CHAPTER 4
AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

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The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that each effect that has a "significant impact" be identified in an Environmental Impact Report (EIR); however, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) does not. In this joint federal and state environmental document, reference to "adverse impacts" is intended also to mean "significant impacts" under CEQA. Evaluations of significance in this document do not represent assessments of the magnitude of such impacts under the requirements of federal law. Under NEPA, no such determination need be made for each environmental effect.

4-1 LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

This section analyzes the land use impacts associated with the No Build Alternative, the Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative, and the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Alternative. The BRT Alternative would travel along the Burbank-Chandler right-of-way, also called the Southern Pacific Burbank Branch right-of-way (SP ROW). The SP ROW is now called the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) ROW. In addition, the BRT Alternative also includes an on-street alignment variation along Lankershim Boulevard and Oxnard Street (Lankershim/Oxnard On-Street Alignment), as well as a "minimum operable segment" (MOS), an initial phase of the project that would extend from Woodman Avenue to Balboa Boulevard. The Final EIS/EIR examines is the Full BRT Alternative (the "Locally Preferred Alternative") with a potential weekend service option along the Lankershim/Oxnard On-Street Alignment. Refinements to the Full BRT alternative during the preliminary engineering are described in Chapter 2. For the purpose of the Land Use analysis, weekday service is described in the Full BRT analysis, and the weekend service option is described in the Lankershim/Oxnard On-Street Alignment. If the weekend option is not selected, only the Full BRT analysis would apply. Chapter 2 describes these alternatives in detail.

The land use and development analysis addresses the following impacts:

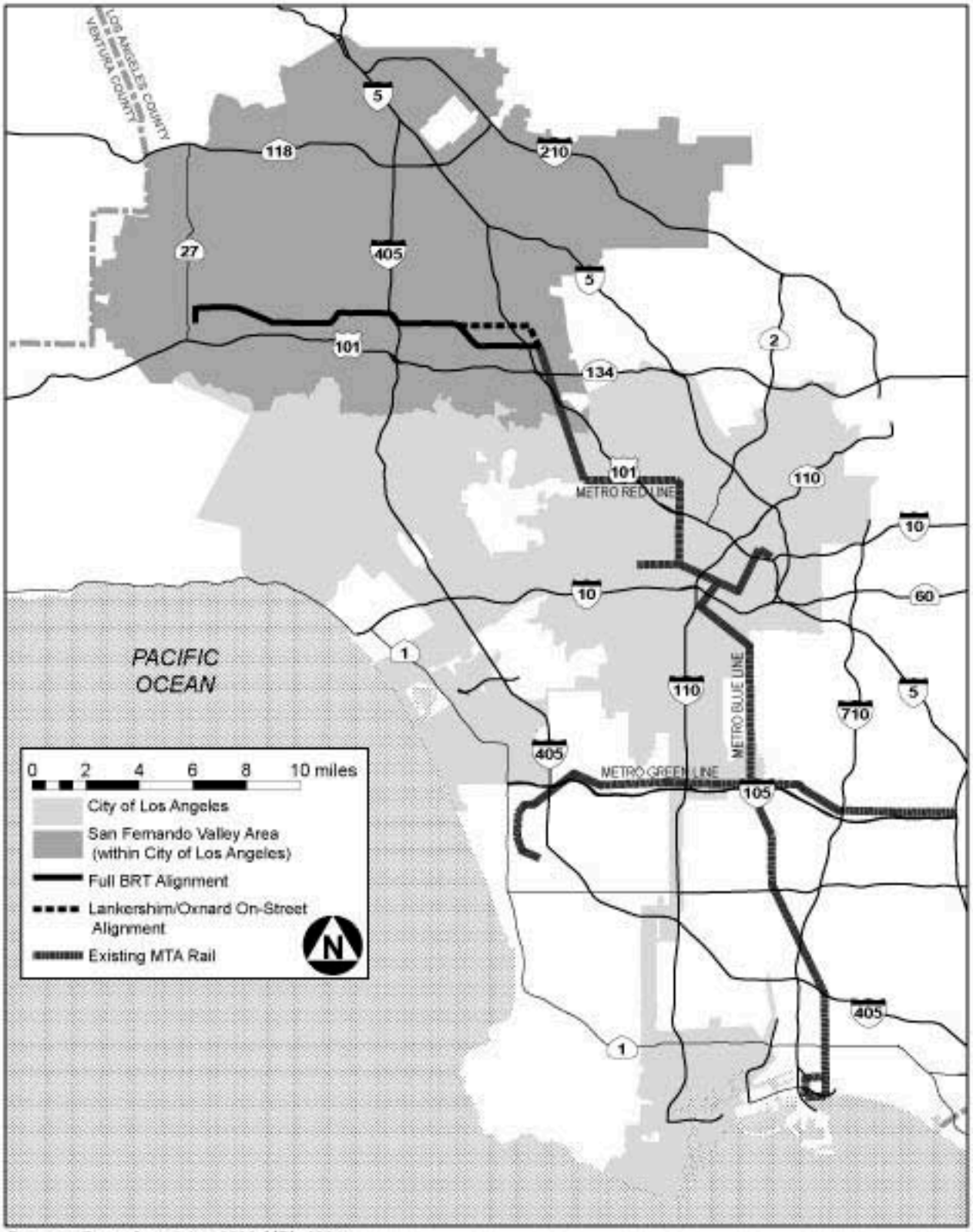
1. Compatibility with existing land use, also known as "localized land use impacts,"
2. Consistency with planned land use and zoning, and
3. Station area development potential.

Potential mitigation measures associated with impacts are described at the end of this section.

4-1.1 Setting

4-1.1.1 Regional Context

The proposed San Fernando Valley East-West Transit Corridor is located in the City of Los Angeles, in the central part of Los Angeles County, approximately 20 miles northwest of the Los Angeles Central Business District (see Figure 4-1). The San Fernando Valley (Valley) is largely



Sources: Gruen Associates, 2000; MTA, 2001; Environmental Systems Research Institute, 1999.

Figure 4-1: San Fernando Valley Regional Context

suburban in character with concentrations of commercial and multifamily residential development, particularly in the southern sections. Much of the Valley's higher density development is located at nodes such as North Hollywood, the Van Nuys Civic Center, and Warner Center. This pattern of development is reflected in the City of Los Angeles *General Plan Framework* and local Community Plans.

According to the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), approximately 68 percent of the land in the San Fernando Valley is residential in use. Single- and multi-family homes are concentrated mainly on the blocks between major arterials. The residential character of the Valley varies depending on location. Single-family residential remains the primary housing type in much of the Valley. However, the southern half of the Valley, in which the proposed project would be located, possesses a mixture of single-family homes, apartments, and condominiums.

Commercial development in the San Fernando Valley consists of a mix of strip retail development and office buildings located along major arterials, as well as large shopping centers typically near freeways. In the vicinity of the proposed project, the North Hollywood and Laurel Plaza/Valley Plaza shopping centers are the major retail centers in the East Valley, and Warner Center is the major retail/office center in the West Valley. At Warner Center and other locations in the Valley, the low-density industrial parks that once housed aerospace, transportation, and other facilities are gradually being replaced by retail, office, and residential development at higher densities.

4-1.1.2 Existing Land Use Patterns

Section 4-1.1.2a describes land uses adjacent to the alignment of the Full BRT Alignment of the BRT Alternative. Sections 4-1.1.2b and 4-1.1.2c describe land uses adjacent to the Lankershim/Oxnard On-Street Variation and the Minimum Operable Segment (MOS), respectively.

a. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Alternative - Full BRT Alignment

The proposed Full BRT Alternative is located almost exclusively alongside the ~~SP~~ MTA ROW alignment. The weekend Lankershim/Oxnard On-Street alignment would run on-street from North Hollywood until it joins the MTA ROW at Woodman Avenue. The alignment is 14.2 miles long with a total of 13 potential stations, from the North Hollywood Metro Red Line transit station west to the proposed Warner Center Transit Hub. The entire proposed project under consideration would lie within the boundaries of the City of Los Angeles.

Although formerly operated as a freight rail line by the Southern Pacific Railroad, the ~~SP~~ MTA ROW has not been used for transportation purposes since 1992. The vacant portions of the right-of- way are unimproved, without ground cover, and typically 100 feet wide, while ranging in width from 30 feet to 225 feet at points along the corridor. In general, the old railroad tracks have not been removed. Other portions of the right-of-way were leased before MTA acquired

the SP ROW from the Southern Pacific Railroad. The locations of substantial leases within the right-of- way are described below. Some of these leases will be displaced as a part of construction of the BRT Alternative. Impacts associated with displacement are described in Section 4-2.

This survey of existing land uses adjacent to the transit corridor includes the area within 500 feet of the BRT alignment. At proposed station sites, a detailed land use analysis has been conducted that encompasses a quarter mile radius around the station sites, an area considered to be a transit station's "primary area of influence." For descriptive purposes, the Full BRT alignment can be broken into segments. The segments used here correspond to City of Los Angeles "Community Planning Areas," used by the City for land use planning, and are described from east to west, with added detail for station areas (Figure 4-2 through Figure 4-5).

❑ North Hollywood

The Full BRT passes through the North Hollywood Community Planning Area between ~~it's~~ the Full BRT's eastern terminus at the North Hollywood Metro Red Line station (at Lankershim Boulevard) and Coldwater Canyon Avenue. Along this entire segment, the ~~SP~~ MTA ROW lies within the median of Chandler Boulevard. ~~Within the right-of-way there are existing eucalyptus trees as well as r~~Recently planted trees are spaced approximately 30 to 40 feet apart and approximately 10 feet from the pavement within the median.

• North Hollywood Terminus (Lankershim and Chandler Boulevards)

The proposed eastern terminus at the existing North Hollywood Metro Red Line station would be within a commercial district along Lankershim Boulevard, and ~~potentially~~ integrated with the historic Lankershim Depot site (see Figure 4-6). The area serves as a regional commercial center and, via the Red Line, is a link between downtown Los Angeles and the Valley. Also known as the NoHo Arts District, the area contains live theaters, studios, and production companies, as well as numerous restaurants and shops. Due to the age of development (many structures are older than 50 years) and mix of uses, the area is pedestrian-friendly, with current pedestrian activity along Lankershim continuing into the evening hours. New buildings in the vicinity of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences include mid-rise office buildings and 3- to 4-story apartment buildings with internal parking, including the Academy Village Apartments. There are approximately ~~850~~ 915 park-and-ride parking spaces, including 150 kiss-and-ride spaces, at the North Hollywood Metro Red Line station. Additional temporary parking has been constructed adjacent to the Lankershim Depot.

