


THIS NOTICE WAS POSTED

ON May 03 2024

UNTIL June 03 2024

REGISTRAR – RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
BUREAU OF ENGINEERING
1149 S. BROADWAY, 7th FLOOR
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90015
CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT
NOTICE OF EXEMPTION
 (Articles II and III – City CEQA Guidelines)

2024 096375

 FILED
 May 03 2024
 Dean C. Logan, Registrar – Recorder/County Clerk
 Electronically signed by TINA TRAN

Submission of this form is optional. The form shall be filed with the County Clerk, 12400 E. Imperial Highway, Norwalk, California, 90650, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21152(b). Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21167(d), the filing of this notice starts a 35-day statute of limitations on court challenges to the approval of the project.

| | |
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| LEAD CITY AGENCY AND ADDRESS: City of Los Angeles c/o Bureau of Engineering 1149 S. Broadway, 6 th Floor, MS 939 Los Angeles, CA 90015 | COUNCIL DISTRICT 14 |
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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| PROJECT TITLE: Eastern Avenue Multi-Modal Transportation Improvements (W.O. E700416A / CIP No. XX10) | LOG REFERENCE |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|

PROJECT LOCATION: Eastern Avenue Corridor between Huntington Drive and Valley Boulevard in the Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan Area of the City of Los Angeles. Please see *Project Description* and *Exhibit 1: Project Vicinity* and *Exhibit 2: Project Location*. T.G. 595-E6, 595-E7, 635-E1, 635-E2, 595-D7, 635-D1

DESCRIPTION OF NATURE, PURPOSE, AND BENEFICIARIES OF PROJECT: The Eastern Avenue Multi-Modal Transportation Improvements project (Project) consists of infrastructure improvements to increase safety and mobility, pedestrian and bike facilities, transit accessibility improvements, and other traffic safety enhancements. Project beneficiaries include the general public, residents, and visitors to the area. Please see the “Project Description” continuation in the narrative for more details. On December 4, 2023, the Bureau of Engineering issued Preliminary Design Plans (90% Design Plans) for review and anticipates the Project will enter the “Bid and Award” phase in March 2024.


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|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| CONTACT PERSON Maria Martin | TELEPHONE NUMBER (213) 485-5753 |
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| EXEMPT STATUS: (Check One) | CITY CEQA GUIDELINES | STATE CEQA GUIDELINES |
|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> MINISTERIAL | Art. II, Sec. 2.b | Sec. 15268 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DECLARED EMERGENCY | Art. II, Sec. 2.a(1) | Sec. 15269(a) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EMERGENCY PROJECT | Art. II, Sec. 2.a(2) | Sec. 15269(b)(c) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GENERAL EXEMPTION | Art. II, Sec. 1 | Sec. 15061(b)(3) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION* | Art. III, Sec. 1 Class 1 Cat. 3 | Sec. 15301 (c) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STATUTORY* | Art. _____ | Sec. _____ |

* See Public Resources Code Sec. 21080 and set forth state and city guidelines provisions.

JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT EXEMPTION: This Project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Article 19, Section 15301 (c). Additionally, the Project is exempt pursuant to *Los Angeles CEQA Guidelines* Article III, Section 1, Class 1, Existing Facilities Category 3. *None of the limitations set forth in State CEQA Guidelines 15300.2 apply (see attached narrative).*

IF FILED BY APPLICANT, ATTACH CERTIFIED DOCUMENT OF EXEMPTION FINDING

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| SIGNATURE:  Maria Martin | TITLE: Environmental Affairs Officer Environmental Management Group | DATE: 01/17/2024 |
| RECEIPT NO. | REC'D BY | DATE |

CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION NARRATIVE

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION (Continued)

