

III. Environmental Setting

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A. Overview of Environmental Setting

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

1. Project Location and Environmental Setting

The Project Site is an approximately 55-acre site located at 4024, 4064, and 4200 North Radford Avenue, near the northeastern corner of Radford Avenue and Ventura Boulevard, within the Sherman Oaks–Studio City–Toluca Lake–Cahuenga Pass Community Plan area of the City of Los Angeles (City).¹ More specifically, the Project Site is comprised of two addressed parcels located at 4200 North Radford Avenue (APN 2368-001-028; referred to herein as the North Lot) and 4024 and 4064 North Radford Avenue (APN 2368-005-011; referred to herein as the South Lot), and two unaddressed parcels located within and around the Los Angeles River (APN 2368-001-029) and the Tujunga Wash (APN 2368-001-030). The Project Site is generally bounded by the Los Angeles River and the Tujunga Wash² to the north and east, Colfax Avenue to the east, a public alley to the south, and Radford Avenue to the west. The North Lot and the South Lot are bisected by the Los Angeles River.

a. Existing Conditions

The Project Site is currently improved with 1,179,110 square feet of studio-related uses, including 359,730 square feet of sound stages; 255,510 square feet of production support; 450,060 square feet of production office; and 113,810 square feet of general office.³

¹ The Project Site area after the dedications and mergers proposed for the Project would be approximately 52 acres.

² The Tujunga Wash is a tributary of the Los Angeles River and runs along the eastern boundary of the North Lot.

³ See Section 4.b, “Land Use Plan and Permitted Floor Area,” in Section II, Project Description, of this Draft EIR for definitions.

The North and South Lots are currently improved with multiple buildings and internal access roads. These buildings include 21 sound stages, each ranging in size from approximately 7,000 square feet to approximately 25,000 square feet, as well as production support, production office, and general office uses. The Project Site also contains 52 permanent buildings/structures, various internal roads, basecamps, and outdoor areas. The existing buildings are primarily located at the northernmost point of the North Lot and throughout the entirety of the South Lot.

The existing Project Site supports a variety of media and production uses focused on the creation, development, recording, broadcasting, and editing of recorded and live television programming, live audience productions, feature films, and other audio, visual, and digital media. The activities related to these uses occur both indoors and outdoors within the Project Site. Specific uses and facilities on-site include motion picture, television, and broadcast studios, production activity areas; indoor and outdoor stages; sets and façades; digital, film, video, audio, video game, eSports, and media production areas; recording and broadcasting; sound labs; film editing; film, video, and audio processing areas; sets and props production areas (including spray booths); computer design and graphics; animation; and ancillary facilities related to those activities. Other related uses and facilities that also occur on-site include basecamps; communication facilities; conference facilities; modular/portable bungalows and trailers; studio support facilities; parking; catering facilities; a commissary; special events, audience, and entertainment shows; exhibit spaces; fitness facilities; emergency medical facilities to serve the on-site employees and visitors; emergency generators; above-ground and below-ground storage tanks; pads for utilities and transmission equipment; maintenance and storage facilities; mills/manufacturing facilities; sleeping quarters for on-site personnel; outdoor amenities; security facilities; carports; solar panels; and storage and warehouses.

The Project Site operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In addition, temporary and occasional special events, including production-related and non-production related events, such as premieres, charitable events, community events, commercial events, and non-commercial events, and other special events defined in Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) Section 41.20.1(a), currently occur within the Project Site in accordance with the LAMC. These events generally require approval from the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety (LADBS), Department of City Planning, Bureau of Street Services, Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD), and Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD).

Outdoor production activity areas occur throughout the Project Site. These outdoor production activity areas are comprised of 1,045,000 square feet. Activities associated with these areas include, but are not limited to, setup and take down of sets and various outdoor filming activities and back lot production activities. These areas also provide flexible space for staging, connectivity between active production and supporting uses, housing of production vehicles, equipment storage, basecamps, and emergency vehicle access.

Basecamps are contained within the outdoor production activity areas and are defined as areas that are at, near, or within a filming location, where critical production activities can be coordinated. These areas provide for production activities including, but not limited to, loading, wardrobe, hair, make-up, craft service, parking, and storage of mobile facilities or support vehicles. These existing basecamp activity areas, which comprise approximately 376,000 square feet, typically occur within existing parking areas and other outdoor areas.

As discussed in detail in Section IV.D, Cultural Resources, of this Draft EIR, the initial phase of development within the studio campus commenced in 1928 with construction of the Mack Sennett Studio. Since then, numerous buildings have been developed, and improvements have been made to accommodate a wider range of production uses that have evolved over time. The studio campus was used by various production companies until 1963, when CBS Television became the primary lessee, and later owner, of the studio campus.

