Environmental Justice Impacts Report

for the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor

February 2016

Metro®

Prepared by the
U.S. Department of Transportation
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Acronyms and Abbreviations

2008 RCP	2008 Regional Comprehensive Plan
2012 RTP	2012–2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy
AA	Alternatives Analysis
BRT	bus rapid transit
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CPA	Community Plan Area
DEIR	Draft Environmental Impact Report
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
Growth Vision	2004 Compass Blueprint Growth Vision
HOV	high-occupancy vehicle
I	Interstate [I]
LADOT	Los Angeles Department of Transportation
LRT	light rail transit
LRTP	Long-Range Transportation Plan
Metro	Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MSF	maintenance and storage facility
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
RTP/SCS	Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy
SCAG	Southern California Association of Governments
SR	State Route
TSM	Transportation System Management
U.S.C.	United States Code

Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Study Background

What Is the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor?

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) have initiated a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)/Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor Project (project). The DEIS/DEIR is being prepared with the FTA as the Lead Agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Metro as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The DEIS/DEIR and related engineering are being undertaken by Metro, in close coordination with the Cities of Los Angeles and San Fernando. The DEIS/DEIR will be a combined document complying with the most recent state and federal environmental laws. The project's public/community outreach component is being undertaken as an integrated parallel effort to the DEIS/DEIR.

Prior to the initiation of the DEIS/DEIR, an Alternatives Analysis (AA) was received by the Metro Board in January 2013 to study the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor in order to define, screen, and recommend alternatives for future study.

This study enabled Metro and the Cities of Los Angeles and San Fernando to evaluate a range of new public transit service alternatives that can accommodate future population growth and transit demand, while being compatible with existing land uses and future development opportunities. The study considered the Sepulveda Pass Corridor, which is another Measure R project, and the proposed California High Speed Rail Project. Both of these projects may be directly served by a future transit project in the project study area. The Sepulveda Pass Corridor could eventually link the West Los Angeles area to the east San Fernando Valley and the California High Speed Rail Project via the project corridor. As part of the January 2013 Alternatives Analysis, most of Sepulveda Boulevard was eliminated as an alignment option, as well as the alignment extending to Lakeview Terrace. As a result of the Alternatives Analysis, modal recommendations were for BRT and LRT.

As a result of the alternatives screening process and feedback received during the public scoping period, a curb-running BRT, median-running BRT, median-running low-floor LRT/tram, and a median-running LRT, were identified as the four build alternatives, along with the TSM and No-Build Alternatives to be carried forward for analysis in this DEIS/DEIR.

1.1.1 Study Area

Where Is the Study Area Located?

The East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor Project study area is located in the San Fernando Valley in the County of Los Angeles. Generally, the project study area extends from the City of San Fernando and the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station in the north to the Van Nuys Metro

Orange Line Station within the City of Los Angeles in the south. However, the project study area used for the environmental issue described in this report could vary from this general study area, depending on the needs of the analysis. The project study area used for this analysis is described further in Section 3.1.1.

The eastern San Fernando Valley includes the two major north-south arterial roadways of Sepulveda and Van Nuys Boulevards, spanning approximately 10 to 12 miles and the major north-west arterial roadway of San Fernando Road.

Several freeways traverse or border the eastern San Fernando Valley. These include the Ventura Freeway US-101, the San Diego Freeway I-405, the Golden State Freeway I-5, the Ronald Reagan Freeway SR-118, and the Foothill Freeway I-210. The Hollywood Freeway SR-170 is located east of the project area. In addition to Metro Local and Metro Rapid bus service, the Metro Orange Line (Orange Line) Bus Rapid Transit service, the Metrolink Ventura Line commuter rail service, Amtrak inter-city rail service, and the Metrolink Antelope Valley Line commuter rail service are the major transit corridors that provide interregional trips in the project study area.

Land uses in the project study area include neighborhood and regional commercial land uses, as well as government and residential land uses. Specifically, land uses in the project study area include government services at the Van Nuys Civic Center, retail shopping along the project corridor, and medium- to high-density residential uses throughout the project study area. Notable land uses in the eastern San Fernando Valley include: The Village at Sherman Oaks, Panorama Mall, Whiteman Airport, Van Nuys Airport, Mission Community Hospital, Kaiser Permanente Hospital, Van Nuys Auto Row, and several schools, youth centers, recreational centers, and San Fernando Downtown and Civic Center.

1.1.2 Alternatives Considered

What Alternatives Are under Consideration?

The following six alternatives, including four build alternatives, a TSM Alternative, and the No-Build Alternative, are being evaluated as part of this study:

- No-Build Alternative
- Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Alternative
- Build Alternative 1 – Curb-Running Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Alternative
- Build Alternative 2 – Median-Running BRT Alternative
- Build Alternative 3 – Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative
- Build Alternative 4 – Light Rail Transit (LRT) Alternative

All build alternatives would operate over 9.2 miles, either in a dedicated bus lane or guideway (6.7 miles) and/or in mixed-flow traffic lanes (2.5 miles), from the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station to the north to the Van Nuys Metro Orange Line station to the south, with the exception of Build Alternative 4 which includes a 2.5-mile segment within Metro-owned railroad right-of-way adjacent to San Fernando Road and Truman Street and a 2.5-mile underground segment beneath portions of Panorama City and Van Nuys.

1.1.2.1 No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative represents projected conditions in 2040 without implementation of the project. No new transportation infrastructure would be built within the project study area, aside from projects that are currently under construction or funded for construction and operation by 2040. These projects include highway and transit projects funded by Measure R and specified in the current constrained element of the Metro 2009 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the 2012 Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). Existing infrastructure and future planned and funded projects assumed under the No-Build Alternative include:

- Existing Freeways – Interstate 5, and Interstate 105, State Route 118, and US-101;
- Existing Transitway – Metro Orange Line;
- Existing Bus Service – Metro Rapid and Metro Local Shuttle;
- Los Angeles Department of Transportation Commuter Express, and DASH;
- Existing and Planned Bicycle Projects – Bicycle facilities on Van Nuys Boulevard and connecting east/west facilities; and
- Other Planned Projects – Various freeway and arterial roadway upgrades, expansions to the Metro Rapid Bus system, upgrades to the Metrolink system and the proposed California High Speed Rail project.

This alternative establishes a baseline for comparison to other alternatives in terms of potential environmental effects, including adverse and beneficial environmental effects.

1.1.2.2 TSM Alternative

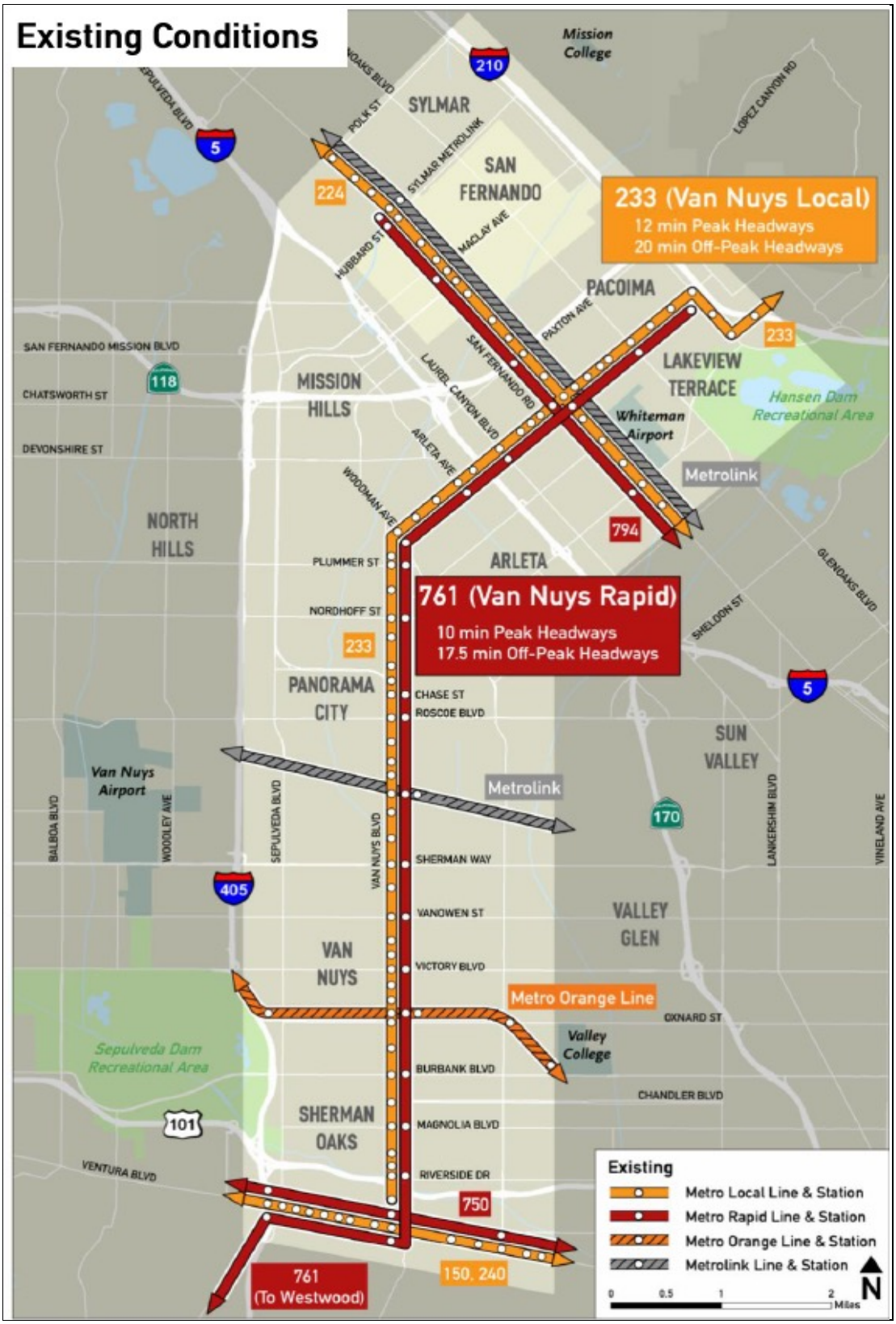
The TSM Alternative enhances the No-Build Alternative and emphasizes transportation systems upgrades, which may include relatively low-cost transit service improvements. It represents efficient and feasible improvements to transit service, such as increased bus frequencies and minor modifications to the roadway network. Additional TSM Alternative transit improvements that may be considered include, but are not limited to, traffic signalization improvements, bus stop amenities/improvements, and bus schedule restructuring (Figure 1-1).

