with the proposed project. Bicycle and pedestrian pathways will eventually extend 30 linear miles along the LA River, providing a vital transportation artery through the city. (The Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan 2019)

Figure 5 Construction of River Channel South of Olympic Boulevard in Los Angeles, 1939



Photograph obtained from *The LA River and the Corps: A Brief History*.  
<https://www.spl.usace.army.mil/Media/News-Stories/Article/477249/the-la-river-and-the-corps-a-brief-history/>.  
Accessed February 7, 2019.

**Figure 6 Finishing Concrete Slope of the Los Angeles River, 1938**



Photograph obtained from *A History of the Los Angeles District-U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 1898-1965* by Anthony F. Turhollow.

## 4 Background Research

### 4.1 California Historical Resources Information Center

On June 5, 2018, Rincon conducted a search of the California Historical Resources Information System at the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) located at California State University, Fullerton. The search was performed to identify any previously recorded cultural resources or previously conducted cultural resources studies within the project site and a 1-mile radius around it (Appendix A [Confidential]). The search included a review of the NRHP, CRHR, California Points of Historical Interest list, California Historical Landmarks list, Archaeological Determinations of Eligibility list, and California State Historic Resources Inventory list. The records search also included a review of all available historical USGS 7.5-, 15-, and 30-minute quadrangle maps.

#### 4.1.1 Previous Cultural Resource Studies

The SCCIC records search identified 44 previously conducted cultural resources studies within a 1-mile radius of the project site. Of the previously conducted studies, three included a portion of the project site; however, none of these studies identified any cultural resources within the project site. Approximately two percent of the project site has been previously surveyed. These studies are listed in **Error! Reference source not found.** below.

**Table 1 Previously Conducted Cultural Resources Studies within a 1-mile Radius of the Project Site**

Report Number	Author(s)	Year	Title	Relationship to Project Site
LA-00068	Fielding, Glenn F.	1974	<i>Zone Change from Ra-1 to Rd 1.5 for Development of 230 2-story Apartments at 6545 Avenue, Reseda</i>	Outside
LA-00384	Martz, Patricia	1977	<i>Description and Evaluation of the Cultural Resources within Haines Debris Basin, Hansen Dam, Lopez Dam, and Sepulveda Dam, Los Angeles County</i>	Outside
LA-02408	Rozaire, Charles E.	1960	<i>The Archaeology at Encino, California – Site LAN-111 at Encino, California</i>	Outside
LA-02409	Stelle, Kenneth and Albert Galiardo	1982	<i>For Improvements of the Operational Characteristics of Route 101, the Ventura Freeway in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties, Between Route 405 in Los Angeles, and the Santa Clara River in Oxnard</i>	Outside
LA-02908	Anonymous	1990	<i>Draft Environmental Assessment Tillman Reclamation Plant Food Protection Project</i>	Outside
LA-03472	Singer, Clay A.	1995	<i>Report on Archaeological Survey of the Zuma Loop Trail Segment in Los Angeles County, California</i>	Outside

Report Number	Author(s)	Year	Title	Relationship to Project Site
LA-03521	Neuenschwander, Neal J.	1996	<i>Cultural Resource Assessment of the Proposed Expansion of National Guard Facilities at Van Nuys, Los Angeles County, California</i>	Outside
LA-03720	Anonymous	N/A	<i>Historic Property Survey Havenhurst Avenue – Between Sherman Way and Victory Boulevard W.o. 21263</i>	Outside
LA-03742	Romani, John F.	1982	<i>Archaeological Survey Report for the 07-LA/VEN 101 Project P.m. 17.1-38.2/0.0-22.7 07351 – 076620</i>	Outside
LA-03957	McLean, Deborah K.	1998	<i>Archaeological Assessment for Pacific Bell Mobile Services Telecommunications Facility La 035-05, 5445 Balboa Avenue, City of Encino, County of Los Angeles, California</i>	Outside
LA-04475	Wlodarski, Robert J.	1999	<i>A Phase I Archaeological Study: A Proposed Senior Housing Project Located at 6639 Darby Avenue, City of Reseda, Los Angeles County, California</i>	Outside
LA-05054	Duke, Curt	1999	<i>Cultural Resource Assessment for Pacific Bell Mobile Services Facility La 093-01, County of Los Angeles, CA</i>	Outside
LA-06142	Unknown	2002	<i>Expansion of the Reseda High School Facilities Located at 18230 Kittridge Street in the City of Los Angeles</i>	Adjacent
LA-06758	Duke, Curt	2002	<i>Cultural Resource Assessment AT&amp;T Wireless Services Facility No. 14055 Los Angeles County, California</i>	Outside
LA-06759	Duke, Curt	2000	<i>Cultural Resource Assessment for Pacific Bell Mobile Services Facility La 968-01, County of Los Angeles, California</i>	Outside
LA-06763	Duke, Curt	2000	<i>Cultural Resource Assessment for Pacific Bell Mobile Services Facility La 078-03, County of Los Angeles, California</i>	Outside
LA-06773	Hale, Alice E.	2002	<i>Cultural Resources Archival Research Report West Valley Area Police Station Replacement Project, Vanowen Street, Los Angeles, California</i>	Outside
LA-06778	Demcak, Carol R.	2001	<i>Report of Cultural Resources Records Search for 6639 Darby Avenue, City of Reseda, Los Angeles County, California</i>	Outside
LA-07272	Billet, Lorna	2005	<i>Hobbes, CA-6301a</i>	Outside
LA-07277	Kyle, Carolyn E.	2002	<i>Cultural Resource Assessment for Cingular Wireless Facility Vy234-03, City of Woodland Hills, Los Angeles County, California</i>	Outside
LA-07806	Mason, Roger D. Jay K. Sander	2003	<i>Cultural Resources Survey of the Proposed Sepulveda Basin Water Recycling Project, Los Angeles County, Los Angeles, California</i>	Outside



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Report Number	Author(s)	Year	Title	Relationship to Project Site
LA-07835	Whitley, David S. and Joseph M. Simon	2000	<i>Phase I Archaeological Survey/Class III Inventory, San Fernando Valley East-West Transit Corridor, Brt Alternative, Study Area, Los Angeles, California</i>	Within
LA-07840	Sylvia, Barbara	2001	<i>Negative Archaeological Survey Report for the Beautification and Modernization along Route 134 from the 134/170 Separation to Shoup Ave. Uc, and along Route 101 from the 101/170 Separation to Concord Street Uc</i>	Outside
LA-08051	Bonner, Wayne H.	2005	<i>Cultural Resources Records Search Results and Site Visit for Cingular Wireless Candidate NI-135-01 (Canoga Park) 6543 North Corbin Avenue, Woodland Hills, Los Angeles County, California</i>	Outside
LA-08194	Killeen, John J.	2006	<i>Sepulveda Basin Sports Complex Project, Records and Literature Search and Archaeological Survey</i>	Outside
LA-08682	Bonner, Wayne H.	2006	<i>Cultural Resources Records Search Results and Site Visit for Cingular Wireless Candidate EI-0147-01 (Ramona), 19717 Oxnard Street, Woodland Hills, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California</i>	Outside
LA-08898	Baker, Cindy and Mary L. Maniery	2007	<i>Cultural Resource Inventory and Evaluation of United States Army Reserve 63d Regional Readiness Command Facilities</i>	Outside
LA-09247	Bonner, Wayne H.	2007	<i>Cultural Resources Records Search and Site Visit Results for T-Mobile Candidate SV01581E (Vince Building), 18432 Oxnard Street, Tarzana, Los Angeles County, California</i>	Outside
LA-10203	Sriro, Adam	2000	<i>Negative Archaeological Report – 020471</i>	Outside
LA-10208	Sylvia, Barbara	2001	<i>Negative Archaeological Survey Report: Metal Beam Guardrail (MBGR) along Sections of Route 101 from Route 134 to the Ventura County Line</i>	Outside
LA-10343	Billat, Lorna	2009	<i>Collocation Submission Packet: Hobbes, CA3140A</i>	Outside
LA-10828	Killeen, John and Mitch Marken	2008	<i>Determination of No Historic Properties Affected for the Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation Dodger Dream Field Project (Project Number 208653), City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California</i>	Outside
LA-10924	Bonner, Wayne	2011	<i>Cultural Resources Records Search and Site Visit Results for AT&amp;T Mobility, LLC Candidate LA0608, USID #44431 (405 Fwy/Balboa), 5363 Balboa Boulevard, Encino, Los Angeles County, California</i>	Outside
LA-10926	Bonner, Wayne	2011	<i>Cultural Resources Records Search and Site Visit Results for T-Mobile USA Candidate SV12455-A (Reseda Tarzana), 6360 Reseda Boulevard, Reseda, Los Angeles County, California</i>	Outside