Vehicular access to the Project Site is provided by five access points along Radford Avenue, one access point along Colfax Avenue (also known as the Colfax Gate), and two production access points along the alley just south of the Project Site.⁴ Pedestrian access to the Project Site is also available at seven entrance points along Radford Avenue, at the Colfax Gate, and at one entrance point along the public alley south of the Project Site. A bridge that crosses the Los Angeles River provides internal vehicular and pedestrian access between the North Lot and South Lot of the Project Site.

Existing automobile parking is located in multiple above-grade parking structures, which are accessible from both Radford Avenue and Colfax Avenue, as well as surface parking areas throughout the Project Site. A total of 3,095 vehicle spaces are currently provided on the Project Site.

All vehicular access and pedestrian entrances include secure, controlled access and a series of drive aisles that provide internal circulation throughout the Project Site. The public alley adjacent to the southern property line of the South Lot provides separation between the Project Site and the various commercial buildings to the south fronting Ventura Boulevard. The public alley contains numerous overhead power poles and lines with antiquated lighting and deteriorated paving.

The Project Site perimeter is enclosed with chain link, wrought iron, or combination block wall/chain link fencing, some of which is lined with trees, shrubs, and climbing vines. Additional landscaping within the Project Site includes trees and shrubs, and some of the

⁴ Access is limited for the two driveways along Radford Avenue north of the Los Angeles River and for the two production access points along the alley south of the Project Site.

parking areas include landscaped stormwater infiltration basins. Street trees are also located along Radford Avenue.

In terms of topography, the Project Site generally slopes gently toward the direction of the Los Angeles River and Tujunga Wash. Project Site elevations range from approximately 585 to 617 feet AMSL. The majority of the North Lot slopes from its northwestern corner to its southeastern corner with approximately 15 feet of elevation change (from approximately 600 to 585 feet AMSL). The majority of the South Lot generally slopes both from its southwestern corner to its northwestern corner with approximately 27 feet of elevation change (from approximately 617 to 590 feet AMSL), and from its southwestern corner to its southeastern corner with approximately 17 feet of elevation change (from approximately 617 to 600 feet AMSL).

In coordination with Metro and other agencies, the City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering (BOE) has approved the future development of bikeway and greenway improvements along the Los Angeles River within the San Fernando Valley to connect gaps in the Valley River bikeway and to construct other improvements, such as pedestrian walking paths, decorative fencing and gates, roadway crossings, outdoor furnishings, lighting, operational and wayfinding signage, educational interpretive elements, Best Management Practices (BMPs) for stormwater runoff, landscaping, and irrigation.⁵ Anticipated improvements within and in the immediate vicinity of the Project Site include bikeway improvements along Radford Avenue and the Tujunga Wash; a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the Tujunga Wash; median plantings, undergrounding of utilities, sidewalk paving, and improvements to the existing Art Walk along Radford Avenue; fencing, solar lighting, signage, bio-swales, and plantings along the Tujunga Wash; and a new crosswalk and High-Intensity Activated crossWalk (HAWK) signal at Moorpark Street. BOE anticipates completion of these improvements by approximately 2030/2031.

b. Surrounding Uses

The Project Site is located in an urbanized area that is developed with a mix of land uses. Ventura Boulevard, the major arterial in the immediate vicinity of the Project Site, is lined with commercial, institutional, and residential uses. Other major arterials in the Project Site vicinity include Laurel Canyon Boulevard, Moorpark Street, and Colfax Avenue, which are all generally lined with medium- and high-density multi-family residential uses and commercial uses. Immediately west of the South Lot across Radford Avenue are a four-story apartment complex, an automobile repair shop, and a single-story, single-tenant restaurant building. To the west and south of the South Lot is a six-story (approximately 75-foot-high)

⁵ *City of Los Angeles Interdepartmental Correspondence from Bureau of Engineering regarding Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Report for Los Angeles River Way—San Fernando Valley Completion, dated June 1, 2023.*

office building located along Radford Avenue and Ventura Place. Further west of the South Lot is a neighborhood of several multi-family residential developments. Immediately west of the North Lot across Radford Avenue are various one-, two-, and three-story low- and medium-density single- and multi-family residential developments. Further west of the North Lot is a neighborhood of several single-family residential developments. Low- and mid-rise commercial buildings and mini shopping centers occupied by general office uses, restaurants, retail uses, automobile repair shops, motels, and government uses are located south of the Project Site, across the abutting public alley and fronting Ventura Boulevard. Properties along the south side of Ventura Boulevard are improved with similar uses. Further to the south beyond Ventura Boulevard are three- and four-story multi-family residential buildings and Carpenter Community Charter School. To the north and east, the Project Site is bounded by the Tujunga Wash and Los Angeles River, respectively, which provide approximately 97-foot to 150-foot buffers from the residential uses across those channels. Many of the streets in the vicinity of the Project Site are lined with street trees, and the major arterials exhibit substantial commercial signage, including multiple large double-faced, off-site billboard signs along Ventura Boulevard.

