

BURBANK • GLENDALE • LOS ANGELES RAIL TRANSIT PROJECT

Draft Environmental Impact Report
SCH #91101017



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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GRUEN ASSOCS
LACTC
BURBANK-GLENDALE-LA RTP/DEIR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
#6/01/92



LOS ANGELES COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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Burbank-Glendale-Los Angeles Rail Transit Project

Draft Environmental Impact Report State Clearinghouse # 91101017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EIR

The Burbank-Glendale-Los Angeles Rail Transit Project Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) provides a detailed description and analysis of a rail transit project that would serve portions of the Cities of Burbank, Glendale, and Los Angeles (Figure 1). It identifies, describes, analyzes, and evaluates potentially significant environmental effects associated with the proposed project. In addition, the report provides specific measures to improve the project's environmental compatibility.

The proposed rail transit alignment would be located along the Southern Pacific Transportation Corridor (SPTC) right-of-way from the Pasadena-Los Angeles Rail Line Junction to the vicinity of the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport at Hollywood Way. This proposed rail transit project forms a part of a larger regional transit system that would link activity centers within these cities with Metro Rail service in Downtown Los Angeles and beyond.

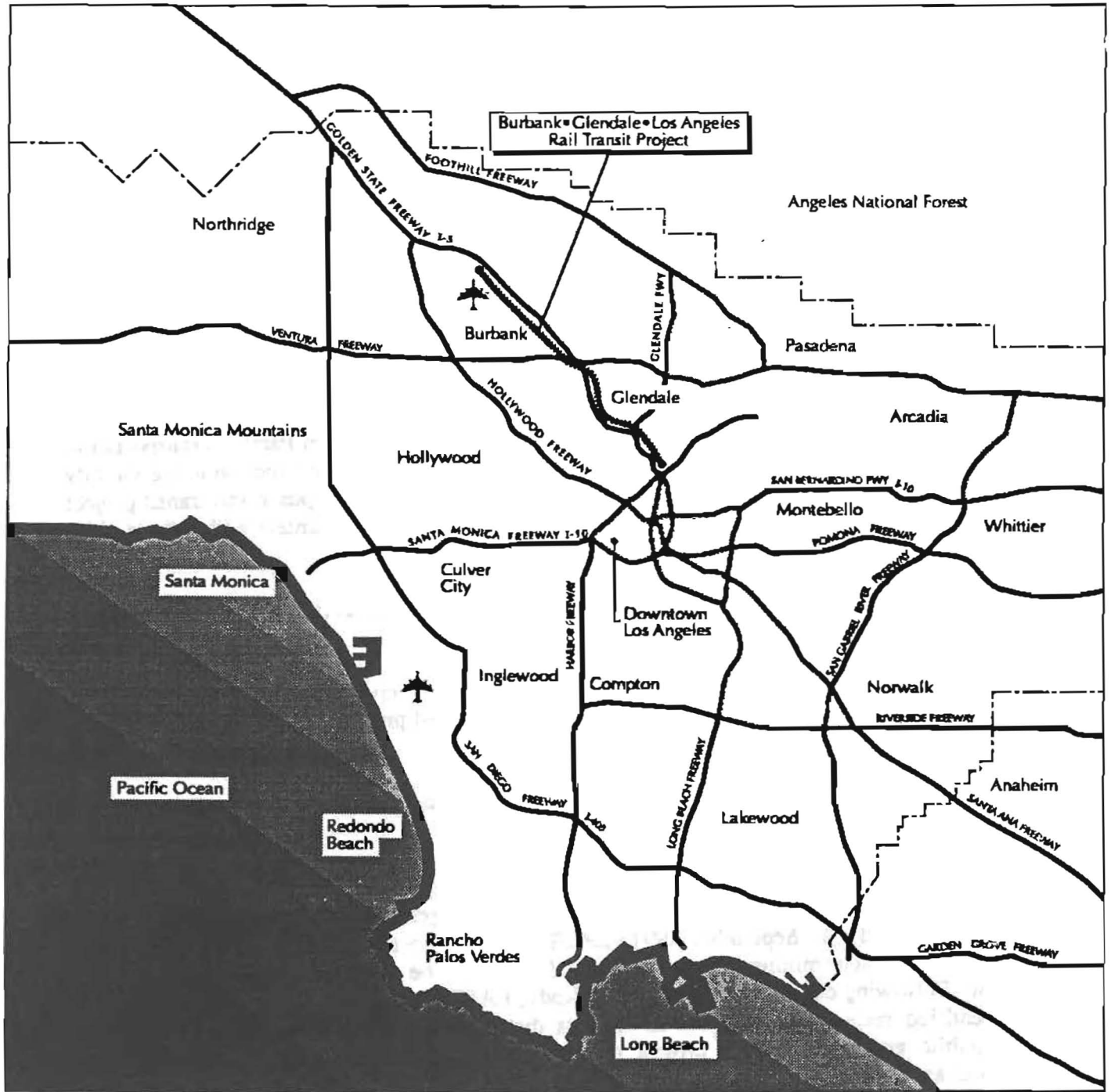
Prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and State CEQA Guidelines, the EIR intends to serve two purposes:

- To provide the lead agency, responsible jurisdictions, civic decision makers, and the general public with detailed information of the proposed project's potential environmental impacts, and;
- To serve as a tool for decision makers to facilitate the decision-making process on the proposed project.