• Lankershim Boulevard to Laurel Canyon Boulevard

Between Lankershim Boulevard and the Hollywood Freeway (SR 170), the right-of-way lies across from commercial and industrial development. West of the Hollywood Freeway to Laurel Canyon Boulevard, land uses along Chandler Boulevard are a mixture of single- and multi-family apartments. North Hollywood High School lies just west of the Hollywood Freeway at Colfax Avenue.

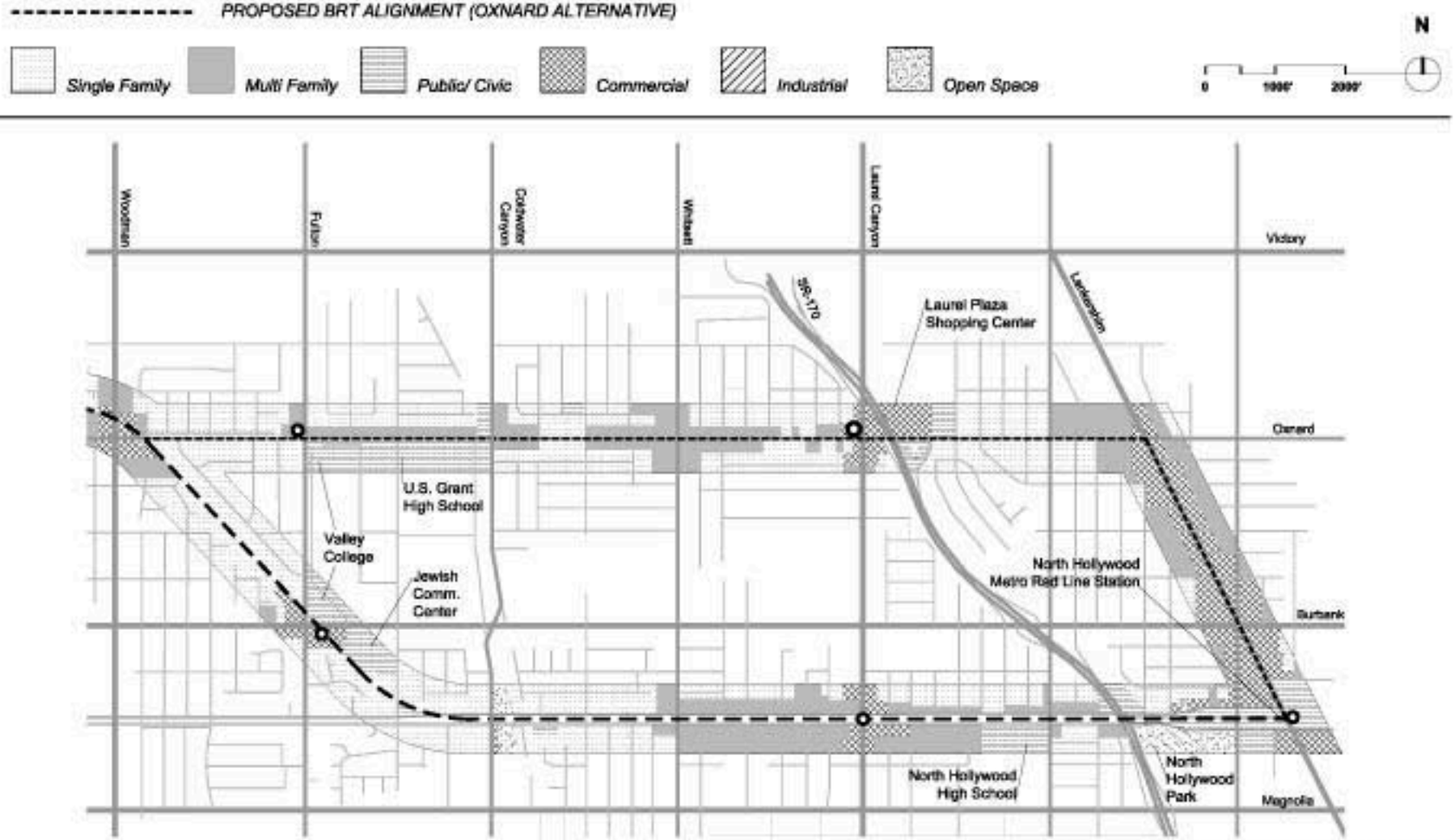


Figure 4-2: Generalized Existing Land Use - North Hollywood to Woodman Avenue

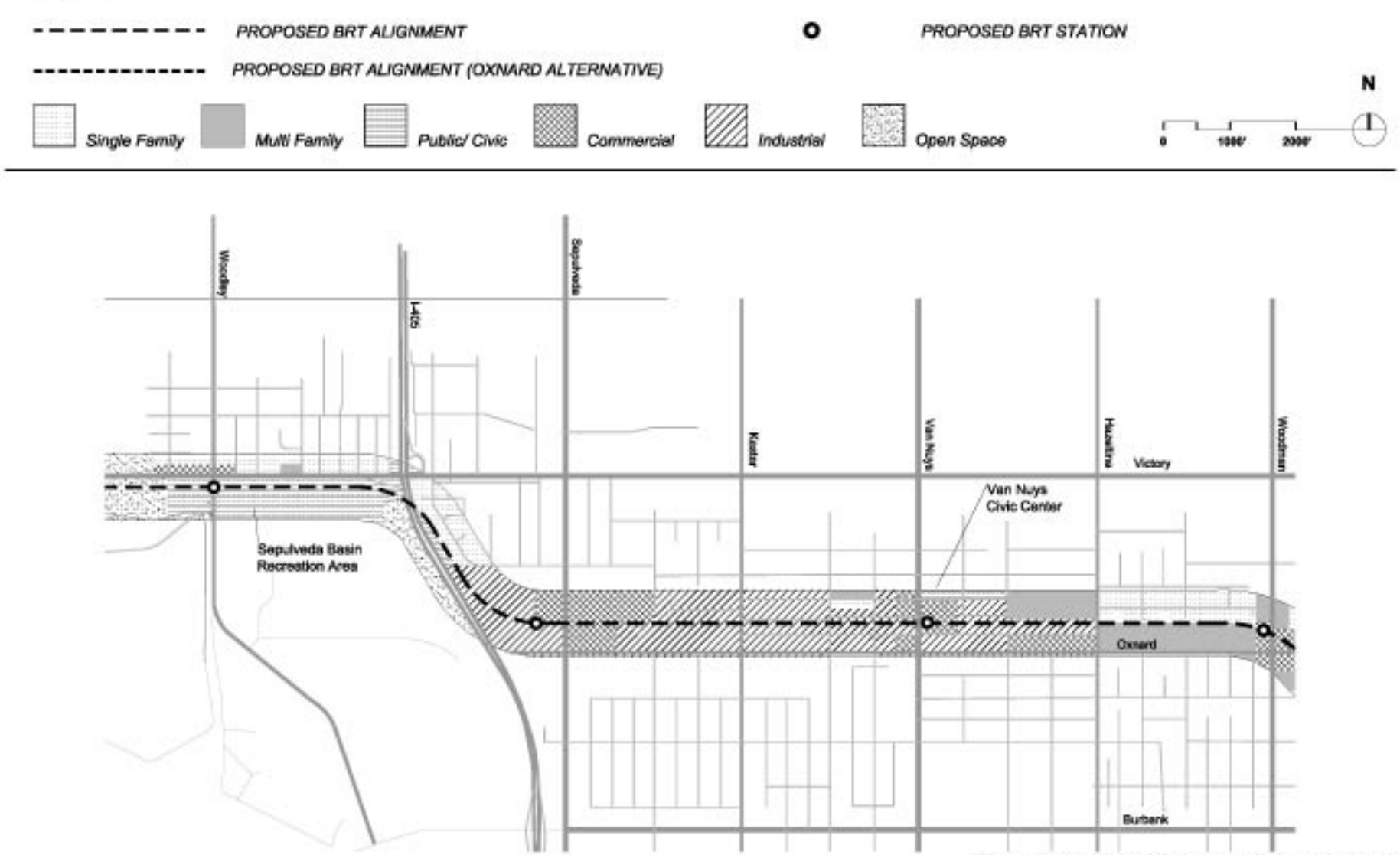


Figure 4-3: Generalized Existing Land Use - Woodman Avenue to Woodley Avenue

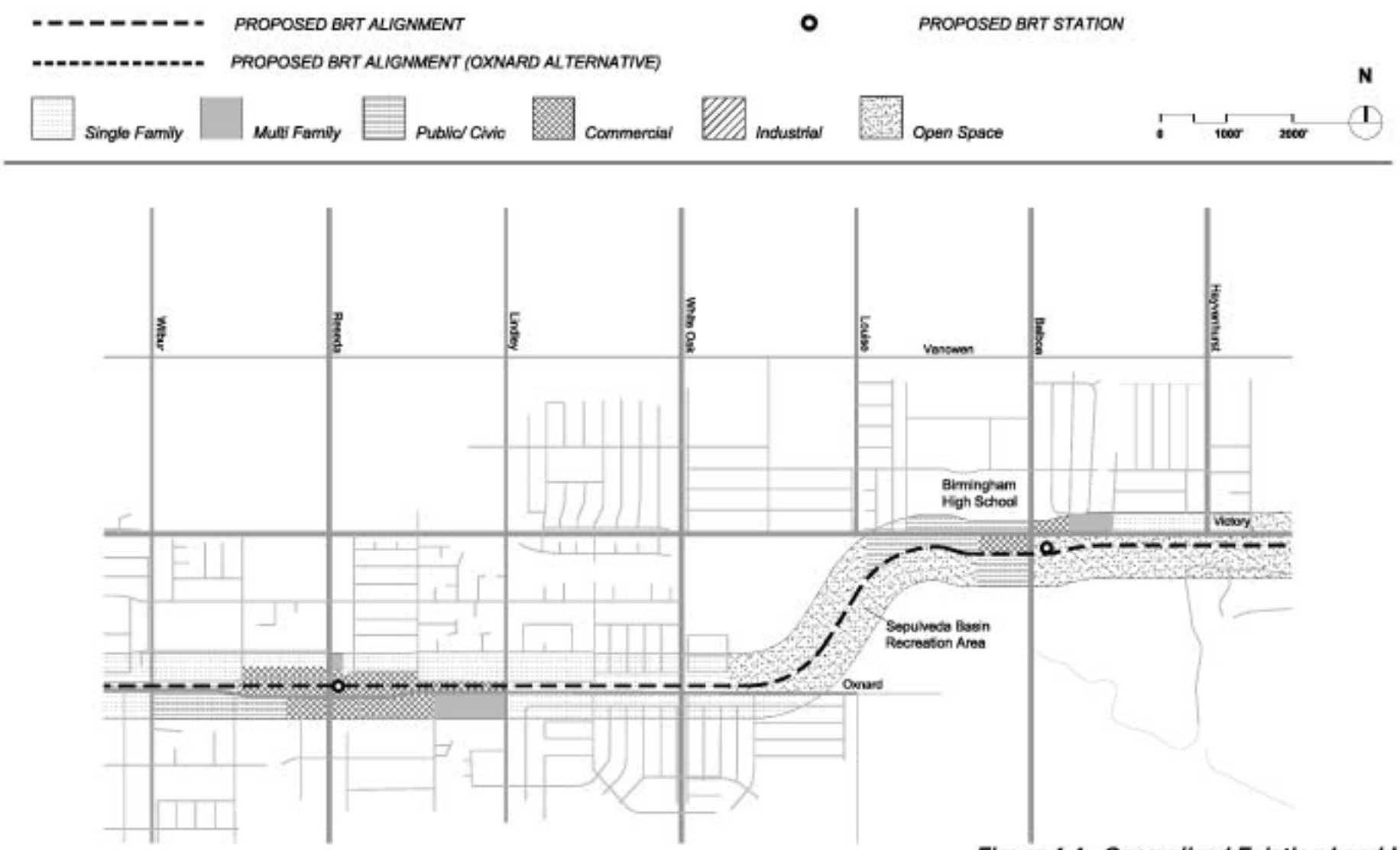


Figure 4-4: Generalized Existing Land Use - Balboa Boulevard to Reseda Boulevard

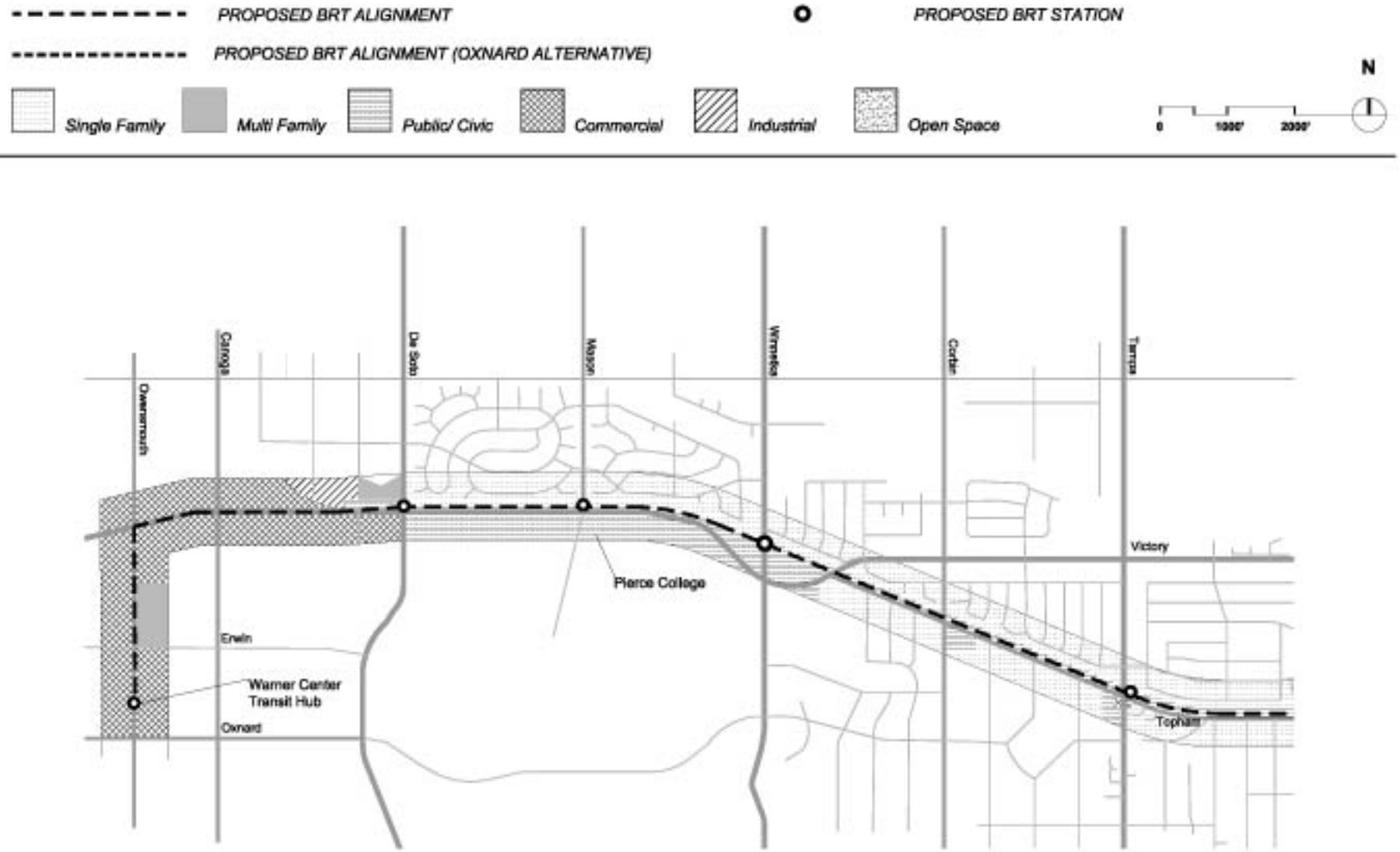


Figure 4-5: Generalized Existing Land Use - Tampa Avenue to Warner Center Terminus

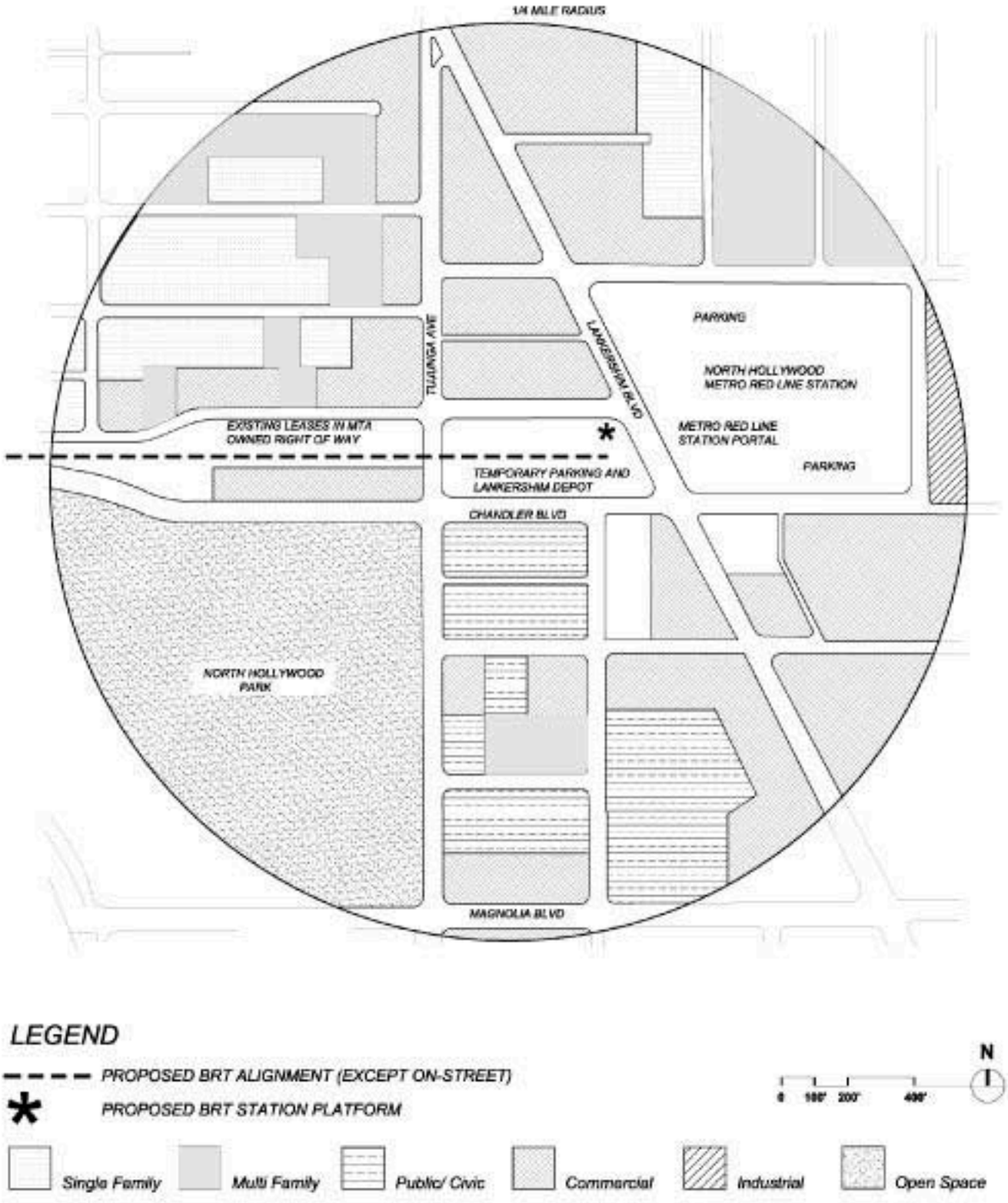


Figure 4-6: North Hollywood Station Area Land Use

- **Laurel Canyon Station (Laurel Canyon and Chandler Boulevards)**

The proposed Laurel Canyon station, at the intersection of Laurel Canyon and Chandler Boulevards, would be located across from retail and office development along Laurel Canyon Boulevard and two- to three-story apartment complexes along Chandler Boulevard, including the Valley Village senior apartment complex on the northwest corner (see Figure 4-7). The commercial development at this intersection serves as a community focal point for the surrounding area, which is comprised predominantly of single-family residential neighborhoods. South of Chandler, the commercial development consists of a mixture of one- and two-story buildings with front or rear surface parking. North of Chandler is a mixed-use area of neighborhood commercial and multi-family apartment buildings. The surrounding neighborhood is comprised of both multi-family apartment buildings and single-family houses.