The TSM Alternative considers the existing bus network, enhanced operating hours, and increased bus frequencies for Rapid Line 761 and Local Line 233. Under this alternative, the Metro Rapid Line 761 and Metro Local Line 233 bus routes would retain existing stop locations. This alternative would add 20 additional buses to the existing Metro Local 233 and Metro Rapid 761 bus routes. These buses would be similar to existing Metro 60-foot articulated buses, and each bus would have the capacity to serve up to 75 passengers (57 seats x 1.30 passenger loading standard). Buses would be equipped with transit signal priority equipment to allow for improved operations and on-time performance.

The existing Metro Division 15 maintenance and storage facility (MSF) located in Sun Valley would be able to accommodate the 20 additional buses with the implementation of the TSM Alternative. Operational changes would include reduced headway (elapsed time between buses) times for Metro Rapid Line 761 and Metro Local Line 233, as follows:

- Metro Rapid Line 761 would operate with headways reduced from 10 minutes to 8 minutes during peak hours (7 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. on weekdays) and from 17.5 minutes to 12 minutes during off-peak hours.
- Metro Local Line 233 would operate with headways reduced from 12 minutes to 8 minutes during peak hours and from 20 minutes to 16 minutes during off-peak hours.

Figure 1-1: TSM Alternative



Source: STV, 2014.

1.1.2.3 Build Alternative 1 – Curb-Running BRT Alternative

Under the Curb-Running BRT Alternative, the BRT guideway would incorporate 6.7 miles of existing curb lanes (i.e., lanes closest to the curb) along Van Nuys Boulevard between San Fernando Road and the Metro Orange Line. This alternative would be similar to the Metro Wilshire BRT project and would operate similarly. The lanes would be dedicated curb-running bus lanes for Metro Rapid Line 761 and Metro Local Line 233, and for other transit lines that operate on short segments of Van Nuys Boulevard. In addition, this alternative would incorporate 2.5 miles of mixed-flow lanes, where buses would operate in the curb lane along San Fernando Road and Truman Street between Van Nuys Boulevard and Hubbard Avenue for Metro Line 761. Metro Line 233 would continue north on Van Nuys Boulevard to Lakeview Terrace. These improvements would result in an improved Metro Rapid Line 761 (hereafter referred to as 761X) and an improved Metro Local Line 233 (hereafter referred to as 233X). The route of the Curb-Running BRT Alternative is illustrated in Figure 1-2.

From the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station:

- Metro Rapid Line 761X would operate within roadway travel lanes on Truman Street and San Fernando Road.
- At Van Nuys Boulevard, Metro Rapid Line 761X would turn southwest and travel south within a curb-running dedicated bus lane along Van Nuys Boulevard.
- The alternative would continue to be curb running along Van Nuys Boulevard until reaching the Metro Orange Line Van Nuys station where Metro Rapid Line 761X service would be integrated into mixed-flow traffic.
- Metro Line 761X would then continue south to Westwood as under existing conditions, though it should be noted that in December 2014 the Metro Rapid Line 761 will be re-routed to travel from Van Nuys Boulevard to Ventura Boulevard, and then to Reseda Boulevard, while a new Metro Rapid Line 788 would travel from Van Nuys Boulevard through the Sepulveda Pass to Westwood as part of a Metro demonstration project.

Metro Local Line 233X would operate similar to how it currently operates between the intersections of Van Nuys and Glenoaks Boulevards to the north and Van Nuys and Ventura Boulevards to the south. However, Metro Local Line 233X would operate with improvements over existing service because it would utilize the BRT guideway where its route overlaps with the guideway along Van Nuys Boulevard.

Transit service would not be confined to only the dedicated curb lanes. Buses would still have the option to operate within the remaining mixed-flow lanes to bypass right-turning vehicles, a bicyclist, or another bus at a bus stop.

The Curb-Running BRT Alternative would operate in dedicated bus lanes, sharing the lanes with bicycles and right turning vehicles. However, on San Fernando Road and Truman Street, no dedicated bus lanes would be provided. The Curb-Running BRT Alternative would include 18 bus stops.

Figure 1-2: Build Alternative 1 – Curb-Running BRT Alternative

Source: KOA and ICF International, 2014.

1.1.2.4 Build Alternative 2 – Median-Running BRT Alternative

The Median-Running BRT Alternative consists of approximately 6.7 miles of dedicated median-running bus lanes between San Fernando Road and the Metro Orange Line, and would have operational standards similar to the Metro Orange Line. The remaining 2.5 miles would operate in mixed-flow traffic between the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station and San Fernando Road/Van Nuys Boulevard. The Median-Running BRT Alternative is illustrated in Figure 1-3.

Similar to the Curb-Running BRT Alternative, the Median-Running BRT (Metro Rapid Line 761X) would operate as follows from the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station:

- Metro Rapid Line 761X would operate within mixed-flow lanes on Truman Street and San Fernando Road.
- At Van Nuys Boulevard, the route would turn southwest and travel south within the median of Van Nuys Boulevard in a new dedicated guideway.
- Upon reaching the Van Nuys Metro Orange Line Station, the dedicated guideway would end and the Rapid Line 761X service would then be integrated into mixed-flow traffic.
- The route would then continue south to Westwood, similar to the existing route. Similar to Build Alternative 1, it should be noted that in December 2014 the Metro Rapid Line 761 will be re-routed to travel from Van Nuys Boulevard to Ventura Boulevard, and then to Reseda Boulevard, while a new Metro Rapid Line 788 would travel from Van Nuys Boulevard through the Sepulveda Pass to Westwood as part of a Metro demonstration project.

Metro Local Line 233 would operate similar to existing conditions between the intersections of Van Nuys and Glenoaks Boulevards to the north and Van Nuys and Ventura Boulevards to the south. Rapid Bus stops that currently serve the 794 and 734 lines on the northern part of the alignment along Truman Street and San Fernando Road would be upgraded and have design enhancements that would be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant. These stops would also serve the redirected 761X line:

1. Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station
2. Hubbard Station
3. Maclay Station
4. Paxton Station
5. Van Nuys/San Fernando Station

Along the Van Nuys Boulevard segment, bus stop platforms would be constructed in the median. Seventeen new median bus stops would be included.

Figure 1-3: Build Alternative 2 – Median-Running BRT Alternative

Source: KOA and ICF International, 2014.

1.1.2.5 Build Alternative 3 – Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative

The Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would operate along a 9.2-mile route from the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station to the north, to the Van Nuys Metro Orange Line station to the south. The Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would operate in a median dedicated guideway for approximately 6.7 miles along Van Nuys Boulevard between San Fernando Road and the Van Nuys Metro Orange Line station. The low-floor LRT/tram alternative would operate in mixed-flow traffic lanes on San Fernando Road between the intersection of San Fernando Road/Van Nuys Boulevard and just north of Wolfskill Street. Between Wolfskill Street and the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station, the low-floor LRT/tram would operate in a median dedicated guideway. It would include 28 stations. The route of the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative is illustrated in Figure 1-4.

The Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would operate along the following route:

- From the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station, the low-floor LRT/tram would operate within a median dedicated guideway on San Fernando Road.
- At Wolfskill Street, the low-floor LRT/tram would operate within mixed-flow travel lanes on San Fernando Road to Van Nuys Boulevard.
- At Van Nuys Boulevard, the low-floor LRT/tram would turn southwest and travel south within the median of Van Nuys Boulevard in a new dedicated guideway.
- The low-floor LRT/tram would continue to operate in the median along Van Nuys Boulevard until reaching its terminus at the Van Nuys Metro Orange Line Station.

Based on Metro's *Operations Plan for the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor Project,* the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would assume a similar travel speed as the Median-Running BRT Alternative, with speed improvements of 18 percent during peak hours/peak direction and 15 percent during off-peak hours.

The Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would operate using low-floor articulated vehicles that would be electrically powered by overhead wires. This alternative would include supporting facilities, such as an overhead contact system (OCS), traction power substations (TPSS), signaling, and a maintenance and storage facility (MSF).

Because the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would fulfill the current functions of the existing Metro Rapid Line 761 and Metro Local Line 233, these bus routes would be modified to maintain service only to areas outside of the project corridor. Thus, Metro Rapid Line 761 (referred to as 761S with reduced service) would operate only between the Metro Orange Line and Westwood, and Metro Local Line 233 (referred to as 233S with reduced service) would operate only between San Fernando Road and Glenoaks Boulevard. It should be noted that in December 2014 the Metro Rapid Line 761 will be re-routed to travel from Van Nuys Boulevard to Ventura Boulevard, and then to Reseda Boulevard, while a new Metro Rapid Line 788 would travel from Van Nuys Boulevard through the Sepulveda Pass to Westwood as part of a Metro demonstration project.

Stations for the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would be constructed at various intervals along the entire route. There are portions of the route where stations are closer together and other portions where they are located further apart. Twenty-eight stations are proposed with the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative. The 28 proposed low-floor LRT/tram stations would be ADA compliant.

Figure 1-4: Build Alternative 3 – Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative

Source: KOA and ICF International, 2014.

1.1.2.6 Build Alternative 4 – LRT Alternative

Similar to the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative, under this alternative, the LRT would be powered by overhead electrical wires (Figure 1-5). Under Build Alternative 4, the LRT would travel in a dedicated guideway from the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station along San Fernando Road south to Van Nuys Boulevard, from San Fernando Road to the Van Nuys Metro Orange Line Station, over a distance of approximately 9.2 miles. The LRT Alternative includes a segment in exclusive right-of-way through the Antelope Valley Metrolink railroad corridor, a segment with semi-exclusive right-of-way in the middle of Van Nuys Boulevard, and an underground segment beneath Van Nuys Boulevard from just north of Parthenia Street to Hart Street.

The LRT Alternative would be similar to other street-running LRT lines that currently operate in the Los Angeles area, such as the Metro Blue Line, Metro Gold Line, and Metro Exposition Line. The LRT would travel along the median for most of the route, with a subway of approximately 2.5 miles in length between Vanowen Street and Nordhoff Street. On the surface-running segment, the LRT Alternative would operate at prevailing traffic speeds and would be controlled by standard traffic signals.

Stations would be constructed at approximately 1-mile intervals along the entire route. There would be 14 stations, three of which would be underground near Sherman Way, the Van Nuys Metrolink Station, and Roscoe Boulevard. Entry to the three underground stations would be provided from an entry plaza and portal. The entry portals would provide access to stairs, escalators, and elevators leading to an underground LRT station mezzanine level, which, in turn, would be connected via additional stairs, escalators, and elevators to the underground LRT station platforms

Similar to the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative, the LRT Alternative would require several additional elements to support vehicle operations, including an OCS, TPSS, communications and signaling buildings, and an MSF.

Figure 1-5: Build Alternative 4 – LRT Alternative

Source: KOA and ICF International, 2014.