The Project is approximately 1.5-miles in length and is located east of downtown Los Angeles. The proposed Project would provide infrastructure improvements including street improvements to increase safety and mobility, pedestrian and bike facilities, transit accessibility improvements, and other traffic safety enhancements. The Project is also intended to increase transit services, connectivity to significant destinations, transit ridership, and improve access to employment centers, educational facilities, healthcare facilities, parks and recreational centers. The Project will construct new sidewalks, medians, and curb extensions as well install new street/pedestrian lighting, traffic signals, crosswalks, speed feedback signs, speed tables, landscaping / public art, and street trees. More specifically, the Project is proposing to make the following improvements:

- Construction of new medians between Lombardy Bl and Klamath St, and as needed at the signalized intersections to improve safety for pedestrian crossing.
- Construction of new curb, gutter, and sidewalks along areas adjacent to the major intersections to be improved, as applicable.
- Construction of curb extensions at the following signalized intersections along the corridor:
 - Eastern Ave at Axtell St
 - Eastern Ave at Twinning St
 - Eastern Ave at Templeton St
 - Eastern Ave at Gambier St
 - Eastern Ave at Lombardy Blvd
 - Eastern Ave at Norelle St
- Installation of street and pedestrian lighting
- New traffic signals and crosswalks may be installed at the following intersections if the signal warrant threshold is exceeded, or other conditions are met:
 - Eastern Ave at Twinning St
 - Eastern Ave at Gambier St
 - Eastern Ave at Lynnfield St
 - Eastern Ave at Ruth Swiggett Dr
 - Eastern Ave at Norelle St
- Installation of speed feedback signs near Farmdale Elementary School and parks along Eastern Avenue
- Enhance existing bus stops along the Eastern Avenue corridor at:
 - Eastern Ave at Huntington Dr
 - Eastern Ave at Navarro St
 - Eastern Ave at Converse St
 - Eastern Ave at Templeton St
 - Eastern Ave at Gambier St
 - Eastern Ave at Lombardy Bl
 - Eastern Ave at Klamath Pl
 - Eastern Ave at Norelle St
 - Eastern Ave at Druid St
 - Eastern Ave at Valley Bl
- Safer bicycle facilities that may be implemented within ½ mile radius from Eastern Avenue that will connect to schools and parks along the Eastern Avenue corridor

- Landscaping and street trees

The Project features noted above will allow for:

- Reduction in travel lanes along Eastern Ave, but addition of a continuous two way left turn lanes
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant sidewalks
- Enhanced bus stops
- Better pedestrian and vehicular lighting
- Increased tree canopy
- Safer street crossings for pedestrians
- Safer bicycle facilities

The exact locations of the above improvement may be adjusted during design phase if warranted by additional traffic analysis.

The Project is located in a landslide, liquefaction, fire brush clearance / very high fire hazard severity, and hillside ordinance / grading area zones. See Section III. 3. *Significant Effects* for more information regarding these special areas and transportation best management practices.

The estimated work period to install the above-mentioned improvements will take approximately 17 months between April 2024 to September 2025. The anticipated hours of construction are 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Some Project work may occur near a driveway; however, the Contractor will facilitate the ingress and egress from the driveway. The Project may slightly increase vehicular trips or traffic congestion during construction, however construction is only expected to last approximately 17 months and all temporary traffic control will be done in accordance with the latest version of the Work Area Traffic Control Handbook (WATCH manual).

Unless otherwise stated, the proposed Project will be designed, constructed and operated following all applicable laws, regulations, ordinances and formally adopted City standards including but not limited to:

- Los Angeles Municipal Code
- Bureau of Engineering Standard Plans
- Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction
- Work Area Traffic Control Handbook
- Additions and Amendments to the Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction

II. PROJECT HISTORY

Eastern Avenue is a primary north-south corridor in the neighborhood of El Sereno. It connects the major thoroughfare of Huntington Drive on the north with the major thoroughfare of Valley Boulevard on the south. The street is fronted by multiple small businesses, schools, a recreation center, a senior center, a major church, and single-family residential houses. The existing infrastructure is severely outdated, with poor roadway conditions, broken sidewalks, and limited traffic signals as well as pedestrian crossings. In 2018, the community developed a conceptual plan, Envision Eastern, for part of the corridor that included multiple improvements to make it safer for pedestrians and cyclists, particularly those accessing the schools and government facilities.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A. Basis for Categorical Exemption

The proposed Project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Article 19, Section 15301, Class 1 (c) *Existing Facilities* for the minor alteration of an existing public street to increase

safety and mobility, pedestrian and bike facilities, transit accessibility improvements, and other traffic safety enhancements with no expansion of existing use.