- **Laurel Canyon Boulevard to Coldwater Canyon Avenue**

West of Laurel Canyon Boulevard to Coldwater Canyon Avenue, a mixture of single-family housing and multi-family apartments is located across Chandler Boulevard from the right-of-way. In addition, several religious structures and schools, including two synagogues, Emek Hebrew Academy, and a day care center are located along Chandler Boulevard.

- **Van Nuys – North Sherman Oaks**

Between Coldwater Canyon Avenue and the Sepulveda Basin at the I-405, the Full BRT Alignment passes through the Van Nuys-North Sherman Oaks Community Planning Area.

- **Coldwater Canyon Avenue to Woodman Avenue**

West of Coldwater Canyon Avenue and extending to Woodman Avenue, the ~~SP~~ MTA ROW leaves the median of Chandler Boulevard and passes behind the back yards of single-family homes. Some homes in the segment have leased small portions of the ~~SP~~ MTA ROW in order to extend their back yards.

- **Valley College (Fulton Avenue and Burbank Boulevard) Station**

Valley College, a community college campus with approximately 16,000 students, occupies the area northeast of the proposed station (see Figure 4-8). Other uses at the intersection are a mixture of college-oriented commercial uses including ~~a Kinko's,~~ a bookstore~~,~~ and various eateries. East of the intersection along Burbank are larger institutional uses, such as the Jewish Community Center. There is also a fire station and a private school. To the west of Fulton Avenue, there is a lumberyard located within the ~~SP~~ MTA ROW on leased land, adjacent to single-family homes. Some single-story auto service structures are also present. Multifamily residential buildings up to three stories in height, with small front setbacks and internal parking, are located along Burbank Boulevard.

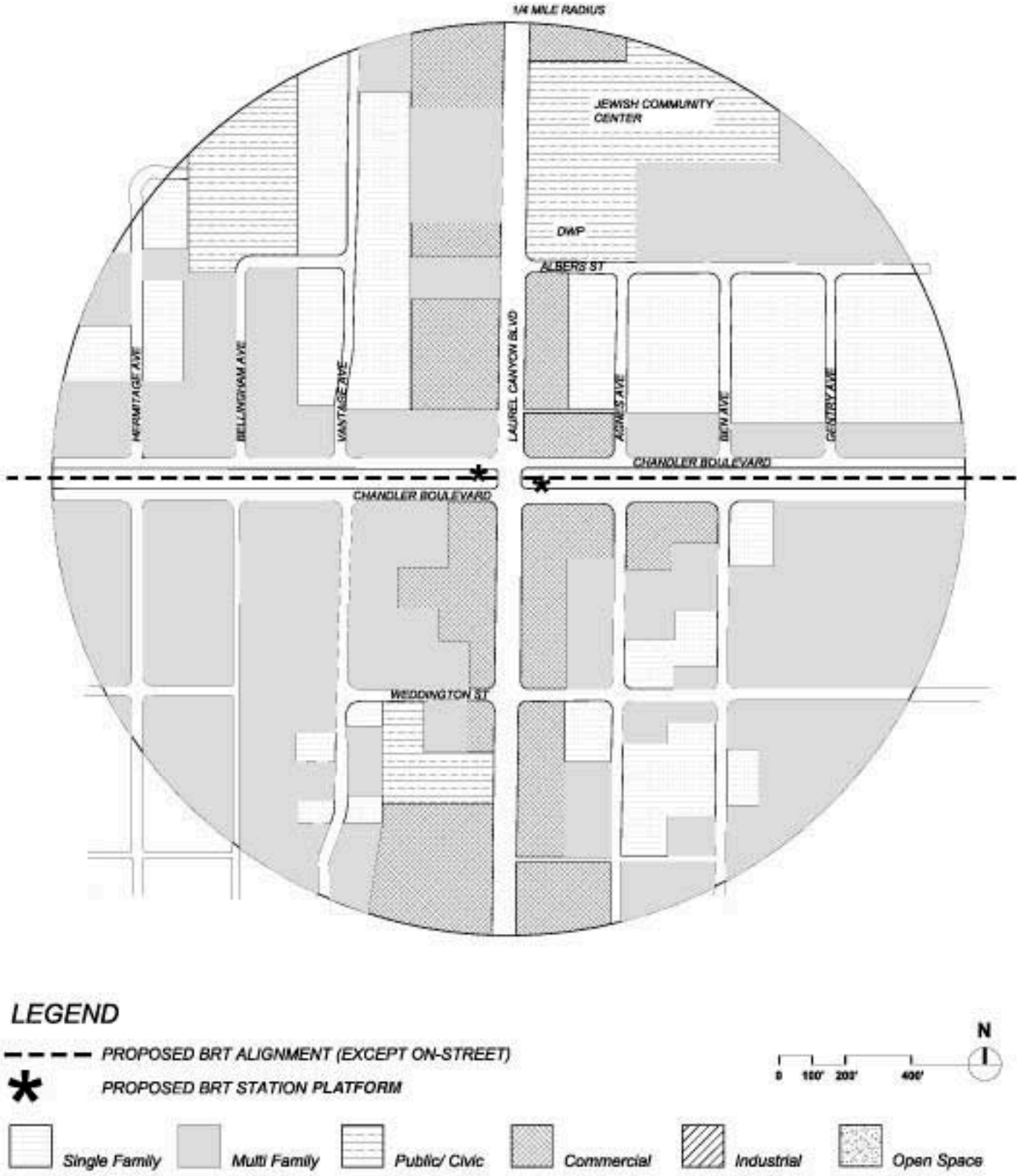
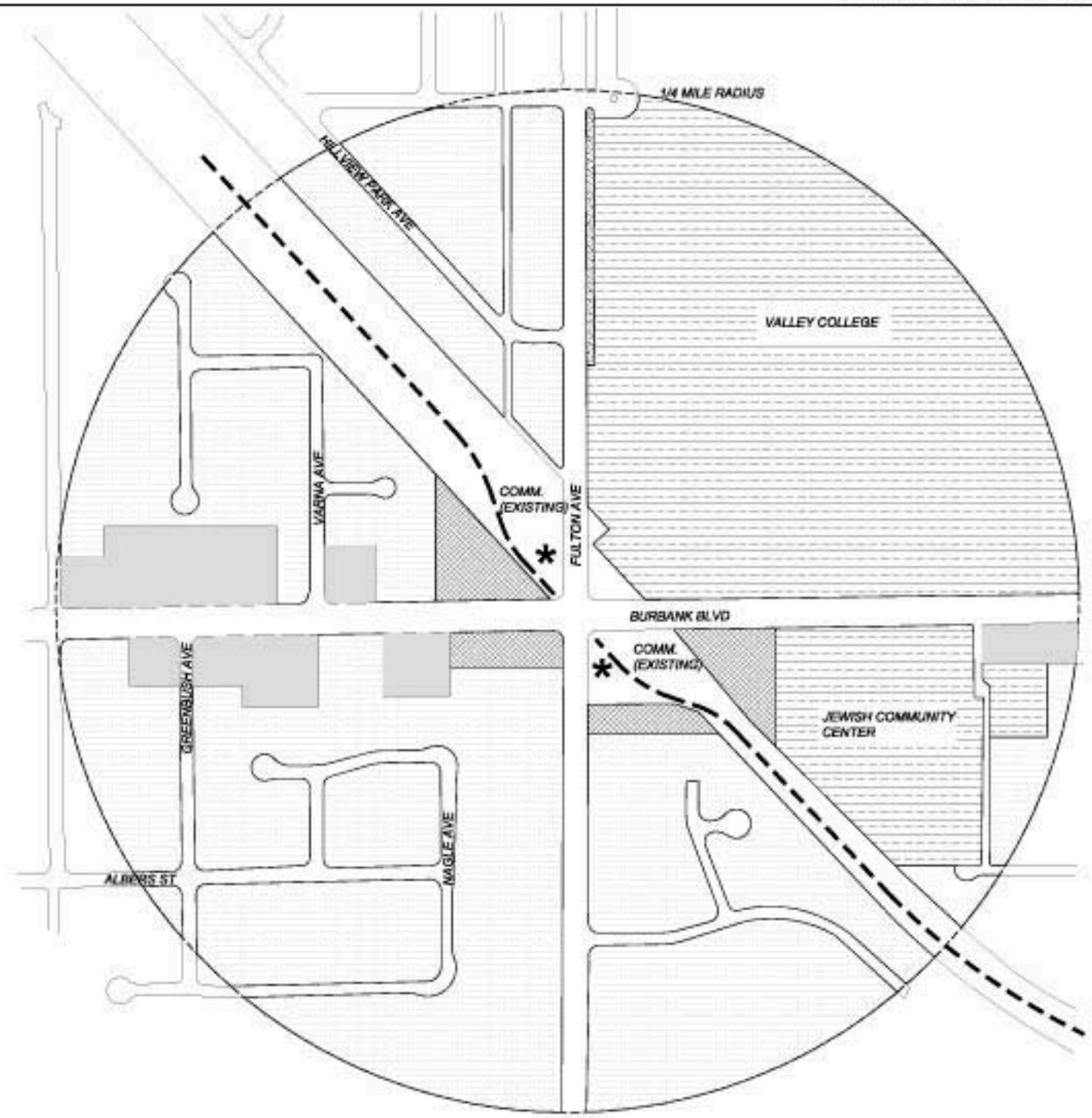


Figure 4-7: Laurel Canyon Station Area Land Use



LEGEND

PROPOSED BRT ALIGNMENT (EXCEPT ON-STREET)

PROPOSED BRT STATION

N

0 100' 200' 400'

Single Family | Multi Family | Public/ Civic | Commercial | Industrial | Open Space

Figure 4-8: Valley College Station Area Land Use

- **Woodman Avenue Station**

The proposed Woodman Avenue station would sit at a transitional point between the Valley Village single-family neighborhood to the east and the denser, older Van Nuys area on the west side of the intersection of Woodman Avenue and the ~~SP~~ MTA ROW (see Figure 4-9). At the corner of Woodman Avenue and Oxnard Street are commercial developments with surface parking located at the front or back of the buildings. On the northeast corner of the intersection, a pharmacy, medical offices, and florist adjoin the right-of-way. North and south of the station, along Woodman Avenue and west along Oxnard Street are multi-story apartments. Single-family homes are located directly north of the ~~SP~~ MTA ROW, east of Buffalo Street and west of Woodman Avenue.