Chapter 2
Regulatory Framework/Methodology

This section describes the regulatory framework related to environmental justice, and the methodology used to determine potential impacts that could result from the project. The following common terms are used in this report and are defined in the following section for clarity:

- **Environmental Justice**: According to the FTA, there are three guiding principles of environmental justice:
  - To avoid, minimize, and mitigate disproportionately high and adverse effects.
  - To ensure the full and fair participation by all affected communities.
  - To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.[1]
- **Disproportionately High and Adverse Effect**: A disproportionately high and adverse effect is an adverse effect that:
  - Is predominantly borne by a minority population and/or low-income population, or
  - Will be suffered by the minority population and/or low-income population and is appreciably more severe and greater in magnitude than the adverse effect that will be suffered by the non-minority population and/or non-low-income population.
- **Minority Populations**: A minority population includes any readily-identifiable group of minority persons who live in geographic proximity, and if circumstances are warranted, geographically dispersed/transient populations, such as migrant workers or Native Americans who will be similarly affected by a proposed USDOT program, policy, or activity. Minority populations include persons who are American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islander. Populations that are reported in the United States Census as "Some Other Race" or "Two or More Races" are not included as minority populations in this analysis, but information is included about these populations to provide the overall characteristics of the project study area.
- **Low-Income Populations**: A low-income population includes any readily identifiable group of low-income persons who live in geographic proximity. Low-income is defined by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) poverty guidelines; in 2010, this was $22,050 for a family of four in the 48 contiguous states and the D.C.
- **Direct Effects**: Direct effects are effects that would be caused by the project and would result at the same time and place as the project.
- **Indirect Effects**: Indirect effects are effects that would be caused by the project and would result later in time or would be farther removed in distance, but would still be reasonably foreseeable. Indirect effects would include growth-related effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems.

[1] Federal Transit Administration. 2012. *Environmental Justice Policy Guidance for Federal Transit Administration Recipients*. August 15. Available: <http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA_EJ_Circular_7.14-12_FINAL.pdf>. Accessed: February 26, 2013.

- **Project Corridor**: The East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor (project corridor) is defined as the area that could be directly and physically affected by at least one of the project alternatives (road widening, construction of a BRT, Low-Floor LRT/Tram, or LRT system, et cetera). More specifically, the project corridor is limited to the properties abutting the following roadway/transit segments:
    - Van Nuys Boulevard, from the Metro Orange Line in the south to San Fernando Road in the north.
    - San Fernando Road, from Van Nuys Boulevard in the southeast to the Sylmar San Fernando Metrolink Station in the northwest (at 12219 Frank Modugno Drive between Hubbard Avenue and Sayre Street).
    - Truman Street, from La Rue Street in the southeast to the Sylmar San Fernando Metrolink Station in the northwest.
    - The Antelope Valley Metrolink railroad corridor, from Van Nuys Boulevard in the southeast to the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station in the northwest.

2.1 Regulatory Framework

2.1.1 Federal Regulations

2.1.1.1 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NEPA of 1969, as amended, established that the federal government must use all practicable means to ensure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings.[2] The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, which establishes the steps necessary to comply with NEPA, requires evaluation of the potential environmental consequences of all proposed federal activities and program.

2.1.1.2 Executive Order 12989

All projects receiving federal funding must comply with Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations", signed by President Clinton on February 11, 1994.[3] This Executive Order directs federal agencies to take the appropriate and necessary steps to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse impacts of federal projects on the health or environment of minority and low-income populations to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law.

[2] US Congress. 1969. *National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, 42 USC Section 4331.* Available: <http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/regs/nepa/nepaeqia.htm>. Accessed: February 15, 2013.

[3] President William J. Clinton. 1994a. *Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (Federal Register Volume 59, Number 32).* February 11. Available: <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/executive-orders/pdf/12898.pdf>. Accessed: February 27, 2013.

2.1.1.3 Council on Environmental Quality Environmental Justice Guidance

A Presidential Memorandum accompanied Executive Order 12898, stating that "each Federal agency shall analyze the environmental effects, including human health, economic and social effects, of Federal actions, including effects on minority communities and low-income communities, when such analysis is required by [NEPA]."[4] The CEQ responded to this order by issuing guidance for agencies on how to address environmental justice under NEPA.[5] The CEQ Environmental Justice Guidance includes general principles for addressing environmental justice during the NEPA process, such as considering relevant public health data; recognizing interrelated cultural, social, occupational, historical, or economic factors; and developing effective public participation strategies.

2.1.1.4 United States Department of Transportation Order 5610.2(a)

United States Department of Transportation Order (USDOT) Order 5610.2(a), Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (77 Federal Register, Number 91, May 10, 2012) sets forth the USDOT policy to consider environmental justice principles in all USDOT programs, policies, and activities.[6] It describes how the objectives of environmental justice will be integrated into planning and programming, rulemaking, and policy formulation. The order sets forth steps to prevent disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations through environmental justice analyses conducted as part of federal transportation planning and NEPA provisions. The order also describes the specific measures to be taken to address instances of disproportionately high and adverse effects and sets forth relevant definitions for conducting environmental justice analyses.

2.1.1.5 FTA Circular 4703.1(Environmental Justice Policy Guidance for FTA Recipients)

In August 2012, the FTA issued Circular 4703.1 to provide recipients of FTA financial assistance with guidance to incorporate environmental justice principles into plans, projects, and activities that receive funding from FTA.[7] The circular provides a framework for integrating principles of environmental justice into the transit decision-making process.

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[4] President William J. Clinton. 1994b. *Memorandum from President Clinton.* March. EPA-175-N-94-001. Available: <http://www.epa.gov/fedfac/documents/executive_order_12898.htm#memo1>. Accessed: March 11, 2013.

[5] Council on Environmental Quality. 1997. *Environmental Justice Guidance Under the National Environmental Policy Act*. Available: <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/ej/resources/policy/ej_guidance_nepa_ceq1297.pdf>. Accessed: February 25, 2013.

[6] United States Department of Transportation. 2012. *Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (Federal Register Volume 77, Number 91)*. May 12. Docket No. DOT-OST-2012-0044. Available: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-05-10/html/2012-11309.htm>. Accessed: February 28, 2013.

[7] Federal Transit Administration. 2012. *Environmental Justice Policy Guidance for Federal Transit Administration Recipients*. August 15. Available: <http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA_EJ_Circular_7.14-12_FINAL.pdf>. Accessed: February 26, 2013.

2.1.1.6 Civil Rights Act

Projects that receive federal financial assistance must also be developed in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which states that "No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."[8]

2.1.2 State Regulations

2.1.2.1 California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Unlike NEPA, CEQA does not address environmental justice explicitly. However, CEQA requires the analysis of alternatives that avoid significant impacts; social and economic impacts that could result in physical changes to the environment; and cumulative impacts (two or more individual effects that, when considered together, are considerable or that compound or increase other environmental impacts).[9] In addition, CEQA encourages public disclosure and participation in the environmental decision-making process through public hearings, public comment periods, and agency responses to comments.

2.1.3 Local Regulations

Metro's Complete Streets Policy is discussed in section 2.1.3.1. In addition, the project study area lies within the Cities of Los Angeles and San Fernando. The local regulations for these jurisdictions were reviewed for policies and regulations that apply to the project.

2.1.3.1 Metro Complete Streets Policy

Metro has developed a Complete Streets Policy to establish a standard of excellence for multimodal design.[10] The term, "Complete Streets," describes a comprehensive, integrated transportation network with infrastructure and design that allows safe and convenient travel along and across streets for all users, including pedestrians, users and operators of public transit, bicyclists, persons with disabilities, seniors, children, motorists, users of green modes (e.g., active transportation, rideshare transit, and clean-fueled vehicles), and movers of commercial goods. Metro's Complete Streets Policy Statement is guided by the following principles:

- **Complete Streets Serving All Users and Modes**: Metro expresses its commitment to work with partner agencies and local jurisdictions to plan and fund Complete Streets that provide safe, comfortable, and convenient travel along and across streets (including streets, roads, transit facilities, highways, bridges, and other portions of the transportation system) through a comprehensive, integrated transportation network that serves all categories of users, including pedestrians, users and operators of public transit, bicyclists, persons with disabilities, seniors, children, motorists, users of green modes, and movers of commercial goods.

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[8] United States Congress. 1964. Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, 42 USC Section 2000d. Available: <http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/cor/coord/titlevistat.php>. Accessed: March 4, 2013.

[9] California Natural Resources Agency. 2010a. *State CEQA Guidelines, 14 CCR Section 15358*. Available: <http://ceres.ca.gov/ceqa/guidelines/art20.html>. Accessed: February 15, 2013.

[10] Metro. 2014. *Metro Complete Streets Policy*. Available: <http://media.metro.net/projects_studies/sustainability/images/policy_completestreets_2014-10.pdf>. Accessed: July 22, 2015.

- **Context Sensitivity**: In planning and implementing transportation projects, Metro departments, partner agencies, and funding recipients will maintain sensitivity to local conditions in both residential and business districts as well as urban, suburban, and rural areas, and will work with residents, merchants, and other stakeholders to ensure that a strong sense of place ensues.
- **Complete Streets Routinely Addressed by All Departments**: All relevant departments at Metro, partner agencies, and funding recipients will work towards making Complete Streets practices a routine part of everyday operations; approach every relevant project, program, and practice as an opportunity to improve streets and the transportation network for all categories of users; and work in coordination with other departments, agencies, and jurisdictions to maximize opportunities for Complete Streets, connectivity, and cooperation.
- **All Projects and Phases**: Complete Streets infrastructure sufficient to enable reasonably safe travel along and across the right-of-way for each category of users will be incorporated into all planning, funding, design, approval, and implementation processes for any transit and highway planning and design, new construction, reconstruction, retrofits, rehabilitations, and capital grant programs, except that specific infrastructure for a given category of users may be excluded if an exception is approved via the process set forth in the "Exceptions" section of this policy.

As stated in the Complete Streets Policy, it may not be effective to modify all streets to accommodate all modes equally. Modal priorities may need to be established for key arterials based on context sensitive evaluations, public feedback, and a review of relevant data. Some streets may be prioritized for transit travel, others for walking, bicycling, vehicle travel, goods movement, or other types of modes. Some streets may have robust facilities that accommodate all modes; however, a number of streets might not contain all these features due to physical right-of-way constraints, connection with local context and local demand, and other considerations.

2.1.3.2 City of Los Angeles

City of Los Angeles Land Use/Transportation Policy

The City of Los Angeles Land Use/Transportation Policy provides the framework to guide future development around transit station areas.[11] The policy includes several elements, consisting of Land Use, Housing, Urban Design, Ridership Strategy, Parking and Traffic Circulation, Equity, Economic Development, and Community Facilities Elements. The elements are intended to guide the land use and circulation patterns linked to the transit system. The following elements are applicable to environmental justice impacts.