Report Number	Author(s)	Year	Title	Relationship to Project Site
LA-11252	Sander, Jay	2010	<i>Cultural Resources Records Search for T-Mobile USA Inc., SV12165A/Oxnard and Balcom ROW JPA 17731 Oxnard Street, Encino, Los Angeles County, California</i>	Outside
LA-11606	Maxon, Patrick	2011	<i>Phase I Cultural Resources Assessment, Sylmar Ground Return Replacement Project, Los Angeles County, California</i>	Within
LA-11674	Loftus, Shannon	2011	<i>Cultural Resource Records Search and Site Survey, AT&amp;T Site NL0110, Victory Tampa Medical Center, 19231 Victory Boulevard, Reseda, Los Angeles County, California 91335</i>	Outside
LA-11933	Bonner, Wayne	2012	<i>Cultural Resources Records Search and Site Visit Results for T-Mobile West, LLC Candidate SV00093A (LA064 VIP Dry Cleaners), 17709 Vanowen Street, Reseda, Los Angeles County, California</i>	Outside
LA-11934	Bonner, Wayne	2012	<i>Cultural Resources Records Search and Site Visit Results for T-Mobile West, LLC Candidate SV00949A (VY714 Reseda Pac Bell), 6827 Reseda Boulevard, Reseda, Los Angeles County, California</i>	Outside
LA-12129	Bonner, Wayne and Kathleen Crawford	2012	<i>Cultural Resources Records Search and Site Visit Results for T-Mobile West, LLC Candidate SV00968A (LA968 Victory Tampa Med B1) 19231 Victory Boulevard, Reseda, California</i>	Outside
LA-12358	Loftus, Shannon	2012	<i>Cultural Resource Records Search and Site Survey AT&amp;T Site LA0277 Victory and Hayvenhurst LTE 6421 Unit CEL#1 Odessa Avenue, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California</i>	Outside
LA-12362	Bonner, Wayne and Kathleen Crawford	2013	<i>Cultural Resources Records Search and Site Visit Results for T-Mobile West, LLC Candidate SV00180A (LA180/ST Catherine Church) 18115 Sherman Way, Reseda, Los Angeles County, California</i>	Outside
LA-12505	Wallace, James, Sara Dietler and Linda Kry	2012	<i>Draft Phase I Cultural Resources Assessment San Fernando Valley Water Recycling Project, City of Los Angeles, California</i>	Within
LA-12521	Fulton, Phil	2012	<i>Cultural Resource Assessment Verizon Wireless Services Shirley Facility, City of Reseda, Los Angeles County, California</i>	Outside

Source: South Central Coastal Information Center June 2018

## 4.1.2 Previously Identified Cultural Resources

The SCCIC records search identified eight previously recorded cultural resources within a 1-mile radius of the project site. No cultural resources were identified within or adjacent to the project site. These resources are listed in **Error! Reference source not found.** below.

**Table 2 Previously Identified Cultural Resources within a 1-mile Radius of the Project Site**

Primary Number	Resource Type	Description	Recorder(s) and Year(s)	NRHP/CRHR Status	Relationship to Project Site
P-19-000111	Prehistoric site	Encino Site; lithic scatter; burials; caches; habitation debris	C. Rozaire 1952; J. Chartkoff 1968	Insufficient information	Outside
P-19-175251	Historic-era building	Reseda Elementary School	C. McAvoy 1995	NRHP eligible; CRHR listed	Outside
P-19-187950	Historic-era building	Military property	PAR Environmental Services, Inc. 2006	Ineligible for NRHP and CRHR	Outside
P-19-189775	Historic-era building	Lemay commercial building	Shannon L. Loftus 2010	Ineligible for NRHP; not evaluated for CRHR	Outside
P-19-189967	Historic-era building	Valley Coordinated Children’s Services	Shannon L. Loftus 2011	Ineligible for NRHP; not evaluated for CRHR	Outside
P-19-190015	Historic-era building	Grangers Classic Auto Collision Repair	Shannon L. Loftus 2011	Ineligible for NRHP; not evaluated for CRHR	Outside
P-19-190063	Historic-era building	AT&T Building	K.A. Crawford 2012	Ineligible for NRHP; not evaluated for CRHR	Outside
P-19-190594	Historic-era building	St. Catherine of Siena Church	K.A. Crawford 2012	Ineligible for NRHP; not evaluated for CRHR	Outside

Source: South Central Coastal Information Center June 2018

## 4.2 Native American Heritage Commission

Rincon contacted the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) on July 20, 2018 to request a Sacred Lands File (SLF) search and request a list of Native American contacts. The NAHC responded on July 28, 2018 stating that the results of the SLF search were negative and provided a list of 16 Native American representatives. Rincon prepared and mailed letters to the contacts on August 1, 2018 to request their input regarding Native American cultural resources within or adjacent to the project site. Rincon followed up with Native American contacts by telephone on September 12, 2018 (Appendix B [Confidential]).

- On August 8, 2018, Jairo F. Avila, on behalf of the Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians (FTBMI), responded to Rincon stating that the project site is within the traditional territory of the Tataviam, and that six village sites are located within a one-mile radius of the project site. Mr. Avila additionally indicated that Rancho El Encino, a prehistoric/historic archaeological site, is located within a one-mile radius of the project site. This site was identified in the SCCIC records search as the Encino Site (P-19-000111); according to the site record, it was destroyed on September 30, 1977 during the construction of the Encino Golf Course. Mr. Avila requested that his comments and a request for formal Assembly Bill (AB) 52 consultation be forwarded onto the lead CEQA agency, the City of Los Angeles, Bureau of Engineering (BOE) for the project, at which time he could provide further information. Rincon responded on August 8, 2018 stating that the lead CEQA agency would be reaching out the tribe under formal AB 52 consultation procedures.
- On August 8, 2018, Jessica Mauck, on behalf of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, responded stating that the project site was outside of the Serrano ancestral territory, and as such the tribe would not request to be involved in the project.
- On August 8, 2018, Brandy Salas, on behalf of the Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation, responded requesting that if ground disturbance for the project was to occur, the tribe would like to consult. Andrew Salas, Chairperson for the Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation responded to the BOE’s AB 52 consultation request.
- On September 12, 2018, Patrick Tumamit of the Barbareno/Ventureno Band of Mission Indians asked if local tribes had been notified of the project and stated that he had no comments.
- On September 12, 2018, Chairperson Anthony Morales of the Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians stated that although the area is developed, the AP may still be considered sensitive due to proximity to the river. He also requested to be informed if any Native American monitoring will be required for the project.
- On September 12, 2018, Joseph Ontiveros of the Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians stated that he would defer to Anthony Morales of the Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians for the project.
- On September 12, 2018, Charles Alvarez stated that he had no comments on the project.
- On November 30, 2018, the Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation responded stating that they would like to consult for the project under Section 106. As the agency responsible for Section 106 compliance for the project, the ACOE will be conducting government-to-government consultation with the Kizh Nation.