2. Land Use Plans

The City's land use plans applicable to the Project Site include the following: the City of Los Angeles General Plan, including the Framework Element, Transportation Element (i.e., Mobility Plan 2035), and Sherman Oaks–Studio City–Toluca Lake–Cahuenga Pass Community Plan; Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan; and the Citywide Urban Design Guidelines. Regional plans that are applicable to the Project Site include: the Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) 2024-2050 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS); and the South Coast Air Quality Management District's (SCAQMD) 2022 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP).

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B. Related Projects

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15130 requires that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) discuss the cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is "cumulatively considerable." Cumulative impacts are defined in Section 15355 of the CEQA Guidelines as "an impact which is created as a result of the combination of a project evaluated in the EIR together with other projects causing related impacts."

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

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

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

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

Cumulative study areas are defined based on an analysis of the geographical scope relevant to each particular environmental issue. Therefore, the cumulative study area for each individual environmental impact issue may vary. For example, a cumulative land use impact generally may only affect the compatibility of uses within the immediate vicinity of the Project Site, while a cumulative air quality impact may affect the entire South Coast Air Basin. The specific boundaries and the projected growth within those boundaries for the cumulative study area of each environmental issue are identified in the applicable environmental issue sections in Section IV, Environmental Impact Analysis, of this Draft EIR.

A list of proposed development projects in the vicinity of the Project Site that could affect conditions in the Project area (e.g., by adding new land uses or floor area and/or generating population increases) was prepared based on information obtained from the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), Department of City Planning, the City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering (BOE), and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP). A total of 13 related Projects have been identified. Ten related development projects have been identified within 0.5 miles of the Project Site at the time of the Notice of Preparation of an EIR (dated June 6, 2023; provided in Appendix A) for inclusion in the cumulative impact analysis provided in this Draft EIR.⁶ These related projects are in varying stages of the approval/entitlement/development process and reflect a diverse range of land uses in the vicinity of the Project Site. Specifically, the related projects comprise a variety of uses, such as residential (including market-rate, affordable, assisted living, and

⁶ *Per LADOT's Transportation Assessment Guidelines (TAG), a project's cumulative transportation analysis must include related projects within 0.5 miles of a project site and 0.25 miles from the farthest study intersection. In addition to these related projects, the Project's Transportation Assessment approved by LADOT also accounts for one more distant related project (i.e., Sportsman Lodge at 12833 Ventura Boulevard) beyond the 0.5- and 0.25-mile distances that could pose cumulative impacts on the transportation system based on the proposed land use, density, and/or location.*

condominium units), commercial (including retail, restaurant, sports facility, and supermarket uses), and recreational uses, as well as mixed-use developments incorporating some or all of these elements. Three additional development projects located beyond 0.5 miles of the Project Site (including the NBC/Universal Project located approximately 1.5 miles east of the Project Site) and 0.25 miles of the furthest outlying study intersections were also considered based on the proposed land use, density, and/or location, and were accounted for with the application of the ambient growth factor.

As discussed in Section II, Project Description, of this Draft EIR, in coordination with Metro and other agencies, BOE has approved the future development of bikeway and greenway improvements along the Los Angeles River within the San Fernando Valley to connect gaps in the Valley River bikeway and to construct other improvements, such as pedestrian walking paths, decorative fencing and gates, roadway crossings, outdoor furnishings, lighting, operational and wayfinding signage, educational interpretive elements, Best Management Practices for stormwater runoff, landscaping, and irrigation. Anticipated improvements within and in the immediate vicinity of the Project Site, include bikeway improvements along Radford Avenue and the Tujunga Wash; a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the Tujunga Wash; median plantings, undergrounding of utilities, sidewalk paving, and improvements to the existing Art Walk along Radford Avenue; fencing, solar lighting, signage, bio-swales, and plantings along the Tujunga Wash; and a new crosswalk and signal at Moorpark Street. BOE anticipates completion of these improvements by approximately 2030/2031. These improvements are listed as a related project. As discussed in Section II, Project Description, consistent with these improvements already envisioned by the City, the Project proposes to construct the Radford Bridge, which would provide pedestrian and bicycle routes across the Tujunga Wash and would include a new studio-related vehicle entry, as well as ramps and/or stairs to provide direct access to the Los Angeles River trail system. In addition, along Radford Avenue, the Project proposes enhanced sidewalks and a landscaped setback and a Class IV protected bikeway from Hoffman Street to the Radford Bridge.