Urban Design Element

The intent of the Urban Design element is to create safe, clean, pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods where transit provides a desirable and positive asset to the community. The element has the following policies related to environmental justice:

- Require transit-friendly buildings that facilitate pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and high occupancy vehicle access to buildings.

[11] City of Los Angeles. 1993. *City of Los Angeles/Planning Department Land Use/Transportation Policy.* Adopted November 2. Available: <http://www.metro.net/images/Land_Use-Transportation_Policy.pdf>. Accessed: February 16, 2013.

- Design safe, clean, comfortable, and active pedestrian-oriented environments in transit station areas; enhance the pedestrian's perception of safety and sense of orientation.

Equity Element

The intent of the Equity Element is to provide the same range of choices for all residents, particularly for those residents who have few, if any, choices. The Equity Element establishes a framework for providing an integrated citywide transportation system designed to accommodate all geographic areas of the city by not only providing public transportation, but by leading to other public economic benefits, such as the revitalization of neighborhoods. The element has the following policies:

- The City shall support and impact the decision-making process to ensure equal access and mobility to all City residents, to meet under-served and unmet transit needs and, within the existing and proposed system, to give priority for development and revitalization to economically disadvantaged areas.
- An annual assessment of the transit demand and needs shall be performed in order to prioritize, modify, and enhance:
    - Service levels; and
    - Existing and planned transportation improvements.
- The City shall promote an equitable and balanced approach for the economic and mobility benefits of its residents in its advocacy for future funding/programming for transportation improvements and services.
- The City and the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) shall work together to optimize participation by the Disadvantaged Business Enterprises/Minority Business Enterprises/Women Business Enterprises in all residential, commercial, and transit services and construction contracts and developments in transit corridors.
- The funds collected through Metro's transit-related development projects shall, to the extent permitted by law, be distributed systemwide based on the equity principles contained in the Land Use/Transportation Policy.
- The City and Metro shall utilize a Citizen Participation Process which shall ensure community input and equitable decision-making in all phases of the system and land use planning, development, engineering, and implementation.
- City economic development funds shall be given priority to support the Equity policy while transit funds shall be programmed for transit programs.
- Where appropriate, community-based non-profit organizations shall be given preference as partners.

Economic Development Element

The intent of the Economic Development Element is to support and encourage economic vitality for all economic segments of the population and to maximize economic development opportunities in neighborhoods surrounding transit-oriented developments (TOD). The element has the following policies:

- Create employment opportunities in TODs by adopting a community job hiring/training program for public and private ventures.
- Develop business attraction, retention, and expansion strategies for TODs.

- Through joint development and public-private partnerships, vacant and under-used City-owned property shall be developed to meet community needs such as pocket parks, public art, affordable housing, and community gardens.
- Community revitalization programs such as redevelopment areas and enterprise zones shall be consistent with and support all elements of this Land Use Policy for transit station areas when the revitalization areas encompass a TOD.

City of Los Angeles General Plan

The City of Los Angeles General Plan guides future development within the city.[12] Any projects that are proposed within the city must be consistent with the general plan. The City of Los Angeles is in the process of updating elements of its General Plan, including bikeways and mobility. This report will be revised to reflect the results of future updates, as appropriate. The following elements are applicable to environmental justice impacts.

Framework Element

The General Plan Framework Element provides Citywide policy and direction for the creation and updates of the general plan elements. The Framework Element encourages new development in proximity to rail and bus transportation corridors and stations, and aims to ensure that a considerable mix of uses be accommodated to provide support services to the community and enhance activity near the stations.[13]

The following goal, objectives, and policies are environmental justice:

- Goal 7A. A vibrant, economically revitalized City.
- Objective 7.1. Focus available resources on a coordinated and comprehensive effort to promote economic activity in Los Angeles, including an aggressive marketing program that communicates the resources and assets available within the City.
- Policy 7.1.2. Encourage community-based service and development entities in efforts to create small business expansion at the local level.
- Policy 7.1.4. Develop an infrastructure investment strategy to support the population and employment growth areas.
- Goal 7B. A city with land appropriately and sufficiently designated to sustain a robust commercial and industrial base.
- Object 7.2. Establish a balance of land uses that provides for commercial and industrial development which meets the needs of local residents, sustains economic growth, and assures maximum feasible environmental quality.
- Policy 7.2.4. Ensure that the City has enough capacity to accommodate the development of general commercial uses which support community needs in all parts of Los Angeles.
- Policy 7.2.14. Take steps to assure that new industries developed are sensitive to environmental and conservation issues, and that cumulative environmental impacts are addressed.

[12] City of Los Angeles. 2013. *General Plan.* Available: <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/>. Accessed: March 1, 2013.

[13] City of Los Angeles. 2001a. *The Citywide General Plan Framework, An Element of the City of Los Angeles General Plan*. Re-adopted August 8. Prepared by Envicom Corporation. Available: <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/cwd/framwk/contents.htm>. Accessed: February 21, 2013.

- Goal 7C. A City with thriving and expanding businesses.
- Objective 7.3. Maintain and enhance the existing businesses in the City.
- Policy 7.3.3. Retain the City's existing employment base through an outreach program to existing businesses and an ongoing assessment of their specific land use requirements.
- Policy 7.3.5. Improve the movement of goods and workers to industrial areas.
- Goal 7E. A City with a highly qualified labor force.
- Objective 7.7. Achieve an effective "match" between the qualifications of the local labor force and the anticipated personnel requirements of existing and emerging industries in the City.
- Policy 7.7.1. Expand job training programs offered in the City to more adequately address the skill requirements of existing and emerging industries.
- Goal 7H. A distribution of economic opportunity throughout the City.
- Objective 7.10. Program resources in a manner that encourages appropriate development, housing opportunities, transit service and employment generation in all areas of the City, with particular emphasis on those portions of the City which historically have not received a proportional share of such opportunities, consistent with the City's overall economic policies.
- Policy 7.10.1. Focus available implementation resources in centers, districts, and mixed-use boulevards or "communities of need."
- Policy 7.10.2. Support efforts to provide all residents with reasonable access to transit infrastructure, employment, and educational and job training opportunities.
- Policy 7.10.3. Determine appropriate levels of service for, but not limited to, educational facilities, hospitals, job training and referral centers, and transportation opportunities in the "communities of need."

Housing Element 2006-2014

The Housing Element is a blueprint for meeting the City of Los Angeles' housing and growth challenge.[14] The Housing Element lays out the strategy to meet this challenge, by directing growth to transit-rich and job-rich centers and supporting the growth with smart, sustainable infill development and infrastructure investments. The Housing Element includes the following goal, objectives, and policies related to environmental justice:

- Goal 3. A City where there are housing opportunities for all without discrimination.
- Objective 3.1. Assure that housing opportunities are accessible to all residents without discrimination on the basis of race, ancestry, sex, national origin, color, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, familial status, age, disability (including HIV/AIDS), and student status.
- Policy 3.1.1. Promote and facilitate equal opportunity practices in the sale and rental of housing.
- Policy 3.1.2. Promote responsible mortgage lending that meets community credit needs and the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA).
- Objective 3.2. Promote fair housing practices and accessibility among residents, community stakeholders and those involved in the production, preservation and operation of housing.

[14] City of Los Angeles. 2009a. *Housing Element of the General Plan 2006-2014.* Adopted January 14. Available: <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/HousingInitiatives/HousingElement/Final/HE_Final.pdf>. Accessed: March 1, 2013.

- Policy 3.2.1. Provide outreach and education for homebuyers and renters regarding rights, financing options, rental subsidies available and protections in the purchase, rental and/or modification of housing units.
- Policy 3.2.2. Provide outreach and education for the broader community of residents, residential property owners and operators regarding fair housing practices and requirements.
- Policy 3.2.3. Collect and report findings on discrimination in the sale and rental of housing.

Transportation Element

The Transportation Element recognizes that primary emphasis must be placed on maximizing the efficiency of existing and proposed transportation infrastructure through using advanced transportation technology, reducing vehicle trips, and focusing growth in proximity to public transit.[15] The element has the following goal, objective, and policies related to environmental justice:

- Goal A. Adequate accessibility to work opportunities and essential services, and acceptable levels of mobility for all those who live, work, travel, or move goods in Los Angeles.
- Objective 1. Expand neighborhood transportation services and programs to enhance neighborhood accessibility.
- Policy 1.3. Provide financial support and incentives to students and senior citizens, thereby allowing them to use taxis, transit, paratransit and related services, voucher programs, incentives for recreational trips, and other appropriate methods, contingent on available funding.
- Policy 1.4. Develop innovative new community-based services, where appropriate and feasible, such as Smart Shuttles, to increase accessibility in areas with high transit dependence, to reduce the unit cost of service delivery, and to create entrepreneurial opportunities.
- Policy 1.7. Provide improved transportation services to support Citywide economic development activities and related economic revitalization initiatives.
- Policy 2.8. Continue to integrate transit and environmental planning to enhance environmental preservation.
- Policy 7.3. Assure the fair and equitable treatment of people of all races, cultures, incomes and education levels with respect to the development and implementation of citywide transportation policies and programs, including affirmative efforts to inform and involve environmental groups, especially environmental justice groups, in the planning and monitoring process through notification and two-way communication.

Land Use Element

The City of Los Angeles has various community plans, which describe local land use policy and collectively make up the Land Use Element of the General Plan. Portions of the project study area overlap with City Community Plan Areas (CPA).[16] Each CPA is comprised of a group of City of Los Angeles neighborhoods. For each of the 35 separate CPAs, community plans were developed to guide land use and design policies within specific portions of Los Angeles.

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[15] City of Los Angeles. 1999a. *City of Los Angeles General Plan, Transportation Element.* Adopted September 8. Available: <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/cwd/gnlpln/transelt/index.htm>. Accessed: February 13, 2013.

[16] KOA Corporation. 2011. *Van Nuys Boulevard Corridor Mobility Study, Purpose and Need Framework*. Monterey Park, CA.

There are four CPA boundaries that overlap the project study area. However, it should be noted that not all of the neighborhoods included in each CPA are wholly included in the project study area. The community plans that apply to the project study area are as follows:

- Van Nuys – North Sherman Oaks Community Plan[17]
- Mission Hills – Panorama City – North Hills Community Plan[18]
- Arleta – Pacoima Community Plan[19]
- Sylmar Community Plan[20]

The community plans contain similar goals, objectives, and policies. Therefore, the following goals, objectives, and policies are applicable to most of the community plan areas in the project study area and are related to environmental justice:

- Promote housing in mixed use projects in transit corridors.
- Ensure that new housing opportunities minimize displacement of residents.
- Encourage large mixed use projects and other large new development projects adjacent to transit stations to incorporate child care and/or other appropriate human service facilities as part of the project.
- Encourage the expansion, wherever feasible, of programs aimed at enhancing the mobility of senior citizens, disabled persons, and the transit-dependent population.