Because the proposed project may pose significant impacts to the environment, the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission (LACTC), as the lead agency for this project, directed that an EIR be prepared. In September 1991, LACTC performed an Initial Environmental Study which assisted in determining the environmental issues to be analyzed in the environmental document. Following completion of the Initial Study, LACTC circulated a Notice of Preparation to all identified responsible agencies as well as distributing a project summary letter to the general public and those on the project mailing list. The Initial Study and the Notice of Preparation appear in Appendix A of the EIR, while responses to the Notice of Preparation are included in Appendix B.

THE PROPOSED PROJECT

For the purposes of this environmental review, the proposed project refers to the Burbank-Glendale-Los Angeles rail line included as a candidate corridor in the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission's (LACTC) 30-year Integrated Transportation Plan. The project would comprise part of the County's 300-mile Metro Rail System (Figure 2), and would extend from the Pasadena-Los Angeles rail line junction in the City of Los Angeles to the



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MILES (approximately)

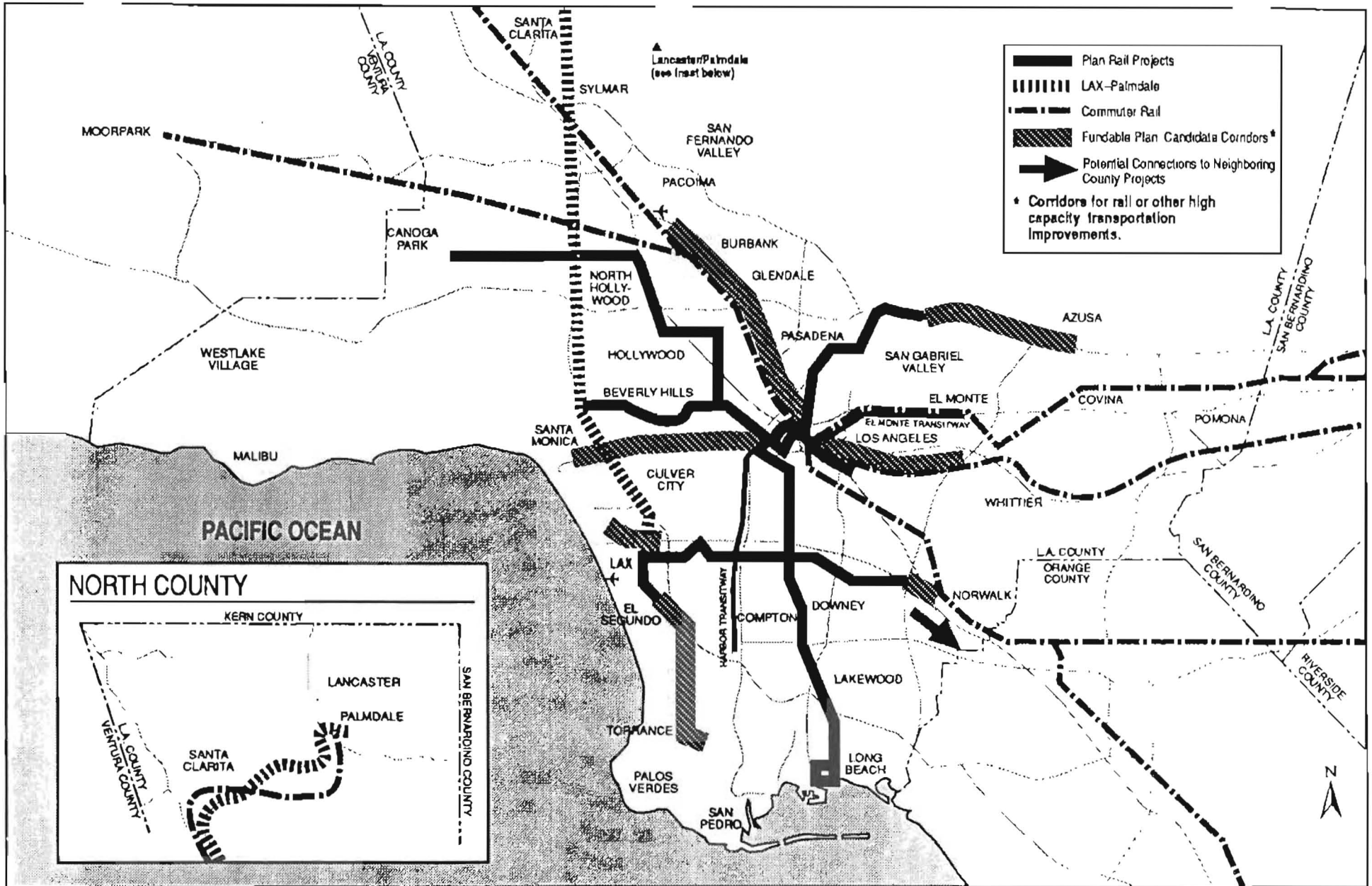
GRAPHICS BY CRUEN ASSOCIATES



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**FIGURE 1
Regional Setting**



SOURCE: LACTC, March 1992



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FIGURE 2
Proposed 30-year Integrated
Transportation Plan

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vicinity of the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport in the City of Burbank. As illustrated in Figure 3, ten stations are currently planned along the 11.9-mile rail transit route.