- **Woodman Avenue to the I-405 Freeway**

Between Woodman and Hazeltine Avenues, the right-of-way passes behind multi-family apartments. Between Hazeltine and I-405, the ~~SP~~ MTA ROW passes through a major section of low-density industrial and commercial uses. Along much of this segment, the ~~SP~~ MTA ROW itself has been leased to businesses. Many of the parcels along the right-of-way are developed with auto sales and repair shops, storage yards, recycling yards, and other similar uses. In general, the developments in this area, either adjacent to or within the ~~SP~~ MTA ROW, show few neighborhood-oriented enhancements and many are in a state of decline.

- **Van Nuys Boulevard Station**

The Van Nuys station would be located in the historic center of the San Fernando Valley. The Van Nuys Civic Center occupies the area north of the proposed station (see Figure 4-10). West of the Civic Center, the storefronts along Van Nuys Boulevard constitute the oldest business district in the San Fernando Valley. Van Nuys Boulevard north of the right-of-way consists of contiguous, uninterrupted pedestrian retail and commercial uses that date from the 1920s. Van Nuys Boulevard continues to act as a regional commercial corridor, catering to the local neighborhood as well as supporting larger-scale businesses including several car dealerships. The city operates several municipal parking facilities behind the commercial buildings. Off the major streets are apartment buildings and single-family homes. The area immediately adjacent to and south of the right-of-way is an aging industrial area of single-story buildings, which is mostly devoted to storage and auto uses with surface parking. Similar uses also occupy leased space within the ~~SP~~ MTA ROW.

- **Sepulveda Boulevard Station**

The proposed Sepulveda station would lie within a commercial/industrial area (see Figure 4-11). Large-scale retail is under development around the station area, and offices are also replacing older light industrial uses. A new office development in the area located south of the ~~SP~~ MTA ROW, the Tri Center Plaza, consists of two office buildings, one six-story and the other three-