City of Los Angeles Special Districts

Several special districts, plan areas, and overlay zones are located in the project study area. These special planning districts are typically located in areas frequently visited by members of the community, largely because they offer shopping and transportation opportunities in a central location to surrounding residential developments. The overall intent of the districts is to enhance the vitality of these areas by fostering safe and attractive pedestrian environments and creating strong community identities. The design guidelines and standards for these districts are focused on creating pedestrian-oriented commercial centers and improving the aesthetic appearance of the areas. In addition, there are several streetscape plans associated with these districts with the goal of coordinating street and sidewalk improvements and preventing changes to the public right-of-way that are not consistent with the adopted guidelines and standards. The following special districts are located in the project study area:

- Van Nuys Auto Row Business Improvement District (BID)[21]
- Van Nuys CBD Special Planning Area (SPA)

[17] City of Los Angeles. 1998d. *Van Nuys-North Sherman Oaks Community Plan*. Adopted September 9. Available: <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/complan/pdf/vnycptxt.pdf>. Accessed: February 13, 2013.
[18] City of Los Angeles. 1999b. *Mission Hills-Panorama City-North Hills Community Plan*. Adopted June 9. Available: < http://cityplanning.lacity.org/complan/pdf/msscptxt.pdf>. Accessed: February 13, 2013.
[19] City of Los Angeles. 1996. *Arleta-Pacoima Community Plan*. Approved November 6. Available: <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/complan/pdf/arlcptxt.pdf>. Accessed: February 13, 2013.
[20] City of Los Angeles. 1997. *Sylmar Community Plan.* Adopted August 8. Available: <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/complan/pdf/sylcptxt.pdf>. Accessed: February 16, 2013.
[21] City of Los Angeles. 2000. *Van Nuys Auto Row Business Improvement District*. March. Available: <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/complan/rproginfo/BID/bidmap/vnyauto.pdf>. Accessed: February 15, 2013.

- Van Nuys Central Business District (CBD) Community Design Overlay District (CDO)[22]
- Panorama City CDO[23]
- Panorama City BID[24]
- Pacoima CDO[25]
- San Fernando Corridors SPA
- Sylmar BID[26]

It is important to note that not all special districts within the project study area are listed because their primary purpose is to provide development design guidelines. The guidelines are discussed separately in the Land Use Impacts Report.

City of Los Angeles Targeted Neighborhood Initiatives

A number of Targeted Neighborhood Initiatives (TNI) are located in the project study area. These initiatives strategically revitalize Los Angeles neighborhoods through several community-driven neighborhood improvement programs, including transportation and pedestrian corridor improvements; façade improvement; and public facilities, housing, and streetscape development. The initiatives are specifically targeted towards neighborhoods that have experienced divestment and blight in recent years, and are occupied by economically challenged residents and businesses and transit-dependent populations. There are four TNIs in the project study area:

- Van Nuys Boulevard TNI[27]
- Van Nuys TNI II[28]
- Pacoima Town Center TNI[29]
- Osborne Corridor TNI[30]

[22] City of Los Angeles. 2004c. *Van Nuys Central Business District Community Design Overlay District (CDO) Design Guidelines and Standards.* Revised August 16. Available: < http://cityplanning.lacity.org/complan/othrplan/pdf/vnycbdcdotxt.pdf>. Accessed: February 13, 2013.

[23] City of Los Angeles. 2003c. *Panorama City Community Design Overlay (CDO) Design Guidelines and Standards.* Approved March 27. Available: <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/complan/othrplan/pdf/PanoramaCityCDO_guidelines.pdf>. Accessed: February 15, 2013.

[24] City of Los Angeles. 2009. *Panorama City Business Improvement District*. Approved March.

[25] City of Los Angeles. 2003b. *Pacoima Community Design Overlay (CDO) Design Guidelines and Standards*. Approved May 22. Available: <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/complan/othrplan/pdf/PacoimaCDOGuidelines.pdf>. Accessed: February 13, 2013.

[26] Sylmar Chamber of Commerce. 2012. *The Vista at Sylmar*. Available: < http://www.sylmarchamber.com/sylmarbid.html>. Accessed: November 10, 2014.

[27] City of Los Angeles. 2002c. *Van Nuys Boulevard Targeted Neighborhood Initiative (TNI).* Available: <http://planning.lacity.org/complan/rproginfo/TNI/tniarea/vannuystni.htm>. Accessed: November 18, 2011.

[28] City of Los Angeles. 2001c. *Van Nuys Targeted Neighborhood Initiative (TNI II).* Available: <http://planning.lacity.org/complan/rproginfo/TNI/tniarea/vannuys2.htm>. Accessed: February 13, 2013.

[29] City of Los Angeles. 1998b. *Pacoima Town Center Targeted Neighborhood Initiative*. Available: <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/complan/rproginfo/TNI/tnimap/tni-paco.pdf>. Accessed: February 13, 2013.

[30] City of Los Angeles. 2001b. *Osborne Corridor Targeted Neighborhood Initiative (TNI).* Available: <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/complan/rproginfo/TNI/tnimap/osborncor.pdf>. Accessed: February 14, 2013.

City of Los Angeles Special Zones

There are two special zones within the project study area:

- **Van Nuys Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ):** Within the Van Nuys HPOZ, lots are categorized by whether they have contributing features, non-contributing features, or if the parcel is undeveloped. The Van Nuys HPOZ Preservation Plan includes guidelines to preserve the historic character of the streetscape, including paving and curbs, signage, street furniture, utilities, street lights, and sidewalks.
- **Whiteman Airport Zone:** Whiteman Airport is outside of the project corridor, but is within the project study area, just 0.5 miles southeast of the project corridor; therefore, many parcels within the project study area fall within the Whiteman Airport Zone. Los Angeles County's Aviation Division requests that parcels within this zone report projects to the department to ensure compliance with Federal Aviation Administration requirements.[31]

2.1.3.3 City of San Fernando

City of San Fernando General Plan

The City of San Fernando General Plan provides comprehensive planning for the future of the city and indicates how the city plans to respond to diverse human needs, such as shelter, commerce, employment, recreation, and the protection of health, safety, and welfare.[32] The following elements are applicable to environmental justice.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element has the following goals and objective related to environmental justice:

Goals

- To retain the small town character of San Fernando.
- To promote the economic viability of commercial areas.

Objective

- To attract new commercial activities, particularly within the downtown area.

2008 – 2014 San Fernando Housing Element

The Housing Element identifies strategies and programs that focus on preserving and improving housing and neighborhoods, assisting with the provision of affordable housing, and promoting fair and equal housing opportunities.[33] The element has the following goals and policies related to environmental justice:

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[31] City of Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety. 2011. *Zoning Information File #2418*. Effective July 25.

[32] City of San Fernando. 1987. *City of San Fernando Revised General Plan.* Prepared by Castaneda & Associates. Available: <http://www.ci.san-fernando.ca.us/city_government/departments/comdev/forms_docs/General%20Plan%20-%20Complete.pdf>. Accessed: February 21, 2013.

[33] City of San Fernando. 2009. *The City of San Fernando 2008-2014 Housing Element*. April 6. Adopted by Resolution #7309. Available: <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/hpd/housing_element2/documents/san_fernando.pdf>. Accessed: February 28, 2013.

- Goal 1.0. Maintain and enhance the quality of existing housing, neighborhoods, and health of residents.
- Policy 1.2. Preserve the character, scale, and quality of established residential neighborhoods.
- Policy 1.3. Work in conjunction with residents to revitalize neighborhoods by supporting neighborhood organizations, controlling crime, improving deteriorated housing, managing traffic and parking, and eliminating blighting conditions.
- Goal 2.0. Provide a range of housing types to meet community needs.
- Policy 2.1. Provide adequate housing sites to facilitate the development of a range of residential development types in San Fernando which fulfill regional housing needs. Assist residential developers in identifying sites through dissemination of the sites inventory.
- Policy 2.2. Provide opportunities for mixed use and infill housing development in downtown San Fernando as part of the city's overall revitalization strategy. Utilize Redevelopment Agency powers to assemble land and provide land write-downs in exchange for the development of affordable units.
- Policy 2.3. Provide affordable housing opportunities for San Fernando's lower income population.
- Goal 3.0. Assist lower income tenants in finding the appropriate resources to allow them to remain in the community.
- Policy 3.1. Take positive steps to ensure all segments of the population are aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding fair housing.
- Goal 4.0. Provide opportunities for moderate income households to become first-time homebuyers.

Safety Element

The Safety Element has the following goal related to environmental justice:

- To provide a safe and healthful environment to the San Fernando community.

Noise Element

The Noise Element has the following goal related to environmental justice:

- To control noise in San Fernando for the protection of the health and well-being of its current and future citizens.

The San Fernando Corridors Specific Plan

The San Fernando Corridors Specific Plan includes policies and strategies to transform Truman Street, San Fernando Road, and Maclay Avenue into attractive, livable, and economically vital districts.[34] These corridors are located within or adjacent to the project corridor. The specific plan recognizes that there is too much commercially-zoned land in the corridors, and not enough land for housing. The specific plan includes strategies to increase residential opportunities throughout the specific plan area, while focusing and attracting businesses in the downtown area. The specific plan includes the following objectives related to environmental justice:

[34] City of San Fernando. 2005. *The San Fernando Corridors Specific Plan*. Adopted January. Available: <http://www.ci.san-fernando.ca.us/sfold/news/specific_plan/sf_corridors_sp_final.pdf>. Accessed: February 13, 2013.

- Establish the city's corridors as the armature of the city.
- Attract new investment appropriate to the envisioned character of the corridors.
- Revitalize the identity and investment climate of the city as a whole.

City of San Fernando Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Overlay Zone (Proposed)

The City of San Fernando received a Metro grant for a proposed project to implement a TOD Overlay Zone, which would create a transit-oriented district on San Fernando Road between the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station and the San Fernando Mall (on San Fernando Road between Kittridge Street and San Fernando Mission Boulevard). The purpose of the project is to enhance downtown San Fernando by creating a safe and sustainable transit-oriented district that offers greater opportunities to travel without a car.

As part of the project, the City of San Fernando would create new planning standards and guidelines to make it easier for people to live near transit and for residents to walk, bike, or take transit to the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station. The project would include updates to the City's General Plan with a focus on generating a safer, livable, and walkable downtown neighborhood environment. The project is under CEQA environmental review as of April 2015 and is proposed for adoption in June 2016.