On November 30, 2018, the FTBMI stated that they would like to consult in accordance with Section 106. As the agency responsible for Section 106 compliance for the project, the ACOE will be conducting government-to-government consultation with the FTBMI.

An updated SLF search was requested in July of 2021 as the project transitioned from a Categorical Exemption to a Mitigated Negative Declaration. The SLF results were returned on July 21, 2021 indicating positive finding.

Under AB 52, consultation efforts were initiated with the requesting tribes by the City. Only the FTBMI responded to the City requesting consultation. On July 19, 2021, City representatives held a meeting with Mr. Jairo Avila of the FTBMI. During the consultation meetings, it was revealed that the Los Angeles River is considered a Tribal Cultural Resource by the FTBMI and other Los Angeles area tribes which would likely lead to positive SLF searches for any projects in proximity to the river. Mr. Avila acknowledged that the project occurs within a highly disturbed area and that monitoring

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may not be required during construction and that standard unanticipated discovery measures were to be implemented for the project. Mr. Avila requested that the unanticipated discovery measure be amended to reflect that the consulting tribes (i.e., FTBMI) be notified of along with an archaeologist of unanticipated discoveries to assist in the identification and significance evaluations of any such resources. The City agreed to this request and the measure was amended to include these changes.

### 4.3 Previous Historic Resources Surveys

The City of Los Angeles maintains an active city-wide survey program aimed at identifying and recording historic resources within the city. Organized by CPA, SurveyLA conducted field surveys from 2010 through 2017 and has completed surveys of the entire city of Los Angeles. The proposed project site spans two CPAs, the Reseda-West Van Nuys and the Encino-Tarzana CPA.

A review of SurveyLA findings for both CPAs indicates that portions of two resources identified as eligible by SurveyLA are located within the project site, Reseda Park and Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area. Also included within the project site are three pedestrian bridges at Vanalden Avenue, Amigo Avenue, and within Reseda Park, which were noted by SurveyLA as possibly significant but requiring additional research. In addition to those within the project site, there are three SurveyLA-identified resources located adjacent to the project site; they include Birmingham General Hospital, the Los Angeles Jewish Home for the Aged, and Reseda High School. All SurveyLA-identified resources within or adjacent to the project site are listed in **Error! Reference source not found.** below. Reseda Park, Sepulveda Basin Recreation area and the Vanalden and Amigo Avenue and Reseda Park pedestrian bridges were evaluated as part of this study. Evaluations are presented in the Results section of this study.

**Table 3 SurveyLA-Identified Historical Resources Within or Adjacent to the Project Site**

Name	Description	Recorder(s) and Year(s)	Status Code	Relationship to Project Site
Reseda Park	Municipal Park	SurveyLA; 2015	3S; 3CS; 5S3	Within
Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area	Municipal Recreation Facility/Flood Control Measure	SurveyLA; 2015	3S; 3CS; 5S3	Within
Vanalden Avenue Pedestrian Bridge	Pedestrian bridge over the LA River	SurveyLA; 2015	None assigned	Within
Amigo Avenue Pedestrian Bridge	Pedestrian bridge over the LA River	SurveyLA; 2015	None assigned	Within
Reseda Pedestrian Bridge	Pedestrian bridge over the LA River	SurveyLA; 2015	None assigned;	Within
Birmingham General Hospital	Former Military Hospital (current high school campus)	SurveyLA; 2015	3S; 3CS; 5S3	Adjacent
Los Angeles Jewish Home for the Aged	Retirement Home	SurveyLA; 2015	None assigned	Adjacent
Reseda High School	High School Campus	SurveyLA; 2015	3S; 3CS; 5S3	Adjacent

Source: South Central Coastal Information Center June 2018

Several documents relating to the context and evaluation of bridges were consulted for this study. In particular, the *Caltrans Statewide Historic Bridge Inventory Update Survey and Evaluation of Common Bridge Types* and corresponding *Structure Maintenance & Investigation* tables were

consulted. Six bridges cross the LA River near the proposed project site. Listed in Figure 4 below, Caltrans found all bridges ineligible for listing in the NRHP.

**Table 4 Vehicular Bridges within Proximity of the Project Site**

Bridge Name	Bridge Number	Date of Construction	Caltrans Finding of Eligibility	Relationship to Project Site
Wilbur Avenue	53 1058	1959	Ineligible for NRHP	Outside
Reseda Boulevard	53 1057	1959	Ineligible for NRHP	Outside
Los Angeles River (Victory Boulevard)	53C0063	1957	Ineligible for NRHP	Outside
Lindley Avenue	53 1055	1959	Ineligible for NRHP	Outside
White Oak Avenue	53 1054	1959	Ineligible for NRHP	Within
Balboa Boulevard	53 1052	1958	Ineligible for NRHP	Outside

Source: Caltrans, *Structure Maintenance & Investigations*, 2018

## 5 Methods

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### 5.1 Survey Methods

#### 5.1.1 Archaeological Field Survey

Rincon conducted an archaeological field survey of the project on August 6, 2018. The survey examined areas of exposed ground surface within the project site, beginning at Vanalden Avenue and moving east to White Oak Avenue. From White Oak Avenue, the survey proceeded to the east along the north side of the Los Angeles River and terminated at Balboa Boulevard. Approximately 95 percent of the undeveloped portions of the project site were surveyed; in some areas, access was restricted by fencing and locked gates. However, Rincon surveyed these areas along the publicly accessible side of the alignment and visually inspected the ground surface from a distance.

All areas of exposed ground surfaces were examined for artifacts (e.g., flaked stone tools, tool-making debris, stone milling tools, ceramics, fire-affected rock), ecofacts (marine shell and bone), soil discoloration that might indicate the presence of a cultural midden, soil depressions, and features indicative of the former presence of structures or buildings (e.g., standing exterior walls, postholes, foundations) or historic debris (e.g., metal, glass, ceramics).

#### 5.1.2 Historical Resources Field Survey

On August 6, 2018, Rincon Architectural Historian Rachel Perzel conducted an intensive-level historical resources survey of the project site, including visual inspection of the LA River. The survey of the LA River began at Vanalden Avenue on the River's south bank and moved east to White Oak Avenue. From White Oak Avenue, the survey proceeded to the east along the north side of the LA River and terminated at Balboa Boulevard.

The purpose of this survey was to identify and photograph any built environment resources over 45 years of age that may be impacted by the project. The field survey consisted of a visual inspection of all built environment features located within or adjacent to the project site to assess the overall condition and integrity, and to identify and document any potential character-defining features. Field documentation included notes and digital photographs of the project area and its vicinity to support field observations.