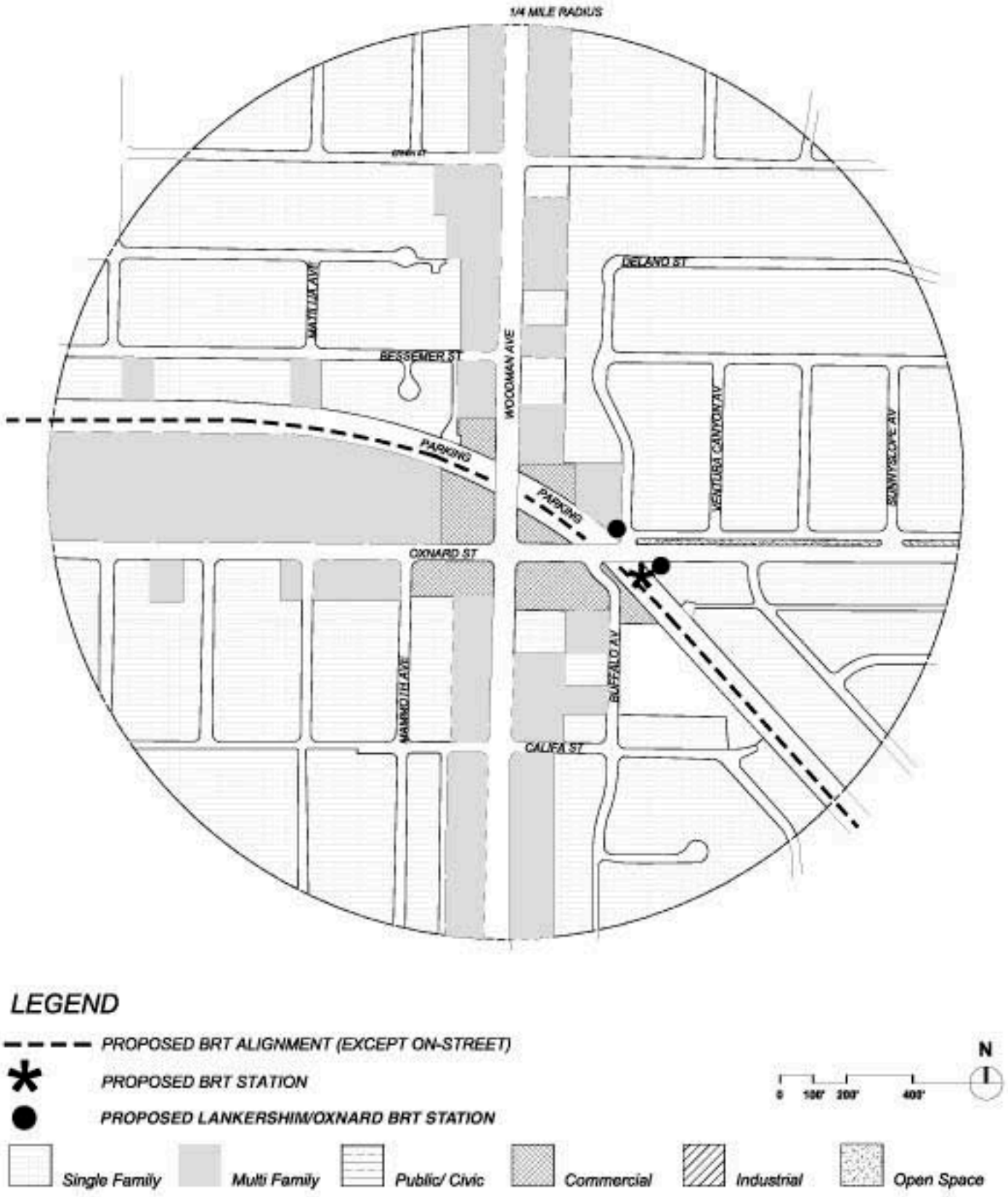


Figure 4-9: Woodman Station Area Land Use

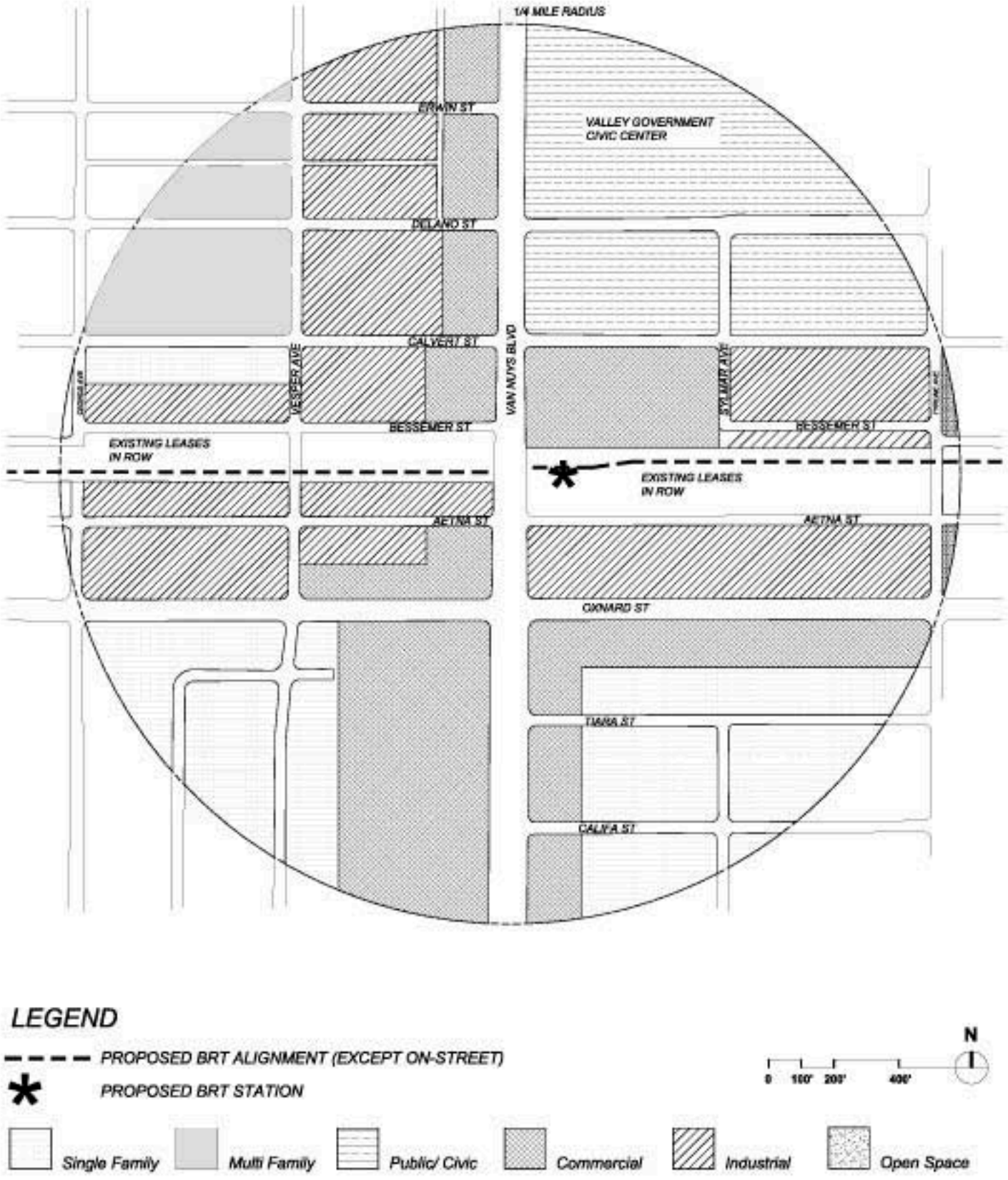


Figure 4-10: Van Nuys Station Area Land Use

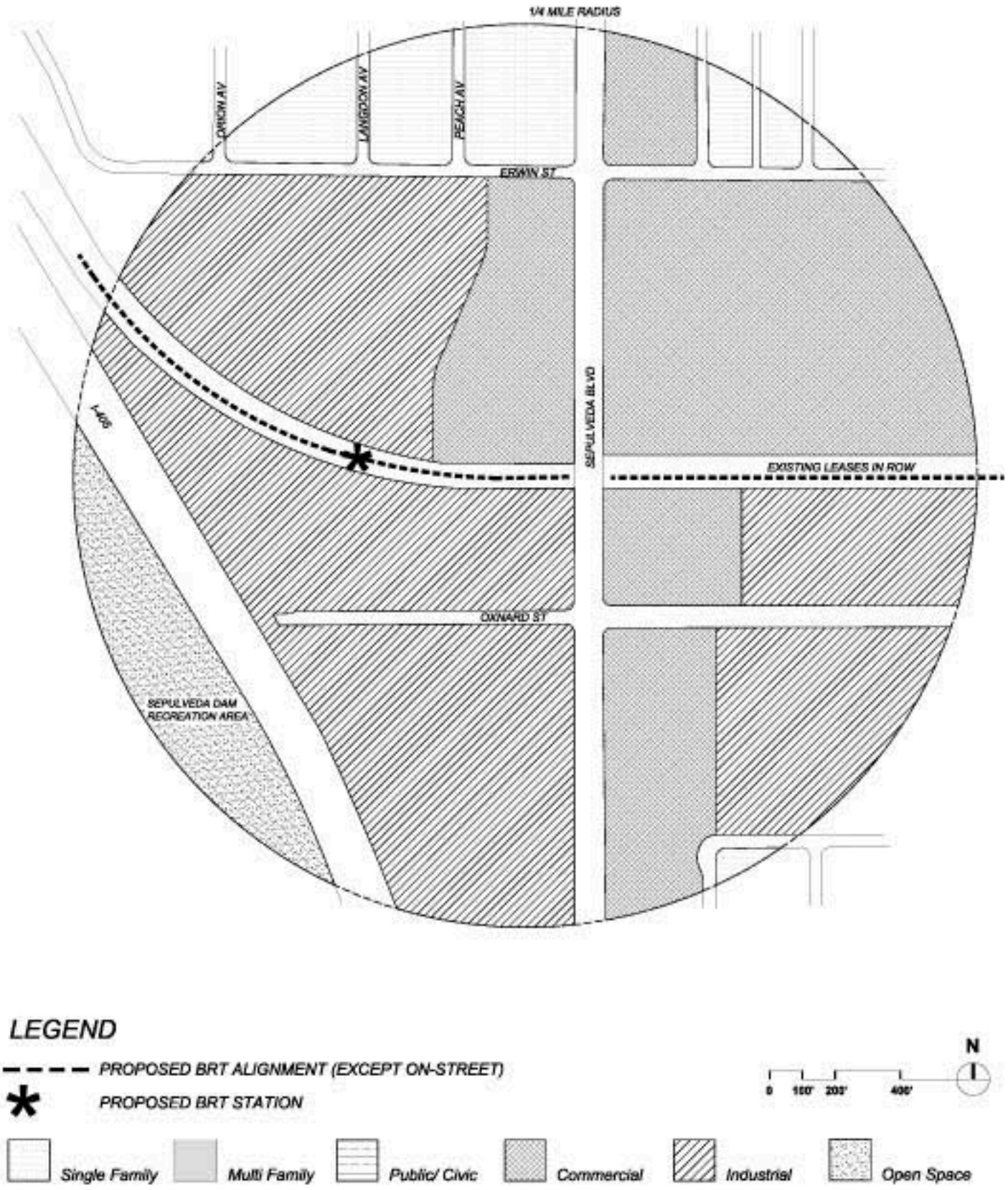


Figure 4-11: Sepulveda Station Area Land Use

story. North of the ~~SP~~ MTA ROW, along Sepulveda Boulevard, are smaller-scale commercial uses, both in strip malls and freestanding, and some fast food establishments with surface parking lots. MTA currently leases much of the right-of-way in this area to businesses, largely for vehicle storage purposes. The proposed station would include a large park-and-ride facility, on land currently owned by MTA and leased for vehicle storage. This facility would lie adjacent to Cameron Woods, a single-family neighborhood.

❑ Reseda – West Van Nuys / Encino - Tarzana

Between I-405 and Corbin Avenue, the full BRT alignment runs along the border between two planning areas, the Reseda – West Van Nuys Community Planning Area and the Encino – Tarzana Community Planning Area.

• Sepulveda Basin

Between I-405 and White Oak Avenue, the alignment passes through the Sepulveda Flood Control Basin and Recreation Area, which is owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In addition to recreational opportunities, the Basin includes water treatment, agricultural fields, and military facilities.

• Woodley Avenue Station

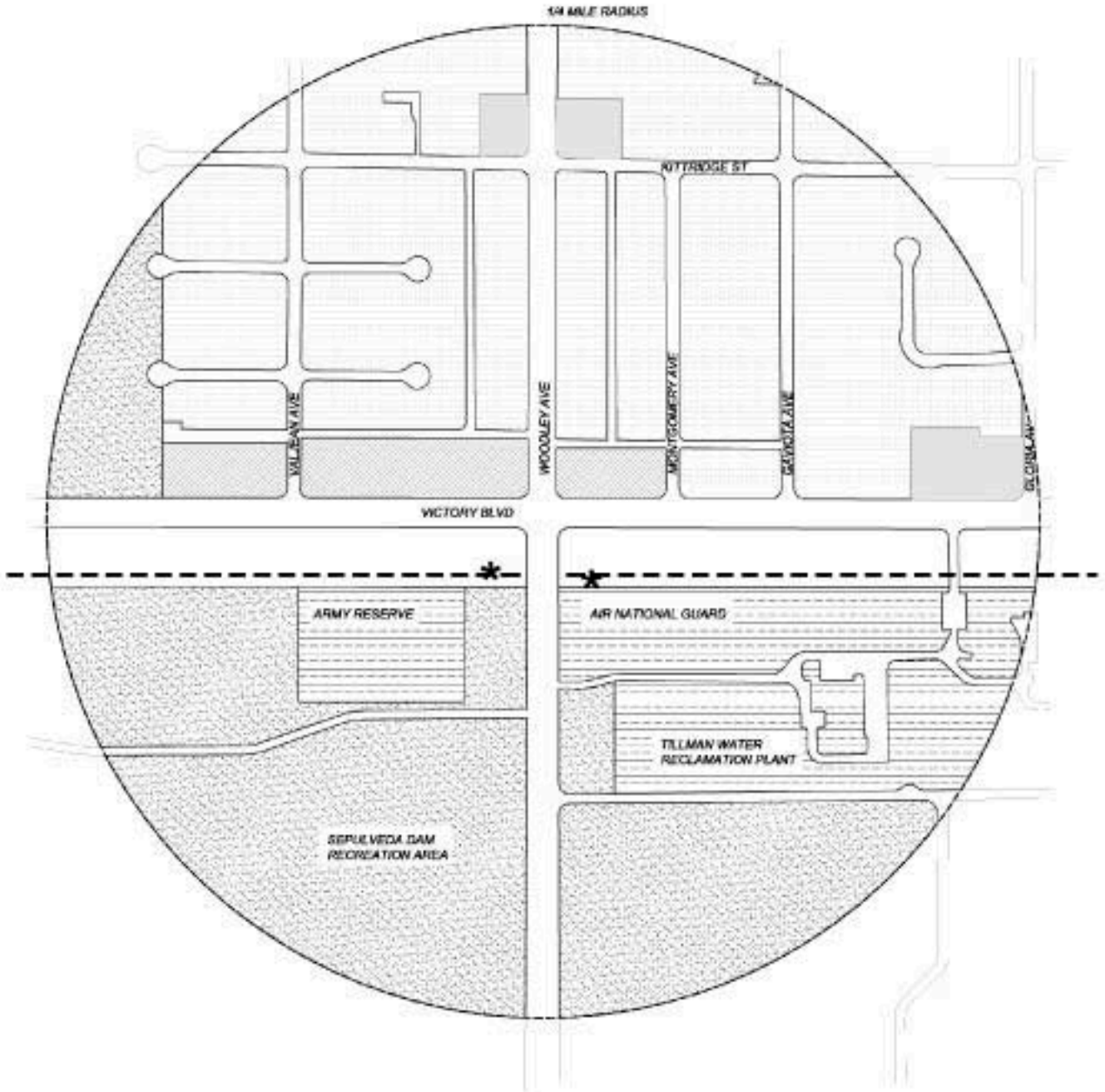
The Woodley station would lie between the Sepulveda Dam Flood Control Basin and Recreation Area to the south and Victory Boulevard to the north (see Figure 4-12). Closest to the station, commercial development at the intersection consists of small-scale single-story buildings set behind parking, while commercial buildings west of the intersection are larger and located along the street, with parking behind the buildings. North of Victory lies a residential neighborhood. Residences include two-story apartment buildings and single-family homes on side streets.

• Woodley Avenue to Balboa Boulevard

Between Woodley Avenue and Balboa Boulevard, the ~~SP~~ MTA ROW also runs adjacent to Victory Boulevard. Land uses across Victory Boulevard from the alignment are a mixture of single- and multi-family residential with some neighborhood retail commercial developments interspersed at major and collector streets. South of the MTA ROW is the Sepulveda Dam Flood Control Basin and Recreation Area.

• Balboa Boulevard Station

The Balboa station would be located in an area similar to the Woodley station area described above (see Figure 4-13). Commercial uses at the intersection include a mixture of single-story convenience retail and a set of four three-story office buildings (located at the southwest corner of the intersection) that are set close to the street with underground and rear surface parking. Northeast of the intersection is a neighborhood of two- to three-story multi-family apartment buildings with small side and front setbacks. To the west are Birmingham High School's athletic track and athletic fields, and Mulholland Middle School.