2.2 Methodology

This report has been prepared in accordance with CEQA and NEPA. Relevant policies are described in Section 2.1, and thresholds of significance are identified in Section 2.3. The following three steps were used to assess the project's impacts on minority and low-income populations in the project study area:

- Demographic information was collected for Census tracts and block groups within the project study area, as well as for the City and County of Los Angeles.
- Textual and visual representations of the data were provided through written descriptions, tables, and maps.
- An assessment of the project's impacts on minority and low-income populations was conducted.

2.2.1 Demographic Information

To identify existing minority and low-income populations in the project study area, demographic information was obtained from the United States Census Bureau. The United States Census Bureau organizes each county into statistical subdivisions called Census tracts and gives each a unique identification number. Census tracts are further divided into block groups, which are generally defined to contain between 600 and 3,000 people. Where partial Census tracts or block groups were included in the project study area, the percentage of each tract or block group in the project study area were calculated using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software products manufactured by Esri, a company that supplies GIS mapping software, solutions, services, map applications, and data.[35] The Census information was then adjusted to only include the portion of each tract or block

[35] Esri. 2013. Esri - GIS Mapping Software, Solutions, Services, Map Apps, and Data. Maps throughout this report were created using ArcGIS® software by Esri. ArcGIS® and ArcMap™ are the intellectual property of Esri and are used herein under license. Copyright Esri. All rights reserved. For more information about Esri® software, please visit www.Esri.com.

group in the project study area. Study area averages were calculated using Census tract or block group data. Census block group data was used in maps for this report to show the proportion of minority and low-income populations within smaller geographical units.

Generally, the United States Census Bureau surveys the United States population each decade and gathers population and housing statistics. In addition, the United States Census Bureau conducts the American Community Survey, which is a survey of a random sample of the United States population to provide annual estimates of transportation and income statistics. For the purpose of this Environmental Justice Report, racial information was gathered from the most recent Census (2010), and poverty statistics were gathered from the American Community Survey (2006-2010).[36,37,38] To understand trends over the last decade, these statistics were compared with information from the previous Census (2000).[39] The following statistics were obtained for Census tracts and block groups in the project study area, and for the City and County of Los Angeles to use as a regional comparison:

- Race, Combinations of Two Races, and Not Hispanic or Latino.
- Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months by Household Type by Age of Householder.

2.2.2 Textual and Visual Representation

After the demographic information was obtained from the United States Census, the data was presented through written descriptions, tables, and maps. The written descriptions and tables within this Environmental Justice Report provide numerical data and percentages, and present broad comparisons between the years 2000 and 2010. The maps within this report were created using 2010 Census boundaries and display Census block groups in the project study area with minority and low-income populations. In accordance with federal regulations, Census block groups containing any minority or low-income population, however small, have been identified for the purpose of analysis on Environmental Justice populations..

2.2.3 Environmental Justice Impact Assessment

An assessment of the project's impacts on minority and low-income populations was conducted by following the guidance and methodologies provided in the CEQ Environmental Justice Guidance, USDOT Order 5610.2(a), and FTA Circular 4703.1. These guidance documents define the range of potential disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations that could result from a project (see "Federal Significance Thresholds" in Section 2.3.1 of this report).

As these effects may include a broad range of environmental and human health effects, the environmental justice impact assessment drew upon the analyses of other impact areas, such as land use, aesthetics, noise, transportation, communities and neighborhoods, parklands and community

[36] United States Census Bureau. 2010b. *2010 Census*. Detailed Tables Generated by Mandy Jones using American FactFinder. Available: <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>. Accessed February 13, 2013.

[37] United States Census Bureau. 2010a. *American Community Survey, 2006-2010*. Detailed Tables Generated by Mandy Jones Using American FactFinder. Available: <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml?refresh=t>. Accessed February 13, 2013.

[38] United States Census Bureau. 2010c. Summary File: American Community Survey, 2006-2010. Detailed Tables Generated by Mandy Jones using the Summary File Retrieval Tool. Available <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/data_documentation/summary_file/>. Accessed February 14, 2013.

[39] United States Census Bureau. 2000. *2000 Census.* Detailed Tables Generated by Mandy Jones using American FactFinder. Available: <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>. Accessed: February 13, 2013.

facilities, and public health and safety. When the project resulted in effects within these impact areas, that effect was then qualitatively or (where possible) quantitatively analyzed to determine if those impacts disproportionately affected minority and low-income populations in the project study area.

The impact analysis also took into consideration the likelihood of impacts; the scale, severity, and extent of impacts; the duration of impacts over time; the reversibility of impacts; direct and indirect impacts; and cumulative or counterbalancing impacts.

2.2.4 Community Outreach

Potential impacts were also identified through public input from the community outreach and scoping process, which included a series of meetings:

Community Outreach Meetings:

- Panorama High School, October 24, 2011
- Pacoima Neighborhood City Hall, October 25, 2011
- Van Nuys Civic Center, October 28, 2011
- San Fernando Regional Pool Facility, April 12, 2012
- St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church, April 17, 2012
- Valley Presbyterian Hospital, April 18, 2012
- Mission Community Police Station, May 1, 2012
- Sepulveda Middle School, October 2, 2012
- San Fernando High School, October 4, 2012
- Panorama High School, October 6, 2012
- Marvin Braude Civic Center, October 9, 2012

Scoping Meetings:

- Panorama High School, March 16, 2013
- The City of San Fernando Regional Pool Facility, March 19, 2013
- Arleta High School, March 21, 2013
- Marvin Braude Constituent Service Center, March 27, 2013

Project Information Meetings:

- San Fernando Regional Pool Facility, November 6, 2014
- Marvin Braude Constituent Service Center, November 12, 2014
- Pacoima Neighborhood City Hall, November 13, 2014

As listed above, three rounds of community outreach meetings were held in October 2011, April 2012, and October 2012. The purpose of the first round of meetings in October 2011 was to obtain feedback on the initial project alternatives. Generally, public comments focused on urging Metro and LADOT to explore Sepulveda Boulevard as an alternative to Van Nuys Boulevard and to extend the northern terminus to the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station.

In response to the first round of meetings, the project alternatives were revised. The second round of meetings in April 2012 introduced the expanded study area that included Sepulveda Boulevard and the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station as the northern terminus, and the third round of meetings in October 2012 updated the public on the alternatives. During these two rounds of meetings, the public identified several potential impacts and concerns, which included the following:

- Visual impacts from the LRT Alternative to the historic area near Brand Boulevard.
- Access challenges for auto dealerships along Van Nuys Boulevard.
- Potential accidents resulting from the LRT's faster speed compared to the BRT Alternative.
- Higher costs for the LRT Alternative, leading to increased fares to cover project costs.
- Slower speeds of the BRT Alternative, which may not improve congestion.
- Detrimental impacts on road surfaces resulting from increased bus use.
- Changes to local bus routes and bus stops requiring passengers to walk further.
- Fewer accommodations for bicycles and wheelchairs with the BRT Alternative.
- Increased congestion and traffic hazards resulting from adding another mode of transit on roadways that are already congested.
- Increased crime resulting from additional transit options.
- Concerns about the adequate provision of bike lanes, paths, and/or infrastructure and bike parking.
- Concerns about providing sufficient connections to other transit modes and destinations, including the future Sepulveda Pass Corridor Project, West Los Angeles, colleges and universities, Los Angeles International Airport, Amtrak, and Metrolink.

In March 2013, the scoping period for the project began, which included four scoping meetings listed above. The scoping period officially started on March 1, 2013 when FTA issued a Notice of Intent (NOI) and Metro issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP). The public scoping period ended on May 6, 2013.

During the scoping period, stakeholders had various opportunities to provide input on the issues they felt should be addressed in the DEIS/DEIR. During this timeframe, 258 formal comments were received by Metro via US Mail, Email, Fax, Facebook, Twitter, and at the four scoping meetings. The attendance at each scoping meeting ranged from 25 to 41 stakeholders, with a total attendance of 139 stakeholders for all four meetings.

Comments received during the scoping period touched on a variety of themes and categories, which included the following:

- LRT Alternative: 119 of the 258 comments received focused on the LRT Alternative with the public overwhelmingly preferring this option. However, some concerns about this alternative included the following:
    - Does not run south of the Metro Orange Line along Van Nuys Boulevard.
    - Danger of accidents with LRT's faster speed along heavily residential areas.
    - Concern that LRT is too expensive.
    - Concern over potential loss of on-street parking.

  - Concern over economic impacts on businesses during construction.
  - Concern over the loss of traffic lanes to accommodate LRT along Van Nuys Boulevard and the potential to make traffic worse.
- Concern that LRT may not be cost-effective and may be counter-productive.
- Maintenance Facility: As part of the LRT Alternative, the following comments were made regarding the location of the required maintenance facility:
  - Locate the maintenance facility in the Panorama City industrial zone.
  - The maintenance facility should be in Pacoima or Van Nuys.
  - Concern over where a maintenance facility will be located and potential impacts on the surrounding community.
  - Questions about the number and types of jobs the maintenance facility could generate.
  - Requests for more detailed information regarding the facility, especially potential impacts on environmental justice communities.
- BRT Alternative: Eighteen of the comments received supported the BRT Alternative. Comments were also received that shared the following concerns against the BRT Alternative:
  - BRT is a "Band-Aid" solution.
  - BRT is slower than the LRT Alternative and will not increase capacity.
  - BRT is a waste of money.
  - Impacts of increased bus use are detrimental to road surfaces, like on Ventura Boulevard.
  - Do not build dedicated lanes for BRT south of the Metro Orange Line along Van Nuys Boulevard.
  - BRT will increase crime in the local area.
  - No point in BRT – going back and doing the same work twice.
  - BRT would be a failure as it will not improve mobility.
- Sepulveda Pass Project: Forty-six comments shared that anything built must include connections to the future Sepulveda Pass project to ensure transit service from the San Fernando Valley to the Westside.
- Terminus-Origination Points/Stops/Configuration: Twenty-four comments were made by stakeholders regarding alternative alignment terminus-origination points, stops, or system configuration. Some of the key points included:
  - Ensure a direction connection with Amtrak/Metrolink and future high-speed rail.
  - Ensure a connection to the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station.
  - Ensure that the station at the Panorama Metrolink/Amtrak station has easy access to the businesses north of the railroad tracks.
  - Try to connect the system to Mission College as well as Olive View Medical Center to strengthen ridership.
  - Include park-and-ride lots along the alignment.
  - Try to connect the alignment to population destinations along the corridor.