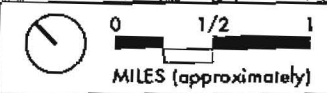
The report is prepared by LACTC in conjunction with the Cities of Glendale, Burbank, and Los Angeles. The scope of work for this rail alignment includes not only its environmental documentation, but also route refinement, engineering feasibility, and station site design analysis; this information appears under separate cover. In addition to these documents, assessment of previously completed planning studies has assisted in guiding the planning and environmental review of the proposed project. These planning studies have been utilized to develop planning consistency between the Burbank-Glendale-Los Angeles Rail Transit Project and local transit-oriented planning efforts. Planning reports that have been evaluated are listed below:

- LACTC, County of Los Angeles, City of Los Angeles. *Downtown Los Angeles to Sylmar/Santa Clarita Rail Transit Study*. November 1990.
- Los Angeles County Public Works Department, LACTC. *Preliminary Feasibility Study for the San Joaquin Valley Line: Commuter Rail Service*. May 1988.
- City of Glendale, LACTC. *Glendale Corridor LRT Route Refinement Feasibility Study*. April 1990.
- City of Glendale. *Glendale Transportation Center Feasibility Study, Needs Assessment, and Master Plan*. December 1991.
- City of Burbank, County of Los Angeles. *Burbank Metrolink Monorail Feasibility Study*. September 1990.
- City of Burbank. *Burbank City Center Multi-Modal Transportation Facility Feasibility Study*. March 1991.

PUBLIC REVIEW

Public officials, affected agencies, and the general public have the opportunity for reviewing and commenting on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) through a 45-day review period established and administered by the State of California's Office of Planning and Research. During this review period, LACTC will conduct individual public workshops and public hearings in the Cities of Burbank, Glendale, and Los Angeles. During the workshops, persons interested in understanding the specifics of the project may meet with staff to ask questions. The public hearing that follows the workshop provides a forum for taking public testimony concerning the proposed rail transit project and the EIR. The preparers of the DEIR are required to respond, in writing, to relevant comments on the DEIR received from both citizens and public agencies. The comments and the responses to comments will be included in the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) to be prepared following the completion of the public circulation period for the DEIR.

**LEGEND:
PROPOSED STATIONS**



- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 BURBANK AIRPORT-HOLLYWOOD WAY | 6 BROADWAY |
| 2 BUENA VISTA | 7 GLENDALE TRANSPORTATION CENTER |
| 3 BURBANK CITY CENTRE | 8 FLETCHER DRIVE-GLENDALE FREEWAY |
| 4 NORTHWEST GLENDALE | 9 TAYLOR YARD-DIVISION STREET |
| 5 VENTURA FREEWAY | 10 SOUTH TAYLOR YARD-AVENUE 19 |