### 5.2 Research Methods

Archival research for this study was completed from December 2018 to February 2019. Research methodology focused on the review of a variety of primary and secondary source materials relating to the history and development of the area surrounding the project site in addition to the history of the LA River itself. Sources included, but were not limited to, historic maps, aerial photographs, and written histories of the area. A list of repositories that were consulted to identify research materials pertinent to the project site is included below. Rincon additionally consulted the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, Survey LA Findings, and several



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resources that pertain to bridge context and evaluation in an effort to identify historical resources that may be impacted by the proposed project.

- University of Southern California Digital Library
- The Online Archive of California
- Tessa-Digital Collections of the Los Angeles Public Library
- The Huntington Digital Library
- Historic aerial photographs accessed via the University of California Santa Barbara digital aerial photography collections
- Unites States Geological Survey Maps
- US Army Corps of Engineers Digital Library
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps
- University of California digital archive (Calisphere)
- The Digital Public Library of America
- Applicable survey reports produced by SurveyLA
- Historical newspaper articles accessed via newspapers.com
- Previously conducted environmental documents that include reference to the LA River
- Multiple resources pertaining to the context and evaluation of bridges including
  - *A Context for Common Historic Bridge Types* (Parsons Brinckerhoff and Engineering and Industrial Heritage)
  - Caltrans Statewide Historic Bridge Inventory Update (Andrew Hope, Caltrans)
  - *Los Angeles River Bridges Staff Presentation* (Office of Historic Resources, September 2007)
  - City of Los Angeles Monumental Bridges 1900-1950-Historic Context and Evaluation Guidelines (Caltrans)
- Other sources as noted in the references list

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## 6 Results

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### 6.1 Archaeological Resources

No archaeological resources (prehistoric or historic) were identified during the field survey. Visibility of native ground surface was low (less than 5 percent), as the project site is almost entirely developed by the channelization of the LA River (Figure 7) and surrounding residential areas. Inspection of isolated areas of exposed ground surface within the project site by the archaeologist indicates extensive disturbance of surficial deposits. Given the developed nature of the project site and its proximity to the LA River, it is likely that subsurface sediments have been extensively disturbed. This finding suggests that there is a relatively low potential for substantial intact cultural deposits to be present in the project site.

**Figure 7 View of Project Site East of Vanalden Avenue; Looking East along the River**



## 6.2 Historical Resources

As a result of the built environment field survey, seven properties were identified within the boundaries of the project site. The LA River, the Vanalden and Amigo Avenue and Reseda Park pedestrian bridges, Reseda Park and Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area were recorded and evaluated for listing in the NRHP, CRHR, and as City of Los Angeles HCMs on California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 523 series forms (Appendix C); a summary of their evaluation is provided below.

### 6.2.1 Los Angeles River

#### **Physical Description**

The proposed project site includes the western half of part six, from Reseda to Balboa Boulevard, and the eastern two-thirds of part seven, from Vanalden Avenue to Reseda Boulevard, of the LA River. Consistent with the rest of the channelized LA River, these portions are composed of several elements that include the River channel and bottom, its banks, and associated elements such as bridges, vegetation, and fencing. From Vanalden Avenue to just east of the Orange Line Busway, the River bottom is concrete-lined with a channel running its center (Figure 8); moving east towards the Sepulveda Dam, the bottom of the River transitions to soft-bottomed. Both portions feature sloped, concrete and/or grouted cobble-lined banks interrupted with formed concrete drains; paved service roads line the north and south banks throughout. While vegetation within and close to the River is limited in the western portion of the project site, east of the River's transition to soft-bottomed, an abundance of mature vegetation is extant within the channel. A variety of metal-framed fencing is present throughout; fencing is primarily contained to street ends to prevent unlawful public access.

Ten bridges cross the River over the project site. These include three pedestrian bridges (Vanalden and Amigo Avenues and just west of Etiwanda Avenue within Reseda Park) six vehicle bridges, at Balboa Boulevard, Lindley Avenue, Reseda Boulevard, Wilbur Avenue, White Oak Avenue (described above) and Victory Boulevard, and one busway, the Orange Line Busway, located within Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area.

All pedestrian bridges, constructed concurrently with the River's channelization, are concrete-constructed. Spanning from bank to bank with additional structural support at the River's center, the bridges feature a simple linear incised design out their out-facing walls. Vehicular bridges, constructed between 1957 and 1959, are primarily composed of concrete piers and abutments supporting metal-framed concrete decks. All bridge decks are lined on both sides with concrete sidewalks. While their railing designs vary, they are constructed primarily of metal throughout. The Orange Line Busway, constructed between 2003 and 2005, features a simple design consistent with the vehicle bridges described above.

**Figure 8 The LA River as Viewed from the Proposed Project Site Near Wilbur Avenue;  
Photograph taken from the South Bank of the River Facing Northeast**



### **Developmental History**

Following a comprehensive flood control plan put forward by the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD) in 1935, a channel to accommodate LA River flood waters in the rapidly expanding San Fernando Valley was excavated. Research suggests that this excavated area was 6.7 miles long, from Owensmouth Avenue in Canoga Park to Havenhurst Avenue in Encino, encompassing the project site (Gumprecht 2001). In the same year, with funding provided by the Works Progress Administration, projects within the LACDA were placed under supervision of the ACOE. From 1939 to 1959 the 51-mile LA River was channelized in 46 parts. Those partially included in the project site, parts six and seven, were completed in 1955 and 1957 respectively.

### **Significance Evaluation**

Completed in 1955 and 1957 respectively, parts six and seven of the LA River were channelized, along with the rest of the LA River, as part of the larger LACDA Project. The LACDA Project includes the implementation of a comprehensive flood control plan for the Los Angeles Basin. Originally intended by the LACFCD, the LACDA Project was eventually implemented under the direction of the ACOE. In addition to the channelization of the LA River, the LACDA Project included the construction of several other permanent flood control measures, dams and debris basins for example, throughout Los Angeles County. The LACDA Project is one of the most extensive flood control systems ever to be constructed in a metropolitan area (ACOE 1992). Without the LACDA Project components in place, the stable development of the Los Angeles Metropolitan Area and the western San Fernando Valley specifically, would not have been possible.

Due to the size of the LA River and the limited potential for effects within the scope of the proposed project, this study did not include the evaluation of the 51-mile long LA River or of the larger LACDA Project components. Neither the LA River nor the LACDA Project components have been previously documented or evaluated in entirety. A review of previously prepared documentation in combination with the cursory research undertaken for this study indicate that if an evaluation of the LA River were pursued, it would likely result in a finding of eligibility. The LA River is therefore presumed eligible for listing in the NRHP, CRHR, and for local designation, making it a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.

The LA River is presumed to be individually eligible for listing in the NRHP, CRHR, and for local historic designation as a primary component of the (presumed) Potential LA River Historic District. The River is assumed eligible under Criterion A, for its association with important events, the LACDA Project and its impacts on the Los Angeles Metropolitan Area, and Criterion C, for its innovations in the area of engineering. Constructed by the ACOE in 46 parts between 1939 and 1959, the period of significance associated with the River spans these years (1939-1959).