In addition to the improvements proposed by BOE, LADWP proposes implementation of its Trunkline South Project, which includes relocation of the trunk line along Moorpark Street, and associated infrastructure improvements, which include removal of a pump station and water pipe. These LADWP improvements would be implemented after 2028, the anticipated Project buildout year. These improvements are also included as a related project. Note that the Radford Bridge would be constructed after these LADWP improvements are completed. In addition, the City is in the process of updating the Community Plans for the three Community Plan Areas (CPAs) of the Southeast Valley: North Hollywood–Valley Village, Sherman Oaks–Studio City–Toluca Lake–Cahuenga Pass, and Van Nuys–North Sherman Oaks. The Sherman Oaks–Studio City–Toluca Lake–Cahuenga Pass Community Plan is one of the City's 35 community plans, which comprise the Land Use Element of the City's General Plan. Community Plans provide a long-term vision for the diverse

geographies of the City, accommodate the growth anticipated in the City by SCAG, and guide the physical development of neighborhoods through goals, policies, and implementation. Community Plan updates aim at a minimum to meet SCAG projections for the City and each CPA and, in some cases, may exceed those projections for certain CPAs depending on development trends, the availability of transit infrastructure, and consistency with the General Plan Framework Element and the goals and policies of the Community Plan. As of January 2025, the Community Plan Update has not yet been released to the public, and the City is planning on another round of outreach to share its progress and receive community input.

The related projects are listed in Table III-1 on page III-10, which identifies the number, location, and address of each related project along with the types of land uses proposed. The locations of the related projects are shown in Figure III-1 on page III-11. Some of the related projects may not be built out by 2028 (i.e., the anticipated Project buildout year), may never be built, or may be approved and built at reduced densities.⁷ Nevertheless, to provide a conservative cumulative impact analysis, this Draft EIR assumes that the related projects would be fully built out by 2028, unless otherwise noted.

⁷ *Project construction is anticipated to begin in 2025 and could be completed as early as 2028. However, the Applicant is seeking a Development Agreement with a term of 20 years, which could extend the full buildout year to approximately 2048.*

**Table III-1
Related Projects**

| No. | Project Name | Description | Unit/Area |
|---|--|--|-----------|
| 1. | Mixed-Use 4021 Radford Ave. | Residential, Including 6 Affordable | 54 du |
| | | Commercial | 3,474 sf |
| 2. | Mixed-Use 11611 Ventura Blvd. | Assisted Living | 140 du |
| | | Senior Independent Living | 62 du |
| 3. | Commercial 11601 Ventura Blvd. | Commercial | 10,568 sf |
| 4. | Studio City Crossings Market/Retail 11265 Ventura Blvd. | Supermarket | 37,079 sf |
| | | Retail | 1,581 sf |
| 5. | Condominium 11331 Ventura Blvd. | Condominiums | 62 du |
| 6. | Mixed-Use 12544 Ventura Blvd. | Residential | 28 du |
| | | Restaurant | 16,580 sf |
| 7. | Mixed-Use 12548 Ventura Blvd. | Residential | 62 du |
| | | Retail | 10,747 sf |
| | | Commercial | 1,925 sf |
| 8. | Mixed-Use 12582 Ventura Blvd. | Residential | 34 du |
| | | Commercial | 5,100 sf |
| 9. | Harvard–Westlake River Park Project 4141 Whitsett Ave. | 17.2-acre Recreational and Sports Facility | 17.2 ac |
| 10. | Mixed-Use 11311 Camarillo St. | Residential, Including 6 Affordable | 60 du |
| | | Retail | 2,826 sf |
| Additional Related Projects Considered^a | | | |
| 11. | Sportsmen's Lodge 12833 Ventura Blvd. | Residential, Including 78 Affordable | 520 du |
| | | Commercial | 45,945 sf |
| 12. | BOE Bikeway and Greenway River Improvements | Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements and BMPs along LA River/Tujunga Wash | N/A |
| 13. | DWP Trunkline South | Pump Station and Water Pipe | N/A |
| <p><i>ac = acres</i> <i>du = dwelling units</i> <i>sf = square feet</i></p> <p>^a <i>Additional development projects located beyond 0.5 miles of the Project Site (including the NBC/Universal Project located approximately 1.5 miles east of the Project Site) and 0.25 miles of the furthest outlying study intersections were also considered based on the proposed land use, density, and/or location, and were accounted for with the application of the ambient growth factor. Application of the ambient growth factor, in addition to the forecasted traffic generated by the related projects, substantially overestimates the actual traffic volume growth in the Study Area that would likely occur prior to Project buildout, which allows for a conservative, worst-case forecast of cumulative traffic volumes.</i></p> <p><i>Source: Related project information provided by LADOT and BOE; Gibson Transportation Consulting, Inc., 2023.</i></p> | | | |