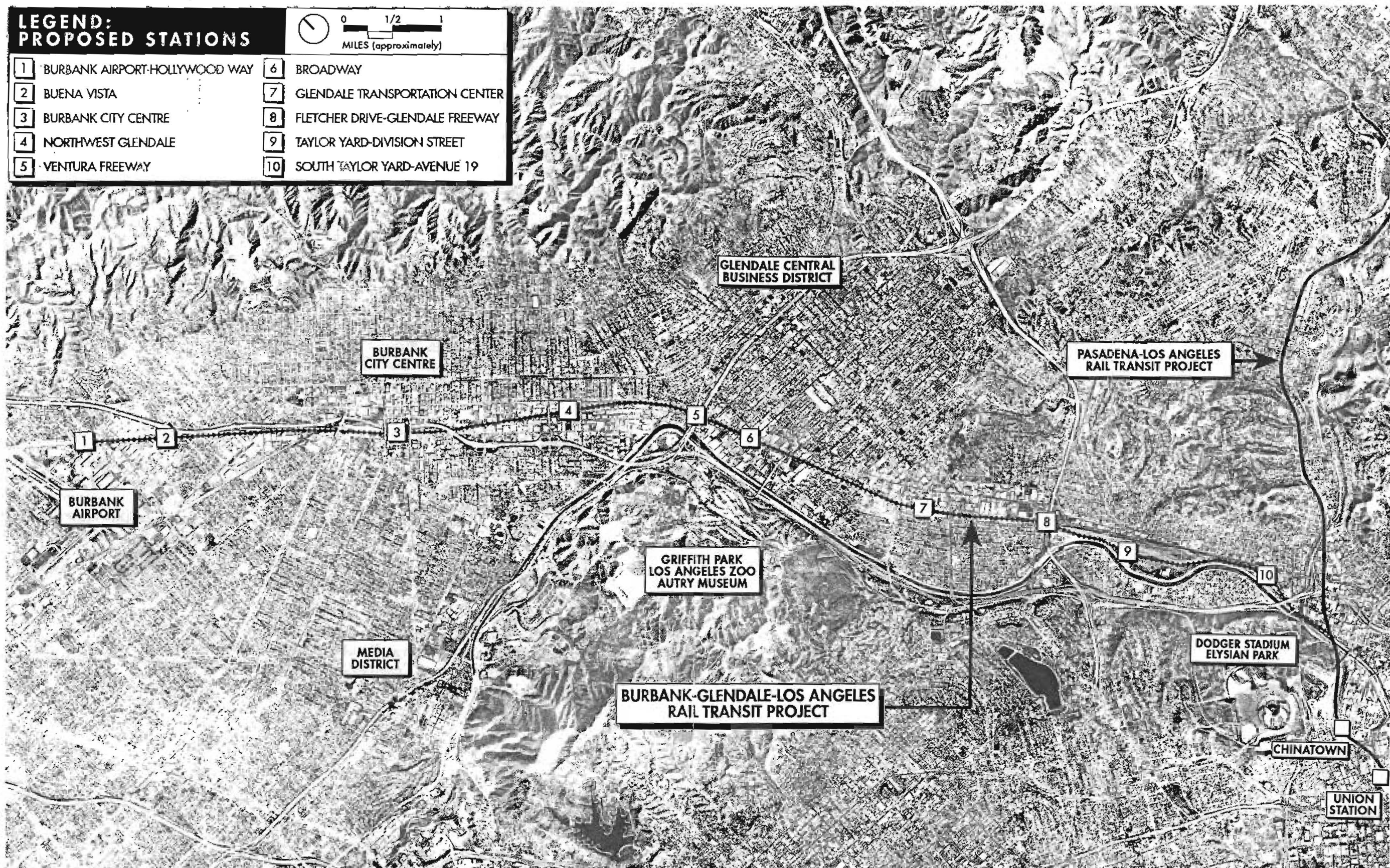


FIGURE 3
Planning Context Map

PERMITS AND APPROVALS

In order to construct the proposed rail transit project, LACTC and other responsible agencies will be required to implement a number of discretionary actions. The following agencies may use this EIR as part of the process of issuing permits, approvals, or cooperative agreements required to construct the project:

- City of Burbank
- City of Glendale
- City of Los Angeles
- California Department of Transportation
- Public Utilities Commission
- Federal Railroads Administration
- South Coast Air Quality Management District
- Southern California Rapid Transit District
- California Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Los Angeles County Public Works Department

PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

As illustrated in Table 1 on the following page, the preferred project alternative is an 11.9-mile light rail system that would provide transit service within the Southern Pacific Transportation Corridor (SPTC) from the vicinity of the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport to Pasadena-Los Angeles Rail Line Junction, with through service to Union Station in Downtown Los Angeles. This alignment represents the end product of previously prepared rail planning studies that explored various alignment and transit mode alternatives.¹ For the purposes of studying project alternatives, Chapter 6.0 of the EIR explores the relative merits of four other potential project choices:

- No Project: No transit improvement to SPTC right-of-way.
- Alternative Alignments: Six alignments through the Glendale CBD.
- Alternative Modes: Commuter Rail, High Speed Rail, Magnetic Levitation (Maglev).
- Alternative Stations: Various station designs and locations throughout the route.

¹ City of Glendale and LACTC, *Glendale Corridor LRT Alignment Alternatives Study*, April 1990; LACTC, County of Los Angeles, City of Los Angeles, *Downtown Los Angeles to Sylmar/Santa Clarita Rail Transit Study*, November 1990.

**Table 1
Summary of Project Characteristics for the
Burbank-Glendale-Los Angeles Rail Transit Project**

Characteristic	Description
ROUTE	
Length	11.9 miles from Burbank Airport to Pasadena Line Junction. 13.6 miles from Burbank Airport to Union Station.
Right-of-Way	Southern Pacific Transportation Corridor, utilizing LACTC's 40-foot transportation easement.
Environmental Documentation	Environmental review for the proposed rail transit project will cover issues related to the development of the alignment from the Pasadena-Los Angeles Rail Line Junction to the vicinity of the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport.
Description	The proposed project extends from the Burbank Airport to the Pasadena-Los Angeles rail line junction. Activity centers that could be served by the proposed rail alignment include the Burbank Airport, Burbank City Centre, Burbank Media District, Glendale Grand Central Industrial Business Park, Glendale Central Business District, Los Angeles Zoo, Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum, and the residential communities of Northwest Glendale, Atwater Village, Glassell Park, and Mount Washington.
STATIONS	
Total	10, all at-grade.
Park-&-Ride Facilities	7
Number of Parking Spaces	5,660
Joint Development Potential	5
OPERATIONS	
Average Weekday Trips (2010)	33,000 - 38,000
Train Type	Light Rail Technology: 19-vehicle fleet.
Maximum Train Speed	55 miles per hour, with an average train speed of 34 miles per hour from Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport to Union Station.
Train Headways	Peak Hour: 6 to 10 minutes. Average: 10 to 15 minutes.
Travel Time: Burbank Airport to Glendale Transportation Center	Approximately 13 minutes.
Travel Time: Burbank Airport to Downtown Los Angeles	Approximately 23 minutes.