The portions of the River included in the project site appear to contribute to the historic significance of the LA River and are presumed to be eligible contributors to the (presumed) Potential Los Angeles River Historic District. The period of significance for these portions of the River is 1955 (part six; from the Sepulveda Dam to Reseda Boulevard) and 1957 (part seven; from Reseda Boulevard to Corbin Avenue). These portions of the River appear to retain a high degree of historic integrity. Their integrity of location is fully intact. Alterations since the time of their construction have primarily consisted of routine maintenance activities that have been similarly undertaken throughout the resource; their integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association remain intact. The area surrounding the project site has become increasingly developed in the decades since these portions of the river were channelized. However, aerial imagery suggests that this process was well under way at the time of their construction; their integrity of setting remains relatively intact. As properties that are eligible for federal, state, or local designation, the portions of the LA River located within the project site are considered historical resources for the purposes of CEQA.

Although presumed eligible as part of the Potential Los Angeles River Historic District, the portions of the River within the project site do not appear eligible for listing in the NRHP, CRHR, or as City of Los Angeles HCMs as individual resources under any significance Criteria (A/1/1 through D/4/4). They represent a small component of the expansive network of elements comprising the system of flood control in place in Los Angeles County, and small portions of the LA River itself. Constructed under the direction of the ACOE between 1939 and 1959, this system includes debris basins, dams (flood control basins), and bridges, in addition to the 51-mile long LA River. The historic significance of parts six and seven of the River is tied directly to their function as part of the 51-mile long LA River, constructed to provide flood control to the Los Angeles Basin.

## 6.2.2 Vanalden Avenue, Amigo Avenue, and Reseda Park Pedestrian Bridges

### Physical Description

Three pedestrian bridges cross the LA River within the project site. Pedestrian bridges are located at the River's intersection with Vanalden Avenue (Figure 9), Amigo Avenue (Figure 10), and just west of Etiwanda Avenue within Reseda Park (Figure 11). Measuring roughly seven feet in width and 170 feet in length, the bridges connect discontinuous segments of the streets of off which they are located, essentially extending them over the River. Their reinforced concrete decks are slightly arched and supported on the north and south by the banks of the River. The Vanalden and Amigo Avenue Bridges are supported near the span's center by a single concrete pier while the Reseda Park pedestrian bridge is similarly supported by two piers. Solid concrete walls flank bridge decks, the outsides of which are minimally decorated with horizontal incising. While Vanalden and Amigo Avenues do not feature any railings, walls of the Reseda Park Bridge are lower and topped with a metal railing system. The bridges are approached at the north and south ends by concrete walkways providing access by foot from public ROWs.

**Figure 9 Vanalden Avenue Pedestrian Bridge; Photograph Taken from the Southeast, Northwest-Facing**



**Figure 10 Amigo Avenue Pedestrian Bridge; Photograph Taken from the Southwest, Northeast-Facing**



**Figure 11 Reseda Park Pedestrian Bridge; Photograph Taken from the Southeast, Northwest-Facing**

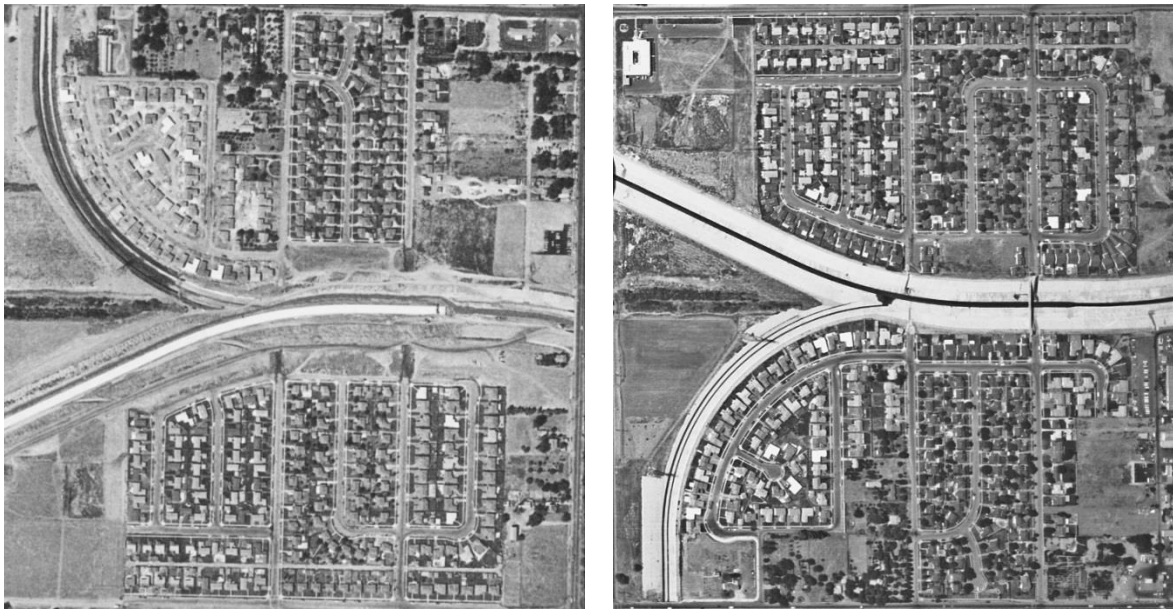




## Developmental History

The LA River was channelized under the direction of the ACOE between 1939 and 1959. A primary component of the LACDA Project, parts six and seven were completed in 1955 and 1957 respectively. Crossing over the LA River within these parts, the Vanalden and Amigo Avenue, and Reseda Park pedestrian bridges appear to have been constructed concurrency with or directly following the River's channelization, circa 1956 (Figure 12). A review of historic newspaper articles indicates that as early as 1952, the Los Angeles City Council was planning for the construction of bridges throughout the San Fernando Valley, deemed a necessity to ensure pedestrian access across the river in the expanding suburban community following the River's channelization. Archival research failed to identify the architect or builder of the bridges and additionally failed to confirm the funding source for their construction.

**Figure 12 Aerial Images of the Amigo Avenue Pedestrian Bridge Prior to and Following Construction; Photographs Taken in 1956 and 1960**



Photograph obtained from University of California Santa Barbara Digital Aerial Photograph Collection.

## Historical Evaluation

SurveyLA previously identified the Vanalden and Amigo Avenue and Reseda Park pedestrian bridges in the 2015 *The Reseda-West Van Nuys Historic Resources Survey Report*. In the report, SurveyLA indicated that the bridges were constructed in 1939 and stated that more research was necessary to determine their significance (SurveyLA 2015). A review of historic aerial photography confirms that the extant pedestrian bridges were constructed concurrently or directly following the River's channelization, circa 1956. While a crossing existed in Reseda Park prior to the River's channelization, aerial imagery clearly indicates that the old crossing was removed, and the current crossing constructed to its east around the time of the River's channelization.

The Vanalden and Amigo Avenue, and Reseda Park pedestrian bridges appear ineligible for listing in the NRHP, CRHR, or as a City of Los Angeles HCM. Archival research failed to confirm that the bridges poses an important and direct connection to a significant historic event, pattern of events, or trend. Constructed concurrent with the River's channelization, the construction of the pedestrian

bridges appears to be a simple necessity due to the changing form of the River in combination with increased suburbanization of the area, rather than a component of channelization project itself (A/1/1). The bridges are not known to be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past (B/2/2). Within the context of bridge construction, these facilities are not technologically significant; nor do they illustrate engineering advances (C/3/3). They are utilitarian examples of post-war pedestrian improvements, of which there are many in the San Fernando Valley. They are unlikely to yield important information in history (D/4/4). The Vanalden and Amigo Avenue and Reseda Park pedestrian bridges additionally appear ineligible as contributing to any known or potential historic districts. As properties that are ineligible for federal, state, or local designation, the Vanalden and Amigo Avenue, and Reseda Park pedestrian bridges are not considered historical resources for the purposes of CEQA.