LEGEND

PROPOSED BRT ALIGNMENT (EXCEPT ON-STREET)

PROPOSED BRT STATION PLATFORM

0 100' 200' 400'

N

Single Family | Multi Family | Public/ Civic | Commercial | Industrial | Open Space

Figure 4-12: Woodley Station Area Land Use

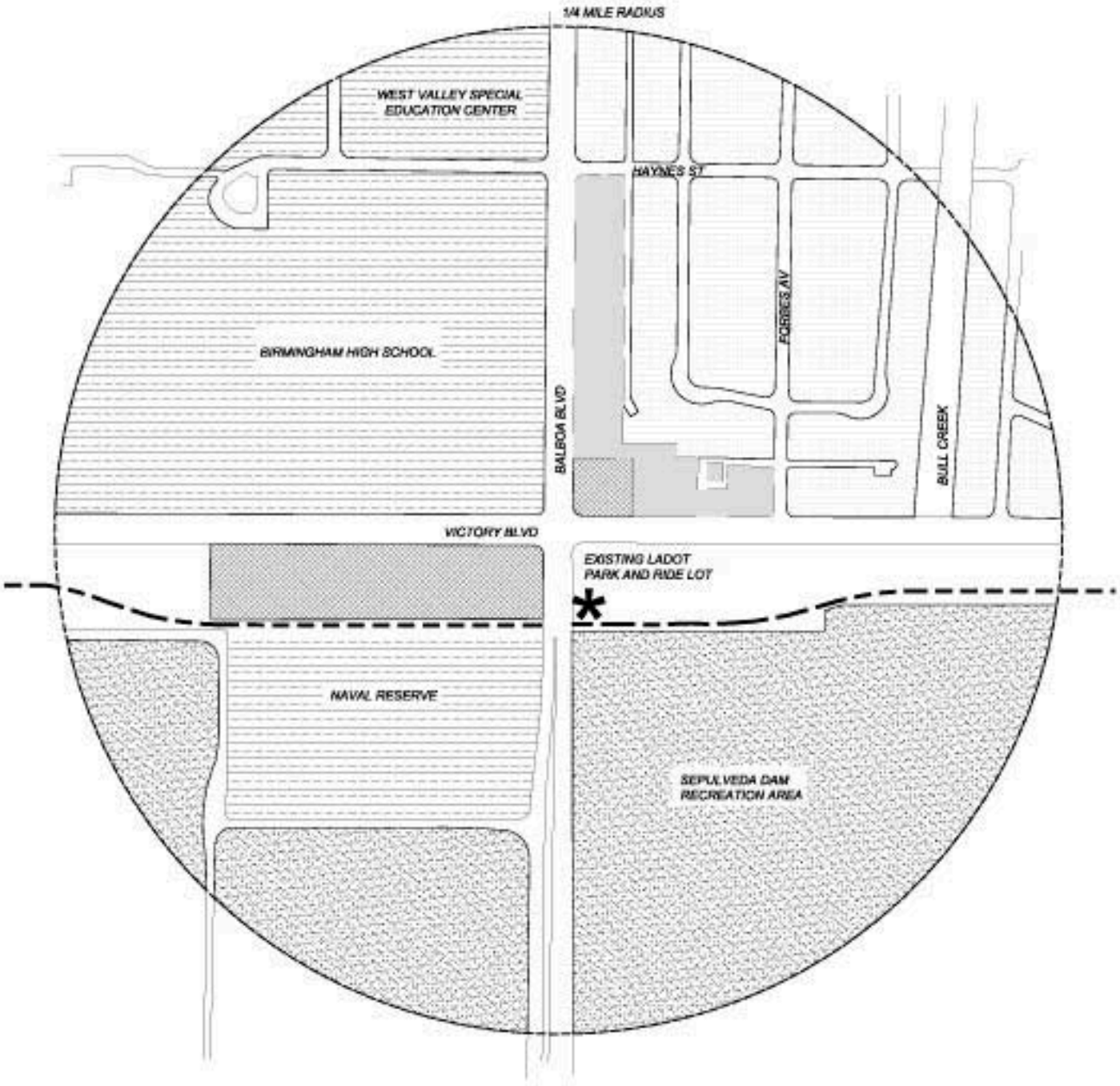


Figure 4-13: Balboa Station Area Land Use

The City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) currently operates a park-and-ride lot on the southeast corner of Balboa and Victory Boulevards, within the ~~SP~~ MTA ROW. Farther to the south is the Sepulveda Flood Control Basin and Recreation Area.

- **Balboa Boulevard to Reseda Boulevard**

West of the Sepulveda Dam Flood Control Basin and ~~Dam~~ Recreation Area, the generally unimproved portions of the right-of-way abut the rear yards of single-family homes on one side and public streets on the other. At Reseda Boulevard, commercial and industrial uses predominate within the corridor.

- **Reseda Boulevard Station**

Reseda Boulevard is a commercial and multifamily housing corridor running north-south through much of the Valley, and the proposed Reseda station would be built in one of the larger commercial concentrations in the Valley (see Figure 4-14). Numerous single-story commercial developments with surface parking as well as small auto-oriented businesses, including a car wash, occupy the area immediately surrounding the station. Most commercial buildings have no street setback, with at-grade parking to the rear of the lots. A drug rehabilitation facility and a private school are located south of Oxnard Street, just west of Reseda Boulevard. Much of the ~~SP~~ MTA ROW in this area has been leased for commercial uses such as auto repair, a landscaping business, and a lumberyard. One notable business located within the ~~SP~~ MTA ROW in this area is Reseda Feed and Saddlery, also known as "the Red Barn." Multifamily housing (both apartments and condominiums) comprises the major land use in the neighborhood to the south of the proposed station. Apartments typically have small setbacks from the street and garage parking. Apartment complexes also line Reseda Boulevard to the north of the right-of-way.

- **Reseda Boulevard to Corbin Avenue**

West of Reseda Boulevard to Corbin Avenue, the right-of-way passes to the north of the Melody Acres neighborhood, a semi-rural single family development. Other single-family residential developments lie north of the right-of-way. The rear yards of homes abut the north side of the right-of-way in this segment of the alignment.

- **Tampa Avenue Station**

Closest to the station, at the intersection of Topham Street and Tampa Avenue are a three-story office building, the Woodcrest School (K-12), and a small store with surface parking. This small commercial concentration at Tampa and Topham is generally surrounded by a single-family housing (see Figure 4-15). South of the right-of-way, the Melody Acres neighborhood has a rustic character, with unimproved curbs and gutters and a residential-agricultural zoning designation which allows the keeping of animals such as horses on a limited basis. North of the right-of-way, homes are more densely built in a more typical suburban neighborhood.

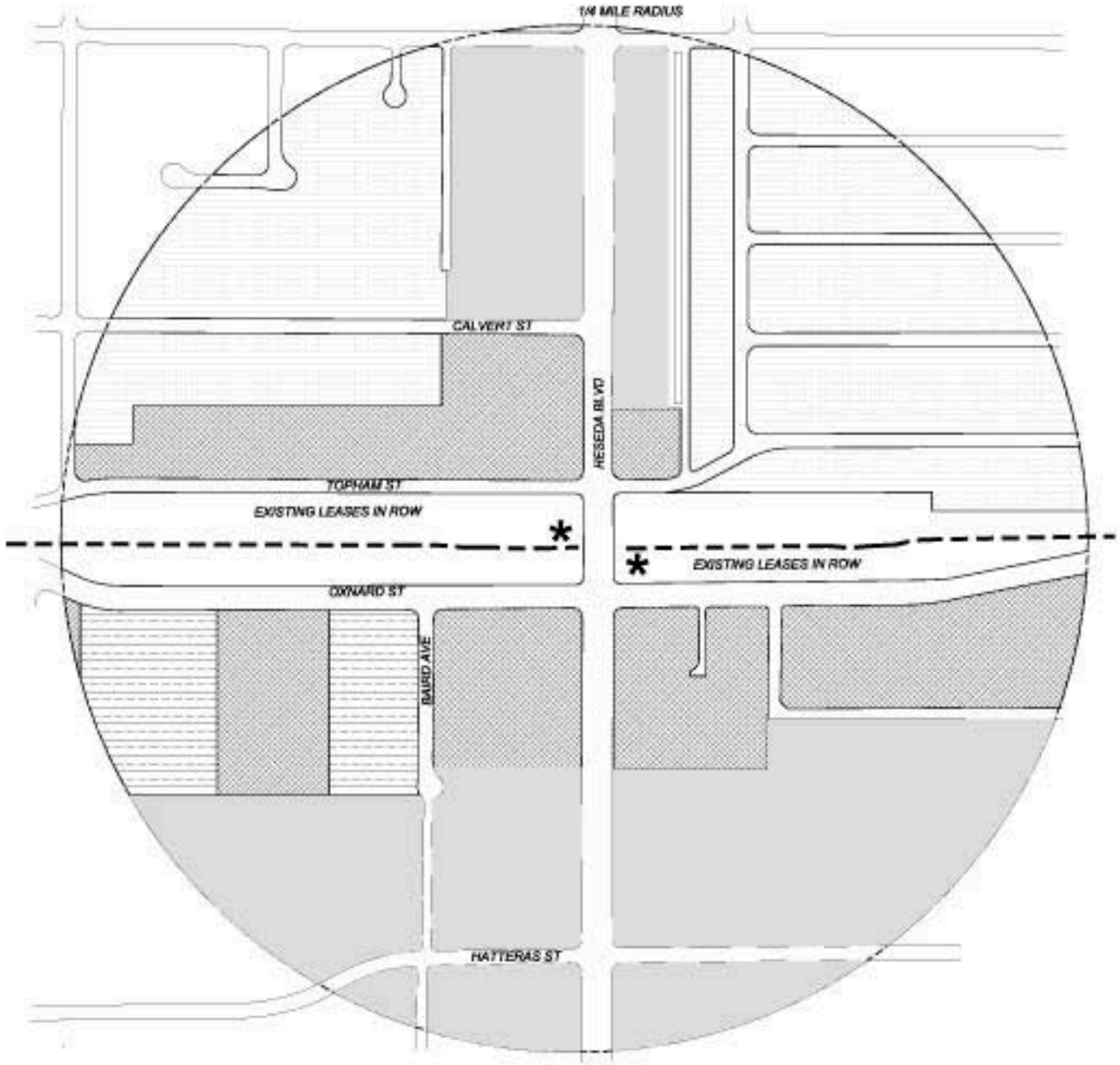
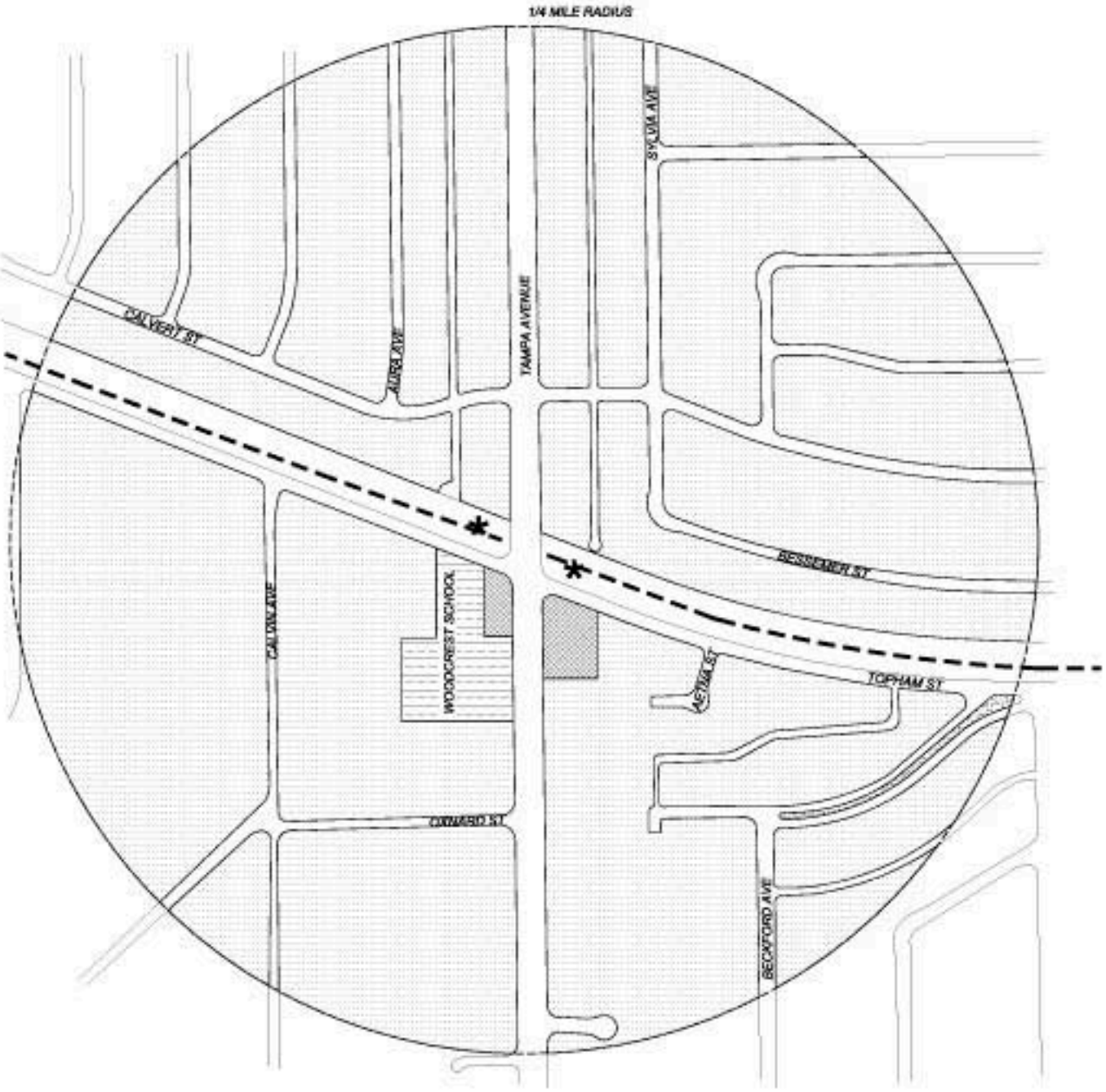