  - Work with area businesses to ensure that stops help attract riders to local businesses around each station location.
  - Consider grade separation along the alignment to go under or over congested intersections.
  - Consider running LRT underground along Van Nuys Boulevard.

- Alignment: Twenty-one comments, one petition, and 21 "form" letters were submitted indicating a preference for either the Van Nuys Boulevard or Sepulveda Boulevard alignment. Several automobile dealerships and businesses along Van Nuys Boulevard submitted comments opposing an alignment along Van Nuys Boulevard, south of the Metro Orange Line, due to possible impacts on their businesses. Additionally, a petition with 45 signatures and form letters signed by 21 businesses owners along Van Nuys Boulevard south of the Metro Orange Line shared opposition due to the potential negative impacts construction and operations might have on their businesses.
- Buses: Eight comments were made concerning current bus routes and frequency. Key points included the following:
  - Do not cut current local/rapid bus routes.
  - Do not eliminate local/rapid bus line stops – we do not want to walk further to ride the bus.
  - Fix the current bus routes.
  - Enhance the current routes to create more efficient service.
  - Before any project is built, continue 734 Rapid Bus service further down Sepulveda Boulevard to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) with stops at the Metro Expo Line.
- Bicycles/Bike Lanes: Six comments were related to bicycles and bike lanes. Many commented that the LRT Alternative is a better option for transporting bicycles. There is a need to accommodate 2-3 bikes on transit options on Van Nuys Boulevard. No comments were made negatively concerning bicycles or bike lanes. When given the option, most commenters indicated preference for bicycle lanes instead of parking lanes. Other key comments included the following:
  - Bike lanes must be included with any project moving forward.
  - Bicycles and wheelchairs are better accommodated on LRT.
  - Bikeway is preferred to street parking, if having to make a choice.
  - Bicycling facilities along Van Nuys Boulevard need to be effective.
  - Put bike lanes on Van Nuys Boulevard and Truman Street.
  - Work with the Los Angeles County Bike Coalition to identify which bicycle projects to include with this study.
  - Include robust bicycle parking facilities at stations.
  - Ensure a continuous bike lane along Van Nuys Boulevard with a minimum 10-foot width reserved between intersections.
- Other comments focused on capacity and costs associated with any public transit system. Following are examples of some of the more general comments shared by stakeholders:
  - Capacity is more important than cost.
  - Ensure that trains/buses are large enough to ensure higher capacities.

- Do not raise fares to cover the cost of this project.
- Ensure safety of Van Nuys Boulevard to reduce the number of accidents before building anything.
- Ensure parking is available with any alternative that is built.
- LADOT DASH should merge with Metro to save taxpayer dollars.
- Preferences for a heavy-rail subway instead of a LRT or BRT system.
- Ensure that the project built has a state-of-the-art audio speaker system, communicating in various languages, for visually impaired individuals.
- With any improvements on Van Nuys Boulevard, ensure that storm water flow improvements are made to reduce traffic flow issues.

Outreach to the community, through public scoping meetings and other methods, will continue throughout the environmental review process. This community input is critical in assessing potential issues within the project study area; therefore, any additional information that is made available from future community outreach efforts will be included in this section of the report.

2.3 Significance Thresholds

Significance thresholds are used to determine whether a project may have a significant environmental effect. The significance thresholds for the project, as defined by federal and state regulations and guidelines, are discussed in the following sections.

2.3.1 Federal

Environmental Justice guidance issued by various federal agencies provides different methodologies and definitions for identifying minority and low-income populations, as outlined in Sections 2.3.1.2 and 2.3.1.4. The CEQ Environmental Justice Guidance applies to all federal agencies, whereas FTA Circular 4703.1 specifically applies to projects receiving FTA funding. This report utilizes the methodologies and definitions for identifying minority and low-income populations as outlined in FTA Circular 4703.1, where feasible.

2.3.1.1 NEPA

NEPA requires federal agencies to determine if an undertaking would significantly affect the environment; however, NEPA does not include specific significance thresholds. According to the CEQ Regulations for Implementing NEPA, the determination of significance under NEPA is based on context and intensity.[40]

Context relates to the various levels of society where impacts could result, such as society as a whole, the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality. The intensity of an impact relates to several factors, including the degree to which the impact would affect public health and safety; the proximity of the project to sensitive resources; and the degree to which effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial or involve unique or unknown risks.

[40] Code of Federal Regulations. *CEQ – Regulations for Implementing NEPA, 40 CFR Part 1508, Terminology and Index*. Available: <http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/1508.htm>. Accessed: February 15, 2013.

Under NEPA, the context and intensity of the project's impacts are discussed regardless of any thresholds levels, and mitigation measures are included where reasonable.

2.3.1.2 Council on Environmental Quality Environmental Justice Guidance

The CEQ Environmental Justice Guidance states that low-income populations in an affected area should be identified with the annual statistical poverty thresholds from the Bureau of the Census' Current Population Reports, Series P-60 on income and poverty.

Minority populations should be identified where either: (a) the minority population of the affected area exceeds fifty percent or (b) the minority population percentage of the affected area is meaningfully greater than the minority population percentage in the general population or other appropriate unit of geographic analysis.

In addition, the CEQ Environmental Justice Guidance includes the following direction when determining disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects.

Human Health Effects

According to the CEQ, when determining whether human health effects are disproportionately high and adverse, agencies are to consider the following three factors to the extent practicable:

- Whether the health effects, which may be measured in risks and rates, are significant (as employed by NEPA), or above generally accepted norms. Adverse health effects may include bodily impairment, infirmity, illness, or death.
- Whether the risk or rate of hazard exposure by a minority population, low-income population, or Indian tribe to an environmental hazard is significant (as employed by NEPA) and appreciably exceeds or is likely to appreciably exceed the risk or rate to the general population or other appropriate comparison group.
- Whether health effects occur in a minority population, low-income population, or Indian tribe affected by cumulative or multiple adverse exposures from environmental hazards[41].

Environmental Effects

According to the CEQ, when determining whether environmental effects are disproportionately high and adverse, agencies are to consider the following three factors to the extent practicable:

- Whether there is or will be an impact on the natural or physical environment that significantly (as employed by NEPA) and adversely affects a minority population, low-income population, or Indian tribe. Such effects may include ecological, cultural, human health, economic, or social impacts on minority communities, low-income communities, or Indian tribes when those impacts are interrelated to impacts on the natural or physical environment.
- Whether environmental effects are significant (as employed by NEPA) and are or may be having an adverse impact on minority populations, low-income populations, or Indian tribes that appreciably exceeds or is likely to appreciably exceed those on the general population or other appropriate comparison group.

[41] CEQ. 1997. Environmental Justice Guidance Under the National Environmental Policy Act. Available: <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/ej/resources/policy/ej_guidance_nepa_ceq1297.pdf>. Accessed: February 25, 2013.

- Whether the environmental effects occur or would occur in a minority population, low-income population, or Indian tribe affected by cumulative or multiple adverse exposures from environmental hazards[42].

2.3.1.3 United States Department of Transportation Order 5610.2(a)

USDOT Order 5610.2(a) includes definitions for adverse effects and disproportionately high and adverse effects.

Adverse Effects

According to the USDOT, the term 'adverse effects' means the totality of significant individual or cumulative human health or environmental effects, including interrelated social and economic effects, which may include, but are not limited to:

- Bodily impairment, infirmity, illness, or death.
- Air, noise, and water pollution and soil contamination.
- Destruction or disruption of man-made or natural resources.
- Destruction or diminution of aesthetic values.
- Destruction or disruption of community cohesion or a community's economic vitality.
- Destruction or disruption of the availability of public and private facilities and services.
- Vibration.
- Adverse employment effects.
- Displacement of persons, businesses, farms, or nonprofit organizations.
- Increased traffic congestion, isolation, exclusion or separation of minority or low-income individuals within a given community or from the broader community.
- The denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of, benefits of USDOT programs, policies, or activities. These are defined as all projects, programs, policies, and activities that affect human health or the environment, and which are undertaken or approved by USDOT. These include, but are not limited to, permits, licenses, and financial assistance provided by USDOT.

Disproportionately High and Adverse Effects

A disproportionately high and adverse effect on minority and low-income populations is an adverse effect that:

- Is predominately borne by a minority population and/or a low-income population; or
- Would be suffered by the minority population and/or low-income population and is appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude than the comparable adverse effect that would be suffered by the non-minority population and/or non-low-income population.

[42] Ibid.

2.3.1.4 FTA Circular 4703.1 (Environmental Justice Policy Guidance for FTA Recipients)

According to FTA Circular 4703.1, questions to consider when determining if a project would result in disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental impacts include:

- Whether the adverse effects on minority and low-income populations exceed those borne by populations that are not minority or low-income populations;
- Whether cumulative or indirect effects would adversely affect a minority or low-income population;
- Whether mitigation and enhancement measures would be implemented for all populations; and
- Whether there would be off-setting benefits to minority or low-income populations as compared to populations that are not minority or low-income populations.

FTA Circular 4703.1 also states that whether an adverse effect is disproportionately high on minority or low-income populations depends on whether that effect would be (1) predominately borne by an environmental justice population, or (2) will be suffered by the environmental justice population and is appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude than the adverse effect that will be suffered by the non-environmental justice populations. Environmental Justice determinations should be made on effects, not on population size. Very small ("statistically insignificant") minority or low-income populations in the study area do not eliminate the possibility of a disproportionately high and adverse effect on these populations.

2.3.2 State

CEQA requires state and local government agencies to identify the significant environmental effects of proposed actions; however, CEQA does not describe specific significance thresholds. According to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, significance thresholds for a given environmental effect are at the discretion of the lead agency and are the levels at which the lead agency finds the effects of the project to be significant.

2.3.2.1 State CEQA Guidelines

The CEQA Guidelines define "significant effect on the environment" as "a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance" (CEQA Guidelines, 14 CCR Section 15382).[43]

The CEQA Guidelines do not describe specific significance thresholds. Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines lists a variety of potentially significant effects; however, none of these effects are related to environmental justice, as CEQA does not specifically address environmental justice impacts.

2.3.2.2 L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide

The City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide does not include specific thresholds for environmental justice impacts.

[43] California Natural Resources Agency. 2010b. *State CEQA Guidelines, 14 CCR Section 15382.* Available: <http://ceres.ca.gov/ceqa/guidelines/art20.html>. Accessed: February 15, 2013.

Chapter 3
Affected Environment/Existing Conditions

3.1 Study Area and Regional Setting

3.1.1 Study Area

The environmental justice study area is located in the San Fernando Valley area of Los Angeles (see Figure 3-1). The San Fernando Valley is a flat area consisting of approximately 260 square miles, and is bounded by the Santa Susana Mountains to the northwest, the Simi Hills to the west, the Santa Monica Mountains and Chalk Hills to the south, the Verdugo Mountains to the east, and the San Gabriel Mountains to the northeast. The project corridor is approximately 9.2 miles in length, and runs nearly the entire length of the valley floor.