### 6.2.3 Reseda Park

#### **Physical Description**

Reseda Park is a 41-acre municipal park bounded by Victory Boulevard, Kittridge Street, Reseda Boulevard and Etiwanda Avenue. The Los Angeles River traverses the park diagonally with a northwest-to-southwest aspect, essentially dividing it into two triangular sections, one on the north and on one the south bank of the River. Built on a level, rectangular tract, the Park is landscaped with large expanses of lawn and mature trees of several varieties. Areas north of the river consist chiefly of open, landscaped spaces, though a paved area with picnic tables and a maintenance yard are located at the east near the Etiwanda Avenue frontage. Located on the south side of the River, the man-made Reseda Park Lake dominates the central section of the Park (Figure 13). Fronting Victory Boulevard, at the southern end of the property, are athletic and recreational facilities including a swimming pool, basketball and tennis courts, baseball diamonds, and a playground. The pool complex includes a two-story, Spanish Colonial Revival-style pool house building and a one-story, Mid-Century Modern-style community center building to the east of the swimming pool. Circulation through the park occurs along a network of curvilinear dirt and concrete paths and a pedestrian bridge that crosses the River near where Etiwanda Avenue abuts the watercourse.

**Figure 13 View from Within Reseda Park with the LA River at Left and Reseda Park Lake at Right; View to the Southeast**



## Developmental History

In 1929, Reseda residents approved a \$100,000 bond measure to finance the acquisition of property and construction of facilities for Reseda Park (SurveyLA 2015). This development is consistent with historic trends in the establishment of municipal parks in Los Angeles. In the period between 1904 and 1931, the construction of new municipal parks in Los Angeles boomed as city officials attempted to address the impacts of rapid urban growth occurring in the area. Influenced by Progressive Era ideas about health and socialization, officials regarded the recreational facilities of municipal parks as a means for the physical and social improvement of both children and adults (SurveyLA 2017).

Dedicated on July 4, 1931, Reseda Park was the only city-owned park in the west San Fernando Valley and one of three in the entire valley at that time. Notable features completed in the initial phase of construction included Reseda Park Lake, the swimming pool (then called a “plunge”) (Figure 14) and pool house, and 100 acacia and pepper trees (SurveyLA 2015; *Los Angeles Times* March 22, 1931). In 1932 and 1933, workers hired by the Federal Reconstruction Finance Corporation and the County Welfare Department implemented a round of improvements that included the construction of pathways, clearing of three acres and grading of eight acres of land, and planting new trees, shrubs, and flowering plants (The Living New Deal 2019). The channelization of the LA River within the Park in the 1930s sacrificed some land previously reserved for recreational purposes (SurveyLA 2015).

Few additional alterations were made to the Park until after World War II. A 1957 municipal bond provided funds for a round of improvements to parks across Los Angeles. Completed as residential development boomed in the surrounding area, this program included the construction of the 1960 community center, new tennis courts, and other athletics-oriented facilities (*Los Angeles Times* May

5, 1960; NETROnline). The influence of the 1957 bond measure was additionally reflected in the ca. 1960 parking lot along Victory Boulevard, a requirement of the measure (SurveyLA 2017). In the ensuing decades no major alterations were completed; the Park essentially retains its 1960s form (NETROnline 2019). Improvements occurring outside its period of significance include the addition of a playground and the construction of the extant public restroom buildings.

## Historical Evaluation

While Reseda Park has not been previously formally evaluated, SurveyLA identified the Park in the *Reseda-West Van Nuys Report: Historic Districts, Planning Districts and Multi-Property Resources* in 2015, finding it eligible for listing in the NRHP, CRHR, and for designation as a City of Los Angeles HCM under Criteria A/1/1 and C/3/3.

In concurrence with SurveyLA, this evaluation found that Reseda Park appears eligible for listing in the NRHP, CRHR, and for designation as a City of Los Angeles HCM as a historic district under Criteria A/1/1. The park is associated with the trend to expand recreational facilities in service of the growing population of the west San Fernando Valley beginning in the 1930s and continuing into the 1960s. Reseda Park additionally appears eligible under Criterion C/3/3 as excellent example of the municipal park property type. Although established on the cusp of the period of significance for eligible municipal parks (1904-1931), it meets the eligibility standards and possesses many of the character-defining features of the municipal park property type, as outlined by SurveyLA; it retains integrity of design, setting, location, feeling, and association. The period of significance for Reseda Park extends from 1929, when construction of the Park was approved, to 1963, following improvements funded by the 1957 parks bond measure (SurveyLA 2015).

Reseda Park does not appear eligible under any remaining criteria. Research conducted for this study failed to identify any associations with individuals important to our past; therefore the subject property appears ineligible under Criteria B/2/2. Further, the property has not yielded and is unlikely to yield important information regarding pre-history or history, and, as a result, appears ineligible under Criteria D/4/4. Reseda Park appears ineligible as a contributor to any known or potential historic districts. As a property that is eligible for federal, state, and local designation, Reseda Lake Park is considered a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.

**Figure 14 Reseda Park Lake, September 9, 1960**



Photograph obtained from Tessa Digital Collections of the Los Angeles Public Library (Order No. 00111152).

Caption: "Time for lunch-Mark Caruso, 3 ½ of Van Nuys, feeds his friends, the ducks, during visit to Reseda Park which is close enough to the business district to provide a scenic spot for quick picnic lunches. Boats are for rent at the park's lake. Hot summer days fins park pool a popular spot."

## 6.2.4 Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area

### Physical Description

Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area occupies approximately three-square miles and contains a recreational facility, wildlife preserve, water reclamation plant, and flood control dam and basin. Located in an urbanized area of the Encino neighborhood of Los Angeles, it is bounded by Victory Boulevard to the north, the U.S. 101 freeway to the south, the Interstate 405 freeway to the east and White Oak Avenue and Balboa Boulevard to the west. The LA River traverses the property (Figure 15) following a mostly straight northwest-to-southwest course, while Haskell Creek flows directly north-to-south near the eastern end of the property.

Within the property are several athletic field complexes, a radio-controlled plane field, Lake Balboa/Anthony C. Beilenson Park, the Japanese Garden, the Donald C. Tillman Water Reclamation Plant, and the Balboa, Encino, and Woodley Lakes golf courses. Public park and athletics facilities occupy nearly all of the property, with the wildlife reserve, water treatment plant, and dam concentrated at the east end of property. Major buildings on the property include the Mid-Century Modern-style club house at the Sepulveda Golf Course, the stylistically non-descript Lake House, the Modern-style Los Angeles Recreation and Parks Department administrative building, a utilitarian-style building housing the recruitment office of multiple U.S. armed forces branches, and other buildings associated with the water reclamation plant.