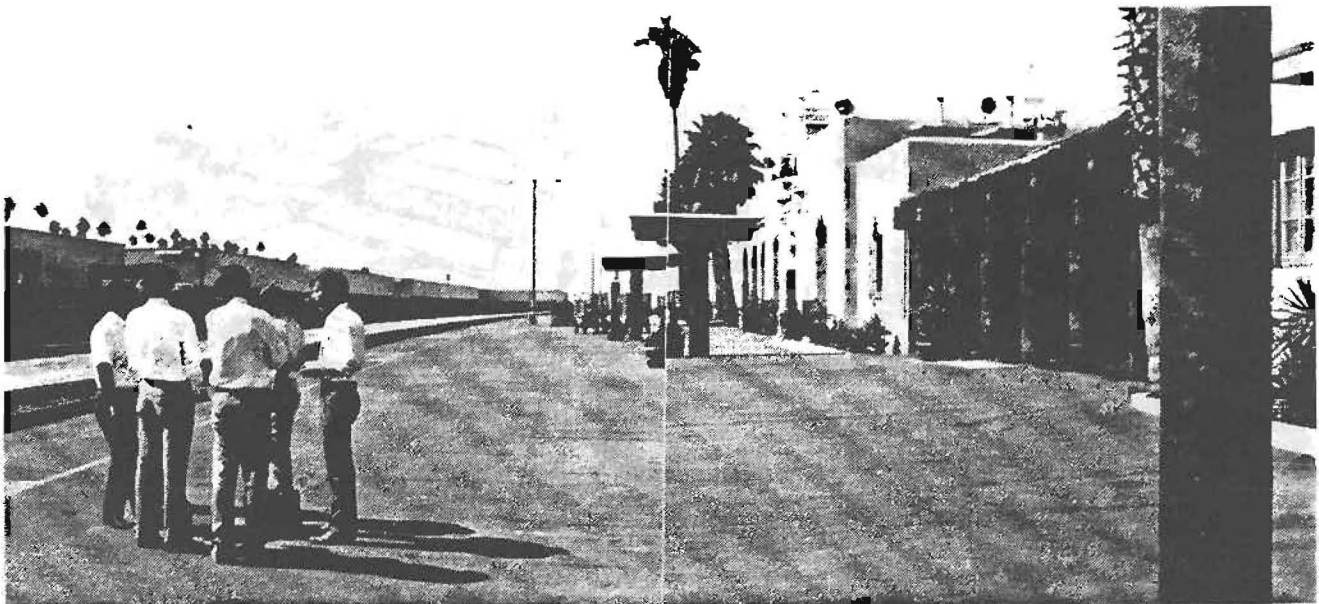
SOURCE: LACTC, Gruen Associates, Schimpeler-Corredino Associates, and Manuel Padron & Associates.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT SUMMARY

The proposed light rail alignment would result in changes to the project study area's physical environment in built out areas adjacent to the rail line and at station areas. Figures 4-6 illustrate the "developed" context of the proposed rail alignment along various portions of the route. Table 2 summarizes environmental impacts and mitigation measures for the proposed rail transit project. Impacts that would remain after mitigation are noted in the summary as "unavoidable adverse impact" if the project receives approval as proposed in this document.

AREAS OF CONTROVERSY AND ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

A number of environmental concerns have been raised by both the community and affected agencies regarding the proposed project. The most frequently raised issues involve noise associated with the Blue Line air horn, safety and security, increased traffic volumes in nearby residential communities, and impacts on sensitive land uses in close proximity to the proposed rail alignment. These issues have been addressed in this EIR in the Noise, Public Services, Transportation and Circulation, and Land Use sections.



View looking north at the old Glendale Rail Depot. The proposed rail alignment's station platform would be located approximately 400 feet south of the existing depot. LRT Vehicles (as depicted in the rendering) would come no closer than 25 feet to the historic structure.

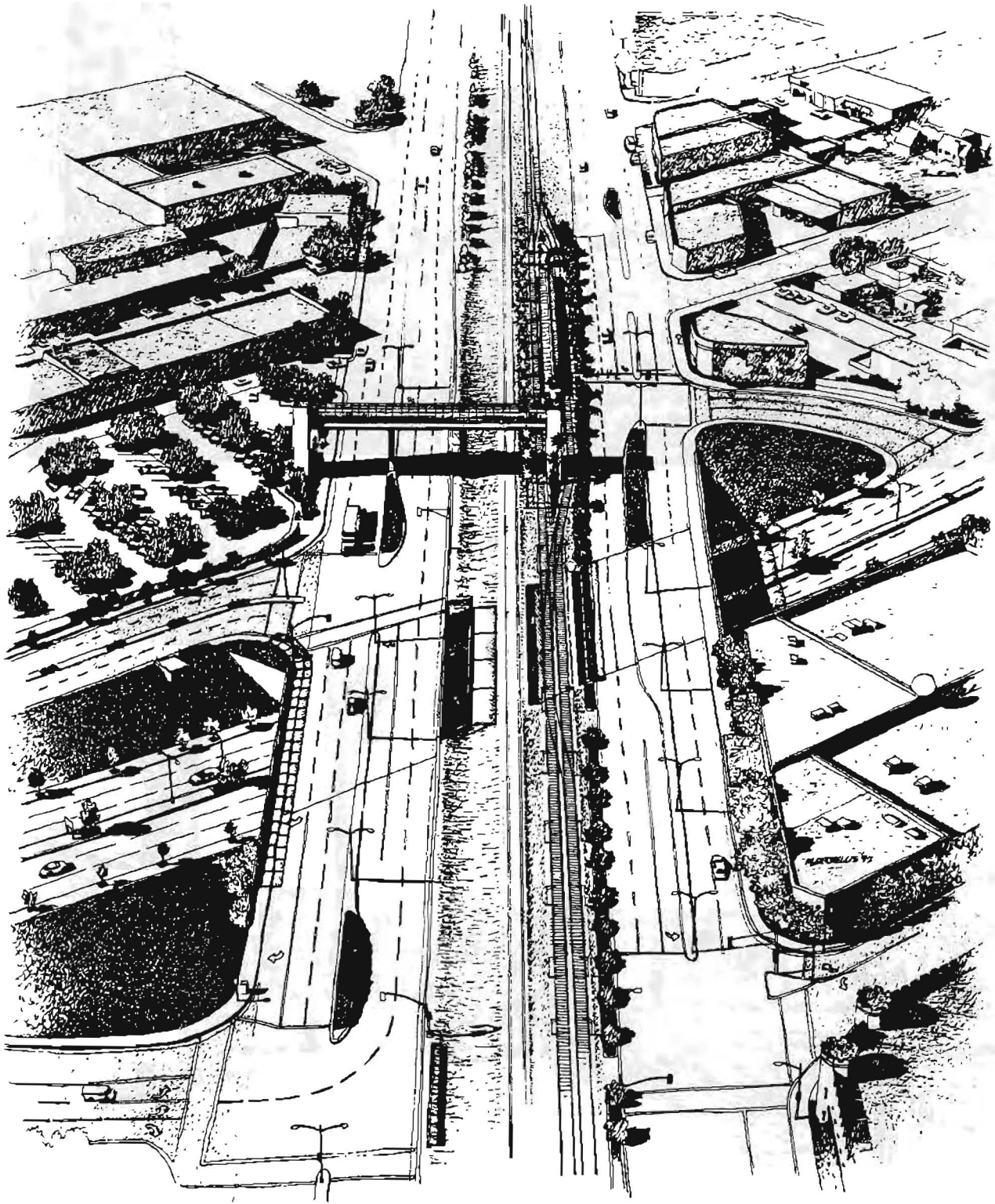
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FIGURE 4
Developed Context of
Glendale Transportation Center