Additionally, this Project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to the *Los Angeles CEQA Guidelines* Article III, Section 1, Class 1 (3) *Existing Facilities* for the minor alteration of an existing public street to increase safety and mobility, pedestrian and bike facilities, transit accessibility improvements, and other traffic safety enhancements with no expansion of existing use to City Engineer standard specifications.

B. Consideration of Potential Exceptions to use of a Categorical Exemption

The State CEQA Guidelines (CCR Sec 15300.2) limit the use of categorical exemptions in the following circumstances:

1. Location. Exemption Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may be significant in a particularly sensitive environment. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.

This Project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Article 19, Section 15301 (c), *Existing Facilities*. Therefore, this exception does not apply.

2. Cumulative Impact. This exception applies when, although a particular project may not have a significant impact, the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.

As an aging major north-south thoroughfare between Huntington Drive and Valley Boulevard, it is anticipated that the need for alteration to improve a severely outdated infrastructure to increase safety and mobility, pedestrian and bike facilities, transit accessibility improvements, and other traffic safety enhancements of a similar nature may occur in the future; however, this Project is not expected to result in any cumulative impacts. While other similar projects - alteration only in scope - are occurring elsewhere in the City, they have been determined to be happening in different neighborhood locations and at different times. Given the nature of the Project, it is not anticipated to result in a cumulative impact when included with successive projects in the same place and over time.

3. Significant Effect. This exception applies when, although the project may otherwise be exempt, there is a reasonable possibility that the project will have a significant effect due to unusual circumstances.

Landslide Zone

According to the Department of Conservation California Geological Survey map showing the location of Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones and Seismic Hazard Zones, collectively referred as “Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation,” for the Los Angeles 7.5-minute Quadrangle, the Project sites are located within an Earthquake-Induced Landslide Zone. These are “areas where previous occurrence of landslide movement, or local topographic, geological, geotechnical and subsurface water conditions indicate a potential for permanent ground displacements such that mitigation as defined in Public Resources Code Section 2693(c) would be required.” Portions of land in the City of Los Angeles, particularly within hillside areas, are designated to be within the Landslide zones. These areas are highly developed with streets, sidewalks, houses and commercial buildings and it is not uncommon to find the need for maintenance and repair in these areas, as such, this not an unusual circumstance. The project consists of the alteration of an existing roadway and there is no reasonable possibility that the project will have a significant effect due to unusual circumstances.

The proposed Project is composed of minor roadway alteration. No new structures for human habitation will be constructed. Roadway corridor alteration and modernization projects are common in the City and throughout areas deemed to be within the landslide area, as such these repairs are not unusual circumstances. The Project would not potentially result in or increase vulnerability to damage caused by landslides and there is no reasonable possibility that the Project will have a significant effect due to unusual circumstances.

Liquefaction Zone

The site lies within a designated liquefaction zone, an area mapped for “historic occurrence of liquefaction, or where local geological, geotechnical, and groundwater conditions indicate a potential for permanent ground displacements,” or where “previous occurrence of landslide movement, or local topographic, geological, geotechnical, and subsurface conditions indicate a potential for permanent ground displacements,” according to the Official Map of Seismic Hazards, released by the California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology. Portions of land in the City, including northern areas along the Santa Monica Mountains, areas along the central belt from Santa Monica to Lynwood, and areas in southern Los Angeles along San Pedro Bay, are designated to be susceptible to liquefaction.