**Figure 15 Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area; Photograph Taken Along the South Bank of the LA River in the Western Portion of the Recreation Area (near Balboa Boulevard); Northwest-facing**



## Developmental History

Located within the Sepulveda Dam Flood Control Basin, the Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area consists of a municipal recreation facility, wildlife reserve, water reclamation plant, and other minor facilities, developed between the 1950s and the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Prior to its use as a recreation facility, the eastern portion of the area now comprising the Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area was established as a component of Los Angeles County flood control. Located within the recreation area, the Sepulveda Dam and retarding basin were constructed in 1941-41. The decision to construct Sepulveda Dam came in response to massive flooding that struck Los Angeles in late early 1938. Following 1938, the ACOE incorporated a dam and retarding basin at the Sepulveda location as part of its larger ongoing LACDA Project. Los Angeles-based construction firm Jahn, Bressi, Bevanda & Gordon won the contract to complete the federally funded Sepulveda Dam project with a \$3.12 million bid (*San Bernardino County Sun* December 8, 1939). Ground was broken in February 1940, and the project reached completion in late 1941, at a cost of approximately \$6.5 million (*Los Angeles Times* February 16, 1940, April 7, 1947).

As early as 1941, City Recreation and Parks Department officials had proposed the development of the 2,000-acre flood control basin reserve for recreational purposes. In 1951, the City of Los Angeles entered a long-term, no-cost lease of lands within the flood basin with the ACOE. Stipulations in this agreement preserved the priority of the property's flood control purpose (*Los Angeles Times* August 2, 1941; SurveyLA 2013). The plans for Sepulveda Basin were part of a larger bond-funded program to build several so-called municipal recreation facilities throughout Los Angeles. Such facilities were differentiated from the municipal park by their relatively large foot print, limited landscaping, and generous provision of purpose-built athletic fields. Planners often located municipal recreation facilities in the suburbs. The new recreation facilities carried some of the same associations with social planning that informed the design of municipal parks earlier in the century (SurveyLA 2017).

The conversion of land at Sepulveda Basin to recreational uses occurred piecemeal over four decades. Historic aerial photographs reveal that, by the mid-1960s, the recreation area included Balboa and Sepulveda golf courses (completed in 1954 and 1957, respectively) located south of the LA River (NETROnline 2019). Into the 1960s, the portion of the property located north of the River remained almost exclusively agricultural in character. In 1966, a renegotiated lease agreement with the ACOE allowed the city to resume development of the recreation area. Facilities were eventually built using monies from the State Recreation and Parks Bonds Fund (adopted in 1964), which additionally financed improvements at Hansen Dam and Knapp Ranch Parks, also located in the San Fernando Valley. Woodley Lakes Golf Course was constructed in 1975 and was the only sizeable facility to be completed at the recreation area during the 1970s (SurveyLA 2017; NETROnline 2019). The city planned to develop such amenities as a theater and a stadium at Sepulveda Basin, but abandoned these proposals in the face of ACOE requirements that only non-permanent buildings be constructed in the flood basin. Improvements continued gradually into the 1980s as former crop fields were redeveloped for Lake Balboa/Anthony C. Beilenson Park (ca. 1980-1989), the Japanese Garden (1984), Donald C. Tillman Water Reclamation Plant (ca. 1980-1995), and Sepulveda Basin Sports Complex (ca. 2010-2012) (NETROnline 2019; SurveyLA 2013).

**Figure 16 Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area-1975**



Photograph obtained from Calisphere Digital Repository (Identifier: 00083457).

Caption: "Today a new 5 mile 'bikes only' path opened in the San Fernando Valley. The path does around the parks surrounding the Sepulveda flood control basin."

## Historical Evaluation

Although not formally recorded and evaluated, Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area was identified by SurveyLA in 2013 as part of the *Encino-Tarzana Community Plan Area Historic Resources Survey Report*. SurveyLA indicated that the property was eligible for listing in the NRHP, CRHR, and for designation as a City of Los Angeles HCM under Criteria A/1/1 and C/3/3.

In concurrence with SurveyLA, this evaluation found that Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area appears eligible for listing in the NRHP, CRHR, and for local designation as a City of Los Angeles HCM as a historic district under Criteria A/1/1. The recreation area is associated with the postwar development of municipal recreational facilities in the Los Angeles area and the postwar urbanization of the San Fernando Valley generally. Meeting the eligibility standards and possessing many of the character-defining features of the municipal recreation facility property type as outlined by SurveyLA, Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area additionally appears eligible under Criterion



C/3/3 as an excellent example of the municipal recreational facility property type. The recreation area retains integrity of design, setting, location, feeling, and association. Its period of significance extends from 1951, when the city entered its lease agreement with the ACOE, to 1984, the year the Japanese Garden was completed (SurveyLA 2013).

Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area does not appear eligible under any remaining eligibility criteria (A/1/1 through D/4/4). Research conducted for this study failed to identify any associations with individuals important to our past; therefore the subject property appears ineligible under Criteria B/2/2. Further, the property has not yielded and is unlikely to yield important information regarding pre-history or history, and as a result, appears ineligible under Criteria D/4/4. Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area appears ineligible as a contributor to any known or potential historic districts. As a property that is eligible for federal, state, and local designation, the Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area is considered a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.

## 6.2.5 White Oak Avenue Bridge (Bridge No. 53-1054)

### Physical Description

The White Oak Avenue Bridge (Figure 17) is a four-lane vehicle bridge constructed of steel and reinforced concrete. Its reinforced concrete deck is supported with a steel I-beam structure that spans the River with abutments sitting on its north and south banks. The bridge deck is additionally supported by a reinforced concrete pier set in the center of the river channel. Solid concrete walls with minimal horizontal incising consistent with the pedestrian bridges previously described, flank the bridge deck. Its four lanes are separated with a concrete median at center. Concrete sidewalks on which a simple metal railing system is mounted line the deck surface at east and west. The bridge is approached at the north and south ends by concrete sidewalks providing access by foot from public rights-of-way.

**Figure 17 White Oak Avenue Bridge-Photograph Taken from the East on the South Bank of the River; Northwest-facing**



## History and Historic Status

Consistent with the timeline of the River's channelization, the White Oak Avenue Bridge was constructed in 1959. It was evaluated by Caltrans as part of the *Structure Maintenance & Investigations* in 2018 and found to be ineligible for listing in the NRHP (Caltrans 2018). In concurrence with Caltrans, this study finds that the White Oak Avenue Bridge appears ineligible for listing in the NRHP; although not formally evaluated, it additionally appears ineligible for listing in the CRHR, and as a City of Los Angeles HCM. The White Oak Avenue Bridges does not appear to possess an important and direct connection to a significant historic event, pattern of events, or trend (A/1/1). It does not appear to be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past (B/2/2). Within the context of bridge construction, the White Oak Avenue Bridge does not appear to be technologically significant; nor does it appear to illustrate engineering advances (C/3/3). It is an example of an improvement common in the post-war period, when the network of roads throughout the San Fernando Valley was greatly expanding. It additionally appears unlikely to yield important information in history (D/4/4). The Whit Oak Avenue Bridge appears ineligible as a contributor to any known or potential historic districts. As a property that is ineligible for federal, state, or local designation, the White Oak Avenue Bridge is not considered a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.

## 7 Impacts Summary and Conclusions

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### 7.1 Archaeological Resources

The cultural resources records search, Native American outreach, and archaeological field survey did not identify any prehistoric or historic archaeological resources within or adjacent to the project site. The project site has been previously disturbed by the development of urban infrastructure and construction of the LA River channel. No native or undisturbed ground surfaces are present within the project site. Ground disturbances for the project are expected to occur at grade or within soils previously disturbed by surrounding development. In this context, the likelihood of encountering intact subsurface archaeological deposits is minimal.

Rincon recommends a finding of *less than significant impact to archaeological resources* under CEQA. The following measures are recommended as a standard best management practice in the event of an unanticipated discovery of cultural resources during project construction.