Aerial Perspective of proposed Burbank Airport-Hollywood Way Station area. The station platform would be located north of Hollywood Way . Facilities which will need to be constructed include a railroad bridge to span Hollywood Way, a 1,500-car park and ride facility on the northwest corner of the intersection, and a pedestrian overpass to access the station platform.

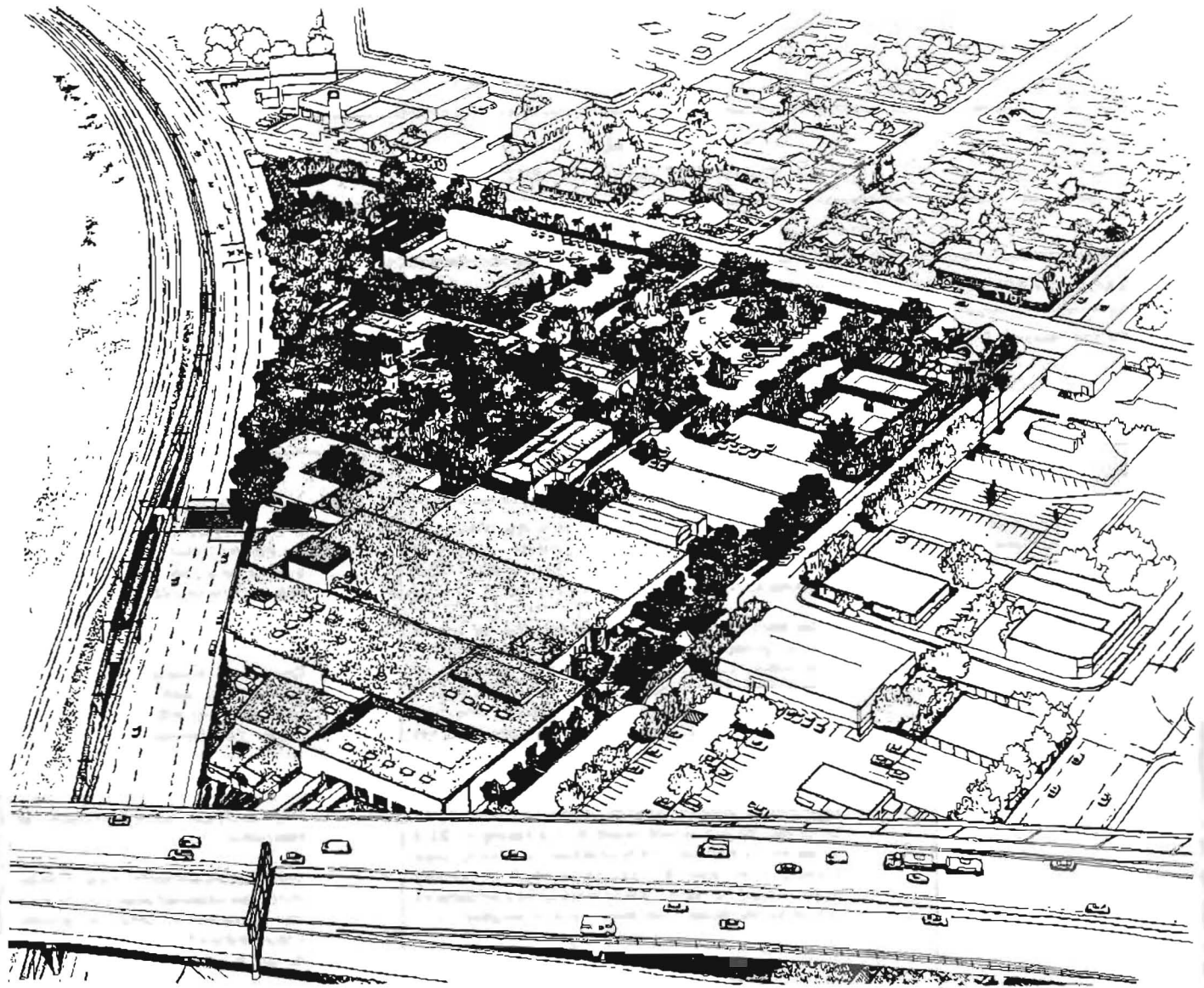
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FIGURE 5
View of Proposed Rail Line at
San Fernando Blvd. - Hollywood Way