The proposed Project is composed of minor alteration of an existing public street involving no expansion of use. No new structures for human habitation will be constructed. Minor alteration projects are common in the City and throughout areas deemed to be within the liquefaction area, as such these repairs are not unusual circumstances. The Project would not potentially result in or increase vulnerability to damage caused by liquefaction and there is no reasonable possibility that the Project will have a significant effect due to unusual circumstances.

Firebrush Clearance Zone / Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ)

Portions of land in the City of Los Angeles, including northern areas along the San Gabriel Mountains, areas along the central belt from Santa Monica Mountains to Alhambra, and areas in southern Los Angeles, are designated to be within the VHFHSZ. These areas are highly developed with streets, sidewalks, houses and commercial buildings and it is not uncommon to find the need for maintenance and repair in these areas, as such, this not an unusual circumstance. The Project consists of alteration of an existing roadway and as indicated above, will comply with the Los Angeles Fire Code, Chapter 33, Fire Safety During Construction and Demolition as well as all brush clearance requirements outlined under LAMC Section 57.322.

For the reasons stated above, there is no reasonable possibility that the Project will have a significant effect due to unusual circumstances related to fire hazards.

Hillside Ordinance / Grading Area

Portion of the site lies within a designated hillside grading area, an area that is regulated under the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) Sections 12.03, 12.21, 12.21.1, 12.23, and 12.27 which governs the development of hillside lots for new construction, additions, and remodeling. Specific requirements regarding height, front and side yards, fire protection, lot coverage, parking street access, sewer connections, and grading are all defined and enforced under the above-mentioned LAMC sections. Hilly portions of land in the City, including the northeast, northern city limits of the North Valley, Santa Monica Mountains to the west, Echo Park / Silver Lake, Griffith Park, Atwater Village, Mount Washington, Hollywood Hills in the center, Baldwin Hills and Playa del Rey / Playa Vista towards Los Angeles International Airport, and San Pedro to the southernmost limits are required to adhere to specific building codes and requirements.

The proposed Project is composed of minor alteration of existing streets and sidewalks involving no expansion of use. No new structures for human habitation will be constructed. Minor alteration projects are common in the City and throughout areas deemed to be within the hillside grading area, as such these repairs are not unusual circumstances. The Project would not potentially result in or increase vulnerability to damage caused by constructing in the hillside areas and there is no reasonable possibility that the Project will have a significant effect due to unusual circumstances.

Traffic and Transportation

The Project proposes for alteration of an existing public street to modern standards and would be constructed in accordance with the latest edition of the temporary traffic control provisions of the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control (CA MUTCD), the Work Area Traffic Control Handbook (WATCH), and any traffic control requirements required by the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT). Construction crews are required to coordinate with schools and LADOT accordingly to provide flagmen when any mode of transportation (e.g. pedestrian, bicycle, automobile) is altered. When the activity site encroaches upon a sidewalk, walkway or crosswalk area, pedestrians shall be provided advance warning if they are detoured away from the activity construction site. As to the closure of any traffic lanes, the Project shall comply with any previously referenced regulations and the Bureau of Engineering (Engineering) Master Specifications.

This Project is required to improve public safety of an existing roadway and as such standard conditions and construction practices would be implemented for the Project. Repairs similar to this Project occur within the public right-of-way throughout the City of Los Angeles and as such, this is not an unusual circumstance. No reasonable possibility has been identified that the Project would have a significant effect due to unusual circumstances.

Hazardous Waste

As of February 17, 2022 and January 9, 2024, the California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) (Geotracker database at <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>) and the State Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) (Envirostor at www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov) has not listed the Project site or any contaminated sites undergoing active cleanup near the Project area (within 500 feet).

For the reasons stated above, there is no reasonable possibility that the Project will have a significant effect due to unusual circumstances.

4. Scenic Highway. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway.

The proposed project locations were referenced against the database of scenic highways at (<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways>) and no scenic highway is located within the vicinity of the Project or within the Project site.