#### 7.1.1 Unanticipated Discovery of Cultural Resources

If cultural resources are encountered during ground-disturbing activities, work in the immediate area shall halt and an archaeologist meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for archaeology (National Park Service 1983) shall be contacted immediately to evaluate the find. The consulting tribes (including the Ferndandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians) shall also be notified of the find to assist in the evaluation. Following evaluation, an appropriate treatment should be developed to ensure that archaeological resources are not impacted.

#### 7.1.2 Unanticipated Discovery of Human Remains

The discovery of human remains is always a possibility during ground disturbing activities. If human remains are found, the State of California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. In the event of an unanticipated discovery of human remains, the County Coroner must be notified immediately. If the human remains are determined to be prehistoric, the Coroner will notify the NAHC, which will determine and notify a Most Likely Descendant (MLD). The MLD shall complete the inspection of the site within 48 hours of notification and may recommend scientific removal and nondestructive analysis of human remains and items associated with Native American burials.

## 7.2 Historical Resources

Site-specific research and the intensive-level pedestrian survey conducted for this study identified three historical resources partially located within the project site, the Los Angeles River, Reseda Park, and Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area. Following implementation of the proposed project, the character-defining features and historic integrity of the LA River, Reseda Park, and Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area, will remain intact; all will remain resources eligible for listing in the NRHP, CRHR, and as City of Los Angeles HCMs. Rincon recommends a finding of ***less than significant impact to historical resources*** under CEQA.

CEQA (§21084.1) requires that a lead agency determine if a project may have a significant impact on the environment, including impacts to historical resources. CEQA defines historical resources as those listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the CRHR or those included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in subdivision (k) of §5021.1. The results of the cultural resources records search, SLF search, Native American outreach, archival research, and intensive-level survey of the project site identified three historical resources within the project area; these include the LA River, Reseda Park, and Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area.

According to CEQA, a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource is a project that may have a significant impact on the environment. In terms of historical resources, substantial adverse change results from “physical demolition, deconstruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surrounds such that the significance of an historical resource would be materially impaired” (CEQA Guidelines §15064.5). Furthermore, material impairment is defined as demolition or alteration “in an adverse manner (of) those characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in or eligibility for inclusion in, the California Register” (CEQA Guidelines §15064.5).

## 7.1 Los Angeles River

The recordation and evaluation of the LA River was outside the scope of this study. To ensure that impacts to potential resources were adequately considered, the LA River was presumed eligible for listing in the NRHP, CRHR, and as City of Los Angeles HCM as a historic district. The (presumed) Potential Los Angeles River Historic District appears eligible under Criterion A/1/1, for its association with important events, the LACDA project and its resulting impacts on the Los Angeles Metropolitan Area, and Criterion C/3/3, for its innovations in the area of engineering. Accordingly, the portions of the LA River within the project site appear to contribute to the historic significance of the (presumed) Potential Los Angeles River Historic District, making them resources for the purposes of CEQA.

Being a resource associated with flood control, the River’s design represents a focus on function rather than style. There are several character-defining features of the River present in the portions extant within the project site; they include the form of these segments, their placement and shape, and their materials of construction, including their concrete-clad channel and bottom and sloped concrete and grouted cobble-clad banks. The presence of a soft bottom in the eastern reaches of the site defines the character of this section. The River’s continued function as a flood-control measure is a feature that defines it and its portions within the project site. Minimally altered beyond routine repairs that have occurred resource-wide, the portions of the River within the project site appear to retain their historic integrity. They are recognizable in relation to their historic appearance.

As mentioned previously, the proposed project will construct a bicycle and pedestrian pathway along the banks of the LA River between Vanalden Avenue and Balboa Boulevard. The actions proposed are small in scale within the context of the channelized LA River, 51-miles long. The project will remain consistent with the *Secretary's Standards*, not resulting in the physical demolition, deconstruction, relocation, or alteration of the LA River. The character-defining features of the River including its form and materials of construction will remain intact despite implementation of the proposed project. Following project implementation, the portions of the River within the project site will continue to contribute to the functionality of the LA River as a measure of flood control. The River in entirety will retain its historic function, consistent with its current function. The historic integrity of the River will remain intact. The presumed eligibility of the LA River will not be impacted by the proposed project.

## 7.2 Reseda Park & Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area

As a result of this study, Reseda Park appears eligible for listing in the NRHP, CRHR, and as a City of Los Angeles HCM under Criteria A/1/1 for its association with the expansion of recreational facilities necessary to serve the growing population of the west San Fernando Valley beginning in the 1930s and continuing into the 1960s and under Criterion C/3/3 as excellent example of the municipal park property type. The character-defining features of Reseda Park include its layout, spatial relationships, its circulation, and many of the natural and manmade features contained within including its Spanish Colonial Revival pool complex and Mid-Century Modern community center building.

Similarly, as a result of this study, Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area appears eligible for listing in the NRHP, CRHR, and as a City of Los Angeles HCM under Criteria A/1/1 for its association with the postwar development of municipal recreational facilities in the Los Angeles area and the postwar urbanization of the San Fernando Valley and under Criterion C/3/3 as excellent example of the municipal recreational facility property type. The character-defining features of Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area include its layout and spatial relationships, its large scale and its generous purpose-specific athletic fields.

The proposed project will not result in the physical demolition, deconstruction, relocation, or alteration of Reseda Park or Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area and will be consistent with the *Secretary's Standards* in relation to both resources. The proposed project will construct a bicycle and pedestrian pathway along the south bank of the LA River through Reseda Park and along the north bank of the LA River through Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area. The proposed pathway will be constructed on the paved service road extant along the banks of the River. The actions proposed are small in scale when considered in the context of the size of each resource (Reseda Park: 41-acres; Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area: three-square miles). Proposed actions are confined to a small portion of each park, a linear footprint along the River.

Following implementation of the proposed project, Reseda Park and Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area will be used for their historic purpose and remain intact examples of the municipal park and municipal recreation facility property types. They will retain their current visual, spatial, and contextual relationships, which are consistent with the historic period. None of the large-scale features that contribute to their significance (the pool house or Reseda Lake in the case of Reseda Park or existing athletic fields in the case of Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area) will be altered by the proposed project. Additionally, the intent and use of Reseda Park and Sepulveda Basin Recreation

Area, as public facilities, will remain intact following implementation of the proposed project. The new bike trail will not destroy any historic materials and will be compatible with the size, scale and features that characterize the properties. The physical features which convey the historic significance of each resource will remain intact and both facilities will retain their integrity and federal, state, and local eligibility as a result. As such, the project is consistent with the *Secretary's Standards* and will not materially impair or result in significant impacts to either historical resource.

### 7.3 Adjacent Resources

A review of SurveyLA findings indicates that three SurveyLA-identified resources are located adjacent to the project site; they include Birmingham General Hospital, the Los Angeles Jewish Home for the Aged, and Reseda High School. Not sited directly on the River, these resources are located adjacent to the on-street improvements included as part of the proposed project. Small in scale, all on-street improvements are to take place in the existing ROW. The current setting of these resources will not be altered by the proposed project; nor will they be obstructed in any way. On-street improvements in the area of these resources consist of the installation of wayfinding signage and mini-traffic circles in addition to the re-stripping of existing roadways and improvement to existing crosswalks.

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# Appendix A

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Record Search Results (Confidential)

# Appendix B

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Native American Outreach (Confidential)

# Appendix C

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Resource Records