Aerial Perspective of proposed Avenue 19 Station near Lawry's California Center. The Center could become the focal point of a potential joint development project following the construction of the rail line. In order to develop a station platform at this location, three feet of right-of-way will be displaced along San Fernando Road .

GRAPHICS BY GRUEN ASSOCIATES



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FIGURE 6
View of Proposed Rail Line at
at Lawry's California Center

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

**Table 2
Summary of Environmental Impacts**

Category	Environmental Impacts	Proposed Mitigation Measures
5.1 POPULATION AND HOUSING		
<i>Residents and Housing Stock</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct impact since the proposed project does not displace existing residences and housing stock. Residents could also experience impacts related to traffic, air quality, noise, and visual quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None required. Refer to Section 5.5 for noise-related mitigations.
5.2 LAND USE		
<p><i>Compatibility with Local Plans and Existing Land Uses</i></p> <p><i>Land Acquisition</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The alignment would be in close proximity to sensitive land uses. This could result in impacts related to pedestrian circulation, noise, air quality, and aesthetics. Local planning documents governing the rail transit corridor generally identify the R.O.W. as quasi-public, light industry, or heavy industry. In the case of current plans and plans being prepared in the project study area, the proposed rail alignment would be compatible, and in many instances, support these planning efforts. <u>Unavoidable Adverse Impact.</u> Implementation of the proposed project would result in the taking of 22.4 acres on 12 parcels. 14 businesses and public uses totaling more than 81,000 square feet in building space would be taken. An estimated 143 employees would be displaced from their place of employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the environmental review process for the Multi-Modal Facilities planned in Burbank and Glendale, these jurisdictions should reference this EIR to be consistent with the proposed project and other local plans. Coordinate project design through Taylor Yard with the outcome of other planning efforts, including the Taylor Yard Development Study. Displaced businesses will receive fair relocation costs. Joint development opportunities should be explored where businesses are displaced in order to provide opportunities for some businesses to remain in the existing area. Because of special considerations, LACTC should work with the City and tenants of the City Jail Building to identify acceptable relocation alternatives within the area.
5.3 AIR QUALITY		
<p><i>Local Area Impacts</i></p> <p><i>Regional Air Quality</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Unavoidable Adverse Impact.</u> Of the six receptor locations studied, only one, at San Fernando Rd. near Sonora Ave., would not experience increased 1-hr. and 8-hr. carbon monoxide concentrations. Based on SCAQMD thresholds, the proposed project would have significant impact near the Pater Noeter High School site. The project would have a beneficial effect on the region's air quality with a projected reduction in automobile-generated pollutants: Carbon monoxide: .24 tons/day Nitrogen oxide: .05 tons/day Organic gases: .02 tons/day Particulate matter: .01 tons/day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed project shall comply with SCAQMD Rule 403. In an effort to reduce air quality impacts related to increased concentrations of vehicles at rail transit stations areas and project-related construction impacts of dust and particulate matter, mitigation measures recommended by the SCAQMD should be implemented. These mitigations appear in greater detail in Section 5.3.

**Table 2
Summary of Environmental Impacts**

Category	Environmental Impacts	Proposed Mitigation Measures
5.4 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION		
<p><i>Region-wide Travel</i></p> <p><i>Intersections & Major Streets</i></p> <p><i>Delay and Queuing</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project will have a beneficial impact on the region with a projected reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) daily: VMT Reduction: 37,800 vehicle miles daily • A significant impact assumes an increase in the intersection capacity utilization (ICU) of at least 0.020, with a final ICU of 0.900 or more. Implementation of the proposed project would impact these intersections: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Front Street and Burbank Blvd. (Burbank) 2. San Fernando Blvd. and Verdugo Ave. (Burbank) 3. San Fernando Road and Fairmont Ave. (Glendale) 4. San Fernando Road and Doran St. (Glendale) 5. San Fernando Road and Los Feliz Blvd. (Glendale) 6. Brand Blvd. and Los Feliz Blvd. (Glendale) 7. San Fernando Road and Brand Blvd. (Glendale) 8. San Fernando Road and Fletcher Dr. (LA) 9. San Fernando Road and northbound SR-2. (LA) • Delay and queuing at at-grade intersections could result in traffic impacts. However, the expected delay per vehicle (under 8.6 seconds) is not significant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended mitigation measures for traffic impacts involve signal improvements, street widening, lane restriping, elimination of street parking, and in some instances, relocation of streetscape and public facilities. The mitigations for the impact intersections are discussed in greater detail in Section 5.4.
5.5 NOISE		
<p><i>Noise</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise produced by the existing Blue Line train air horn reaches noise levels of 105 dB. An electrical train horn is being proposed and would produce single event noise levels of 87 dB. • Implementation of the proposed project would result in increases in the noise environment ranging from 0.2 to 0.9 dB. The LRT CNEL near the residences adjacent to the rail line is 64.1 dB. According to the Draft FTA noise guidelines, this does not constitute a significant impact, since the ambient noise level is already 77 dB. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use lower sound level horns without compromising safety. The horn serves to warn pedestrians. Alternative warning devices for pedestrians should be explored. • Sensitive land uses adjacent or with no screening from the alignment should be buffered by means of berms, noise barriers, or other measures.
5.6 EARTH, WATER, AND RISK OF UPSET		
<p><i>Geology</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project is not expected to create geologic impacts in the East Valley and North Los Angeles region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None required.