Since the proposed Project is not within a state designated scenic highway or within sight of any state designated scenic highway, this exception has no application.

5. Hazardous Waste Site. This exception applies when a project is located on a site listed as a hazardous waste site under Government Code Section 65962.5.

As of February 17, 2022 and January 9, 2024, the State Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) (Envirostor database at www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov) nor the California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) (Geotracker database at <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>) has listed the project site, as such, this exception does not apply.

6. Historical Resources. This exception applies when a project may cause a substantial adverse

change in the significance of a historical resource.

The Project will occur within areas previously disturbed by grading and installation of utilities and transportation infrastructure.

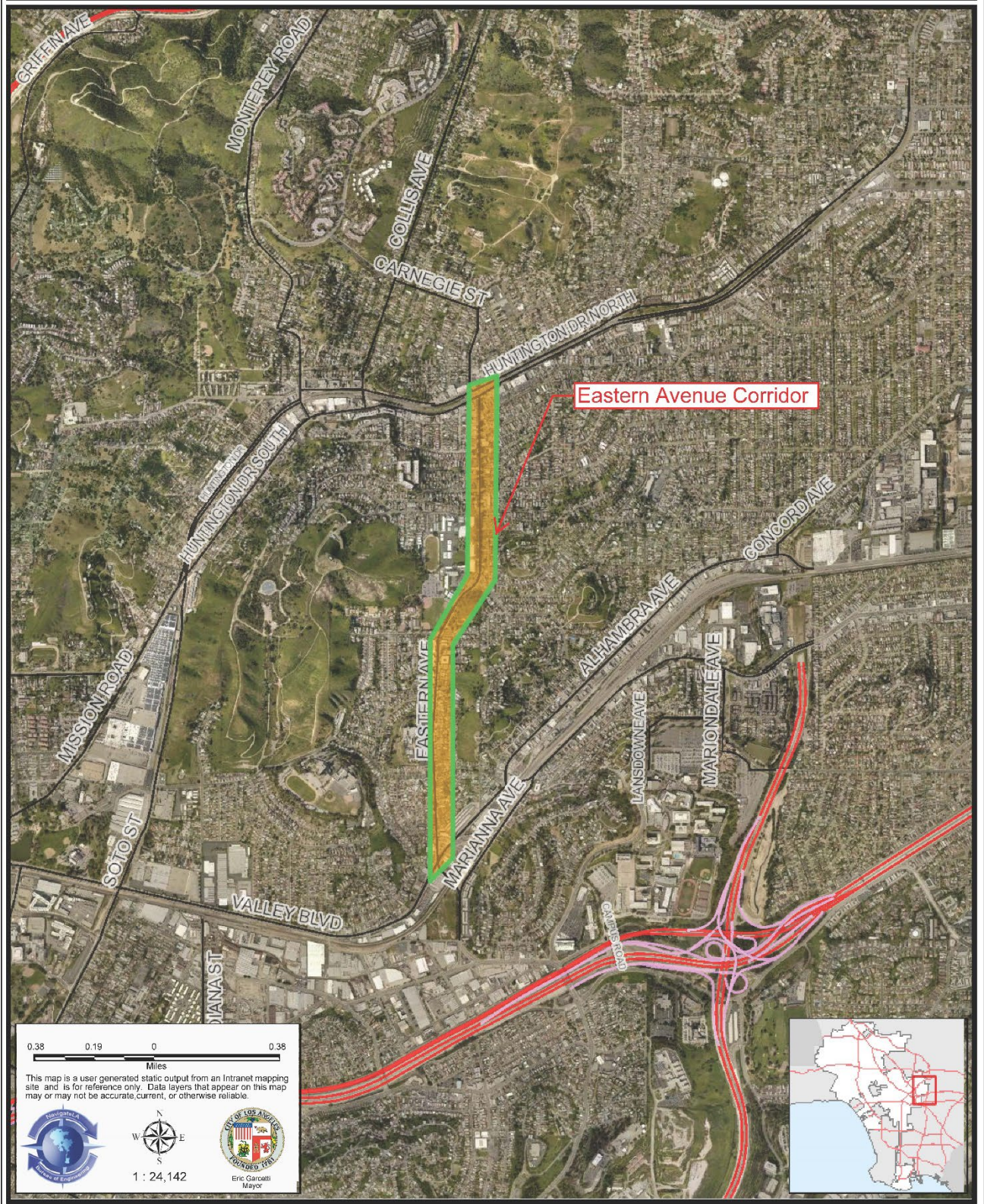
In the event that unanticipated historical artifacts were encountered, City Engineer Standard Specifications, Section 6-3.2, (Greenbook, 2012) states: "If discovery is made of items of archaeological or paleontological interest, the Contractor shall immediately cease excavation in the area of discovery and shall not continue until ordered by the Engineer." Therefore, during activities in which there will be ground disturbances (i.e., digging, drilling, etc.) if any evidence of archaeological, cultural, or paleontological resources are found, all work within the vicinity of the find shall stop until a qualified archaeologist can assess the finds and make recommendations. No excavation of any finds should be attempted by Project personnel unless directed by a qualified archaeologist. Construction activities may continue in other areas. If the discovery proves significant under CEQA (Section 15064.5f; Public Resources Code or PRC 21082), additional work such as testing, or data recovery may be warranted.