LEGEND

- Project Site
- Related Project

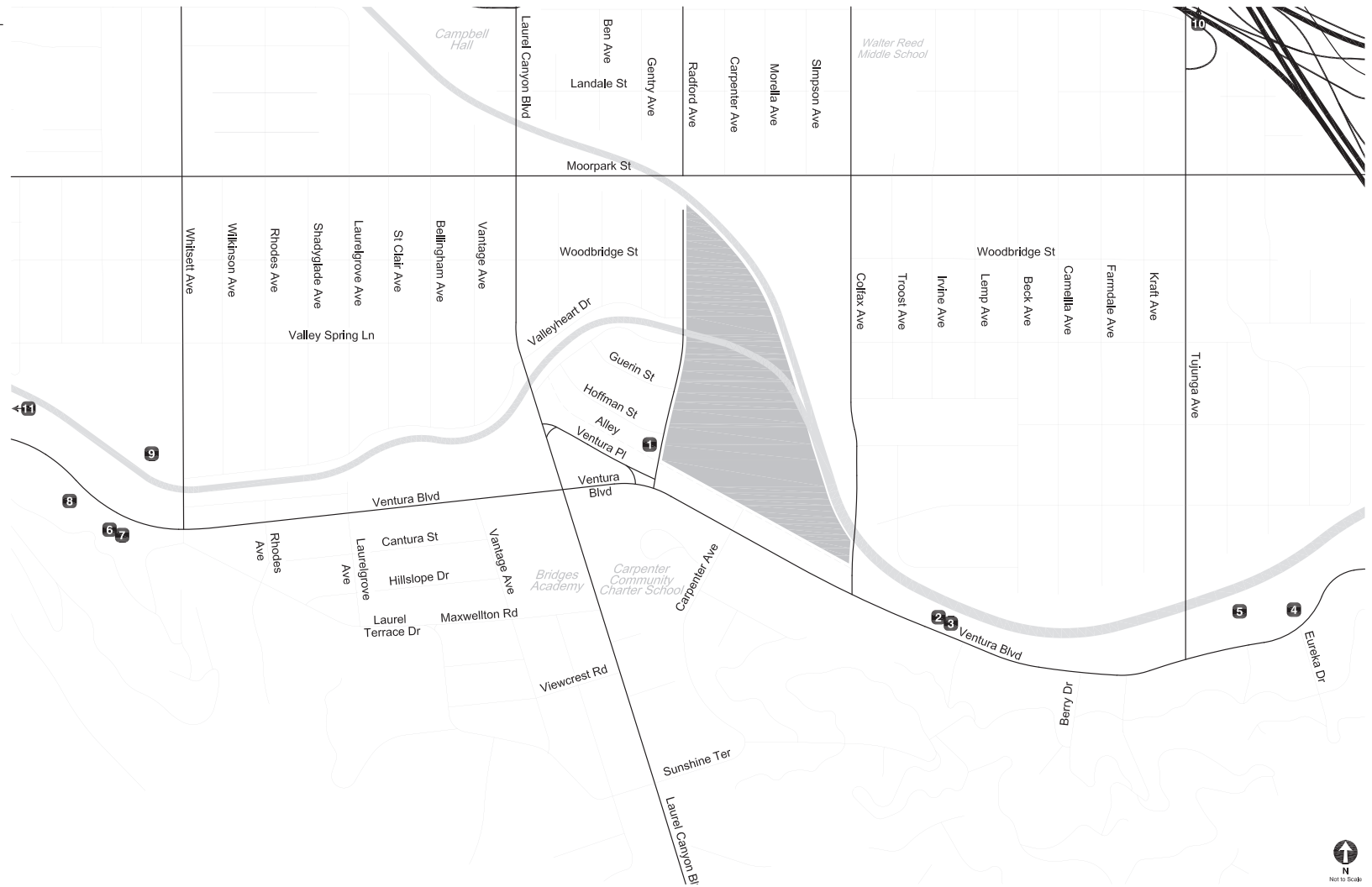


Figure III-1
Related Projects Location Map