**Table 2
Summary of Environmental Impacts**

Category	Environmental Impacts	Proposed Mitigation Measures
5.8 EARTH, WATER, AND RISK OF UPSET (continued)		
<p><i>Seismicity</i></p> <p><i>Watercourses and Drainage</i></p> <p><i>Risk of Upset</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although the project is located in an area with a number of active faults, the alignment is not exposed to greater seismic risk than other locations in Southern California. • The project would create temporary impacts related to the widening of the Arroyo Verdugo Wash bridge. Impacts could include disturbance in the wash bottom and minor increases in downstream sediment loads. • There may exist high traces of soil contamination, particularly at station locations with long histories of industrial use, and in and near Taylor Yard. The yard, however, is currently undergoing cleanup under the supervision of the California Environmental Protection Agency. All potentially contaminated sites within the construction zone should be addressed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All structures should be constructed in anticipation of a major earthquake. • Soils testing should be conducted to determine potential risk of soil liquefaction or subsidence. • None required. • Soils testing should be conducted to determine specific subsurface soil conditions. • Conduct detailed geotechnical studies of station areas to help determine potential for upset.
6.7 PUBLIC SERVICES		
<p><i>Schools</i></p> <p><i>Police</i></p> <p><i>Fire</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fifteen schools are in close proximity to the rail line. Some of these campuses may experience impacts related to noise, traffic and pedestrian movement. • Safety problems could arise from persons walking to and from classes. • LACTC contracts with the L.A. County Sheriff's department to patrol trains, station platforms, and station areas. Existing Blue Line service experiences very little crime. Crimes committed typically include petty theft, fare evasion, and rule violations. • Project development could create impacts related to fire flow, fire protection, emergency medical services, and increased false alarms. • Accessibility could also be impacted since the LRT operates on priority at at-grade intersections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LACTC safety criteria should be distributed to students and teachers. • Pedestrian areas should be clearly marked near the R.O.W. • Construction sequencing should be coordinated with local schools, buses, and carpools. • Security measures should be incorporated into the physical design of rail-related facilities. • Transit District Police should consider the development of a centralized substation along the route to improve response times. • Every effort will be made to mitigate impacts that affect a Fire Department's ability to provide emergency services with adequate response times.

**Table 2
Summary of Environmental Impacts**

Category	Environmental Impacts	Proposed Mitigation Measures
5.8 NATURAL AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES		
<p><i>Natural Resources</i></p> <p><i>Recreational Resources</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Species of special interest that may be impacted by the project are the California Gnatcatcher and the Southwestern Pond Turtle. Both species have been sighted in the project study area and have suitable habitats in close proximity to the rail line. • Displaced plant life would include a variety of shrubs and trees. Most significantly impacted would be the Ornamental and Evergreen Pear trees located between Grandview Ave. and Colorado St. in Glendale which would be displaced by the project. • Impacts related to recreational facilities include noise and accessibility. Of the six parks identified within .25 miles of the alignment, only Palanconi and Chevy Chase Parks may experience impacts related to noise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When existing landscaping is removed, new landscaping shall be planted as established in a landscaping plan. The uprooted Pear trees should be boxed, maintained, and transplanted during the time of project construction. • Refer to Section 5.5 for mitigations related to noise.
5.9 UTILITIES AND ENERGY		
<p><i>Utilities</i></p> <p><i>Energy Consumption</i></p> <p><i>Energy Savings</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of the project would require the relocation of the following: SPTC Freight Rail alignment; Western Union Telegraph underground lines; MCI, US Sprint, AT&T fiber optic cables; and Southern California Edison electrical lines. • The project would consume: 14.4 million kWh/year at station areas. 15,000 kWh/day in rail usage. • The project would have net beneficial effects on regional energy consumption through a reduction in vehicle miles traveled. This would save approximately 1,700 gallons of fuel per day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LACTC will work with Southern Pacific to relocate MCI, US Sprint, and AT&T fiber optic cables when these lines come in conflict with the LRT alignment. • To further reduce energy demands, the proposed project should employ regenerative transit vehicle braking improvements, coordinate traffic and rail signalling, and implement Title 24 design features.
5.10 AESTHETICS		
<p><i>Visual Quality</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual impacts would include: Removal of streetscape along SPTC R.O.W. Overhead catenary wires. Development of rail-related facilities (i.e., Burbank Airport Station pedestrian bridge). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace streetscape along SPTC R.O.W. with new streetscape or other decorative feature. • Urban design standards shall be established in areas identified as having visually sensitive land uses. • Provide funding set-aside for public art in station areas.