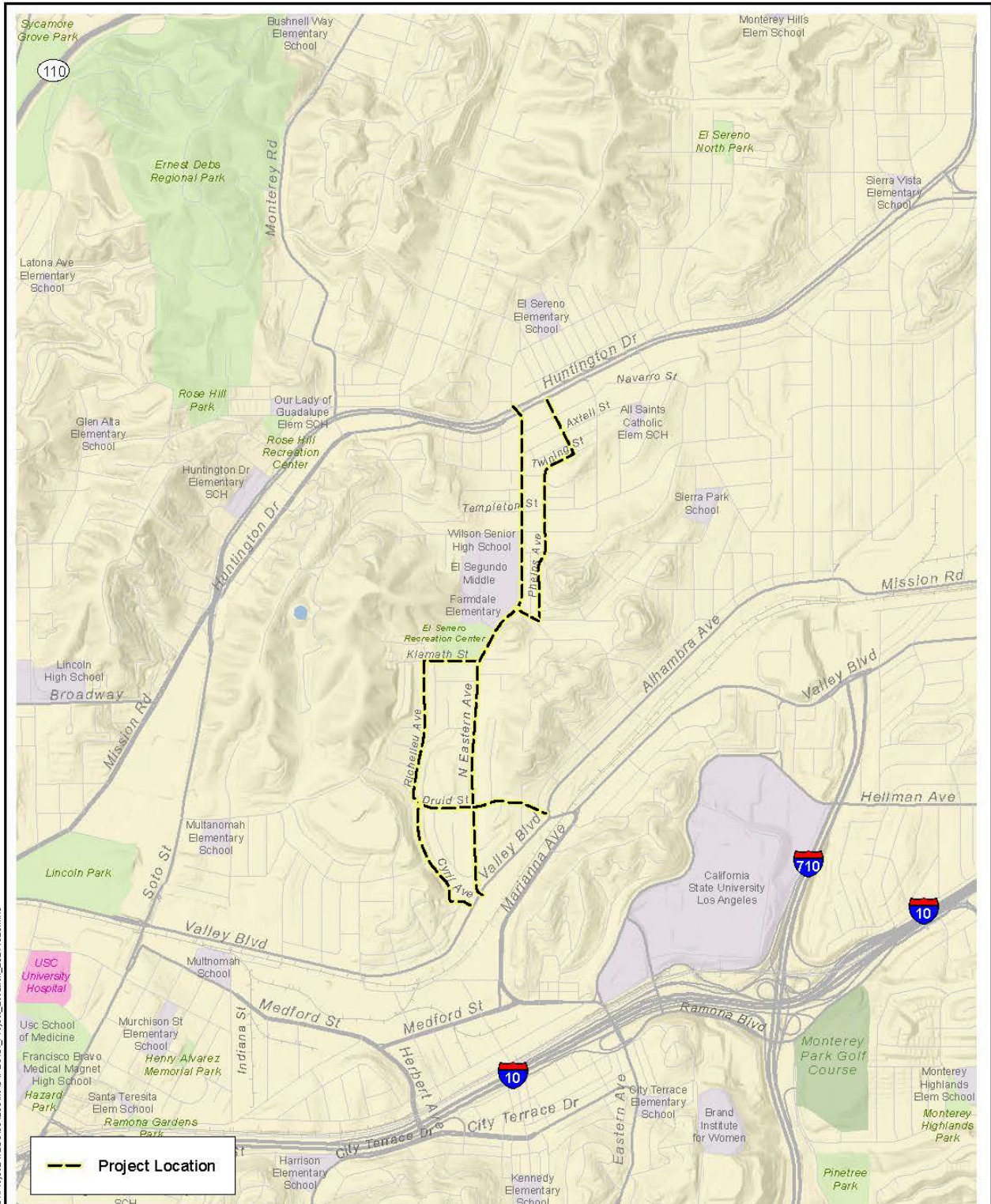
The discovery of human remains is always a possibility during ground disturbances; State of California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that no further disturbance shall occur until the Los Angeles County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to PRC Section 5097.98. The Los Angeles County Coroner must be notified of the find immediately. If the human remains are determined to be prehistoric, the Coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission, which will determine and notify a Most Likely Descendent (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.