Figure 4-14: Reseda Station Area Land Use



LEGEND

PROPOSED BRT ALIGNMENT (EXCEPT ON-STREET)

PROPOSED BRT STATION PLATFORM

N

0 100' 200' 400'

Single Family | Multi Family | Public/ Civic | Commercial | Industrial | Open Space

Figure 4-15: Tampa Station Area Land Use

❑ Canoga Park – Winnetka – Woodland Hills (incl. Warner Center)

West of Corbin Avenue to its western terminus in Warner Center, the full BRT alignment passes through the Canoga Park – Winnetka – Woodland Hills Community Planning Area.

• Corbin Avenue to De Soto Avenue

Between Corbin and Winnetka Avenues, the ~~SP~~ MTA ROW runs just north of Topham Street, and passes through a single-family neighborhood. At Winnetka, baseball fields, a child care center, and the West Valley Adult Occupational Training Center lie within the corridor. Between Winnetka and De Soto Avenues, the unimproved right-of-way runs just north of Victory Boulevard, and Pierce College sits across Victory from the right-of-way. North of the right-of- way are single-family homes. Between Corbin and De Soto, the rear yards of homes abut the north side of the right-of-way.

• Pierce College ~~(Mason Avenue)~~ Station

There are two station locations under consideration for Pierce College. The baseline location is at the intersection of Mason Avenue and Victory Boulevard, and the alternative location is at Winnetka Avenue and the MTA ROW (just north of Victory Boulevard).

The Pierce College station at Mason Avenue would serve the ~~13,000~~ 16,500-student (in 2001) campus. South of the right-of-way and Victory Boulevard is the Pierce College campus, including buildings, student parking lots and agricultural open space (see Figure 4-16). North of the right-of-way is a single-family neighborhood.

The Pierce College station at Winnetka Avenue would also serve the 16,500-student campus of Pierce College. The MTA ROW is located several hundred feet north of the intersection of Victory Boulevard and Winnetka Avenue. Between the MTA ROW and the intersection are a child care center and baseball fields (see Figure 4-16b). South of Victory Boulevard are buildings and recreational open space of the Pierce College campus, and the West Valley Adult Occupational Training Center. North of the MTA ROW are primarily single family homes. Further to the north are the Ability First Park Vocational Training Center and the Rancho del Valle multi-family residential developments.

• De Soto Avenue Station

The proposed De Soto station would sit at the edge of Warner Center. Densities and land use intensity increase immediately west of De Soto. At the intersection of De Soto Avenue and Victory Boulevard, each corner of the intersection varies in land use character (see Figure 4-17). On the northeast corner is an area of medium-density single-family homes. To the southeast are Pierce College agricultural fields. To the southwest are single-story commercial uses with some medium-sized 'big-box' retail buildings, and other strip commercial developments with surface parking in front and alongside the buildings. To the northwest are two- to three-story multi-family apartment buildings set close together and close to the street, with internal parking. West of the apartment buildings are large single-story office and light-industrial buildings.

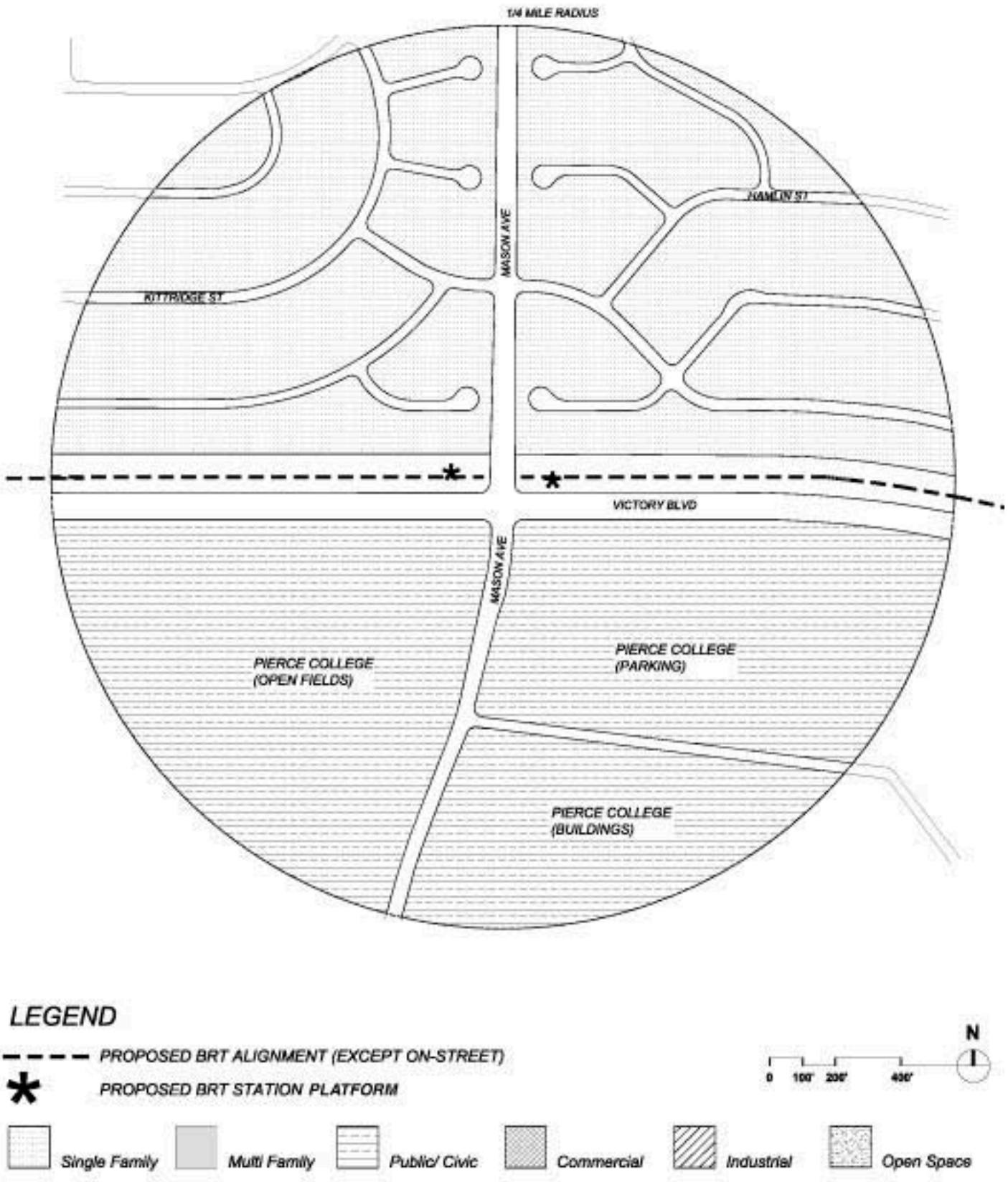


Figure 4-16: Pierce College Station at Mason Avenue Area Land Use