As indicated above, the Project is not anticipated to result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. Therefore, no substantial adverse impact to cultural resources is anticipated, and as such this exception does not apply.

Exhibit 1: Project Vicinity

Eastern Avenue Multi-Modal Transportation Improvements (W.O. E700416A)





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Project Location

Project Location Map
 Eastern Avenue Multi-Modal Transportation Improvement Project

Exhibit 2



(Rev: 12-07-2021 JVR) R:\Projects\11LOS031200\MD\PE\sex_P\Project_Location.pdf

IV. REFERENCES

- California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3 (State CEQA Guidelines), available from <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>
- California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology. Official Map of Seismic Hazards. Retrieved February 17, 2022 from <http://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/informationwarehouse/>
- California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology. Seismic Hazard Zones for The Los Angeles 7.5-Minute Quadrangle, Los Angeles County, California. (2017). Retrieved February 17, 2022 from http://gmw.conservation.ca.gov/SHP/EZRIM/Reports/SHZR/SHZR_029_Los_Angeles.pdf
- California Regional Water Quality Control Board. *Geotracker*. Retrieved February 17, 2022, from [https:// geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov](https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov).
- City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning Parcel Profile Report. Retrieved on February 17, 2022, from *NavigateLA* <http://boemaps.eng.ci.la.ca.us/navigatela/>
- City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works Bureau of Engineering. Retrieved on February 17, 2022, *NavigateLA*. <http://boemaps.eng.ci.la.ca.us/navigatela/>
- City of Los Angeles Environmental Quality Act Guidelines available from https://planning.lacity.org/EIR/CEQA_Guidelines/City_CEQA_Guidelines.pdf
- Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5
- Los Angeles Municipal Code
- Public Resources Code, Div. 13, Sections 21000-21189 (CEQA), available from <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>
- Public Resources Code Section 5097.98
- Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction*. Greenbook, 2012 edition.
- State CEQA Guidelines.
- State Department of Toxic Substances Control. *Envirostor*. Retrieved February 17, 2022, from www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov
- State Department of Transportation. *California Scenic Highway Mapping System*. Retrieved on February 16, 2022 from <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways/>