The project study area encompasses the area in which direct and/or indirect effects associated with the project could result. For this report, the project study area is generally bound by the San Diego Freeway (I-405) to the west, open space to the south (Deervale-Stone Canyon Park, Fossil Ridge Park, and Coldwater Canyon Open Space), Fulton Avenue and the Los Angeles River to the east, and the Foothill Freeway (I-210) to the north (see Figure 3-2).

The project study area was identified using information provided in the Purpose and Need Framework, site visits in October 2011 and February 2013, Google maps, and aerial photographs of the project corridor.[44,45] Research was performed to identify physical characteristics, such as freeways, which serve to naturally delineate areas, neighborhood designations and specific planning areas, 2010 Census tract and block group boundaries, and available demographic information. Potential impacts, such as those related to construction and project operations, were also taken into consideration when determining the extent of the project study area.

The project study area includes 108 Census tracts (2010 boundaries) as shown in Table 3-1, and 256 block groups. The Census tracts in the project study area are shown in Figure 3-3, and the Census block groups are shown in Figure 3-4.

[44] KOA Corporation. 2011. Van Nuys Boulevard Corridor Mobility Study, Purpose and Need Framework. Monterey Park, CA.

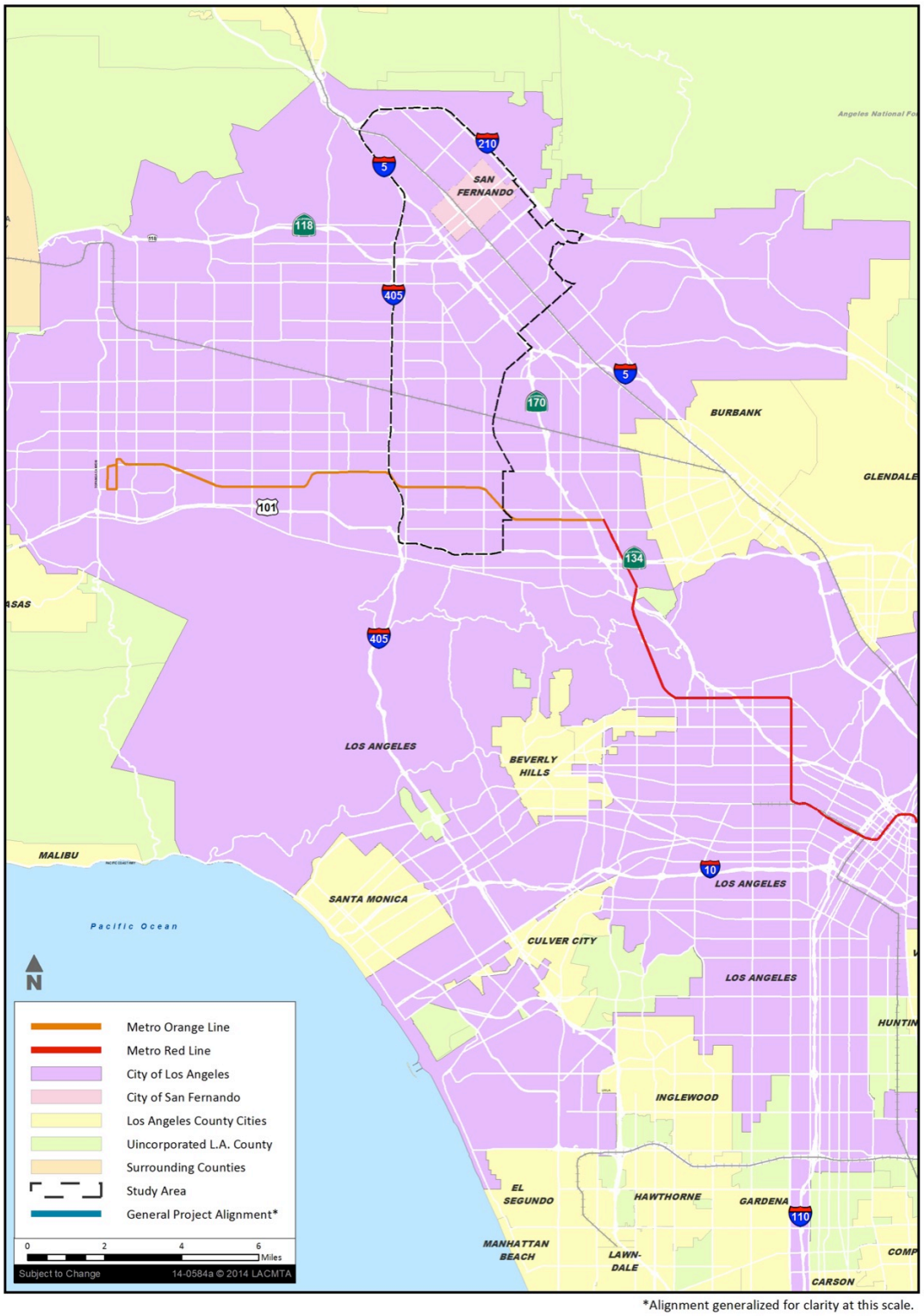
[45] Google, Inc. 2013. Google Maps. Available: <http://maps.google.com/>. Accessed: February 13, 2013.

Table 3-1: Census Tracts in the Project Study Area

2010 Census Tracts					
City of Los Angeles					
1041.05	1064.05	1174.05	1200.2	1273	1287.02
1041.08	1064.06	1174.07	1200.3	1275.2	1288.01
1042.01	1064.07	1174.08	1201.03	1277.11	1288.02
1042.03	1064.08	1175.1	1201.04	1277.12	1289.1
1043.1	1065.1	1175.2	1201.05	1278.03	
1043.2	1065.2	1175.3	1201.06	1278.04	
1044.01	1066.04	1190.01	1201.07	1278.05	
1044.03	1066.48	1190.02	1201.08	1278.06	
1044.04	1066.49	1192.01	1203	1279.1	
1045	1070.1	1192.02	1204	1279.2	
1046.1	1070.2	1193.1	1235.1	1281.01	
1046.2	1091	1193.2	1235.2	1281.02	
1047.01	1094	1193.4	1236.02	1282.1	
1047.03	1095	1193.41	1245	1282.2	
1047.04	1096.01	1193.42	1246	1283.02	
1048.1	1096.03	1194	1271.02	1283.03	
1048.21	1096.04	1197	1271.03	1284	
1048.22	1171.01	1198	1271.04	1285	
1061.14	1171.02	1199	1272.1	1286.01	
1064.03	1172.01	1200.1	1272.2	1286.02	
City of San Fernando					
3201	3202.01	3202.02	3203		

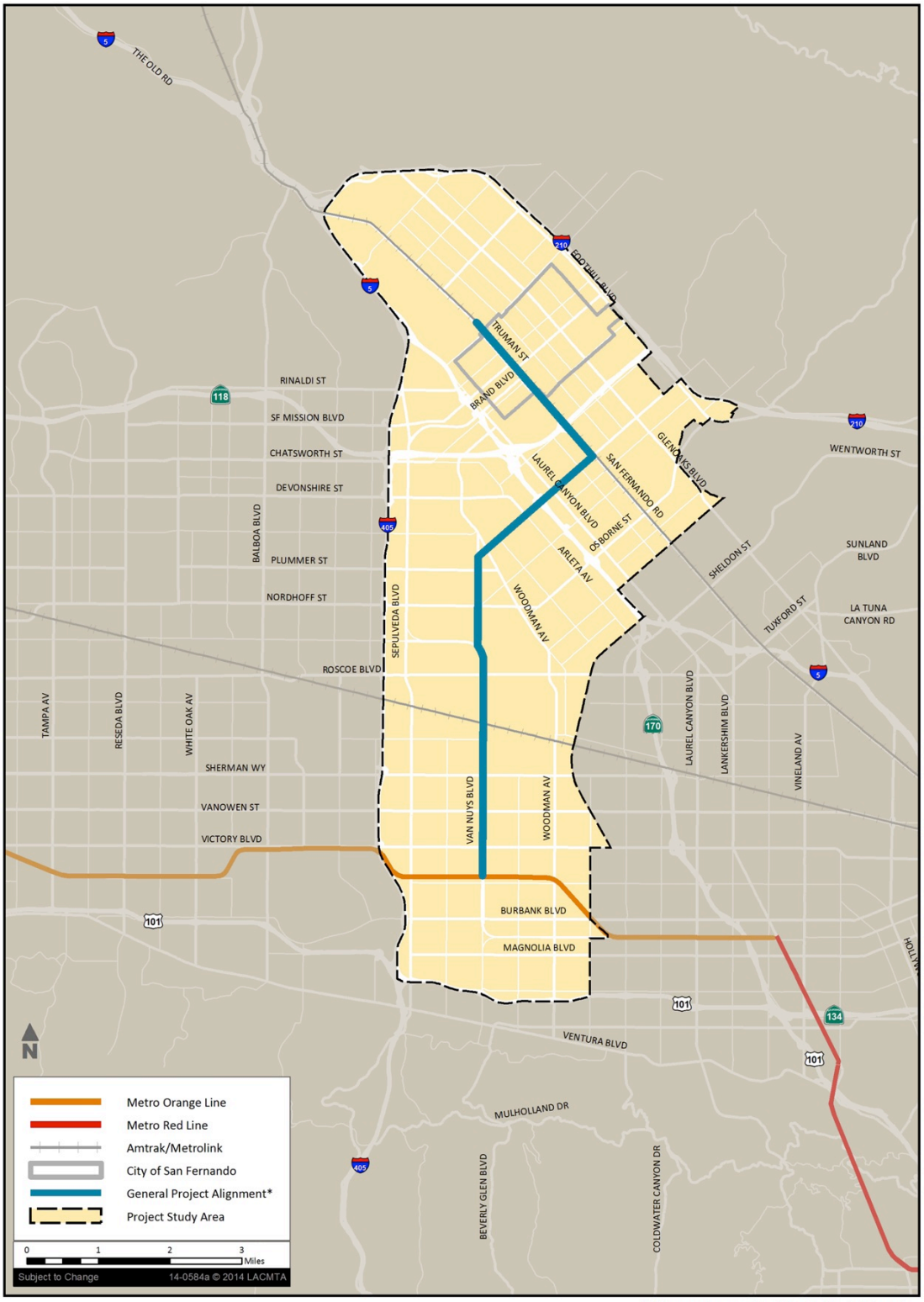
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010

Figure 3-1: Project Vicinity



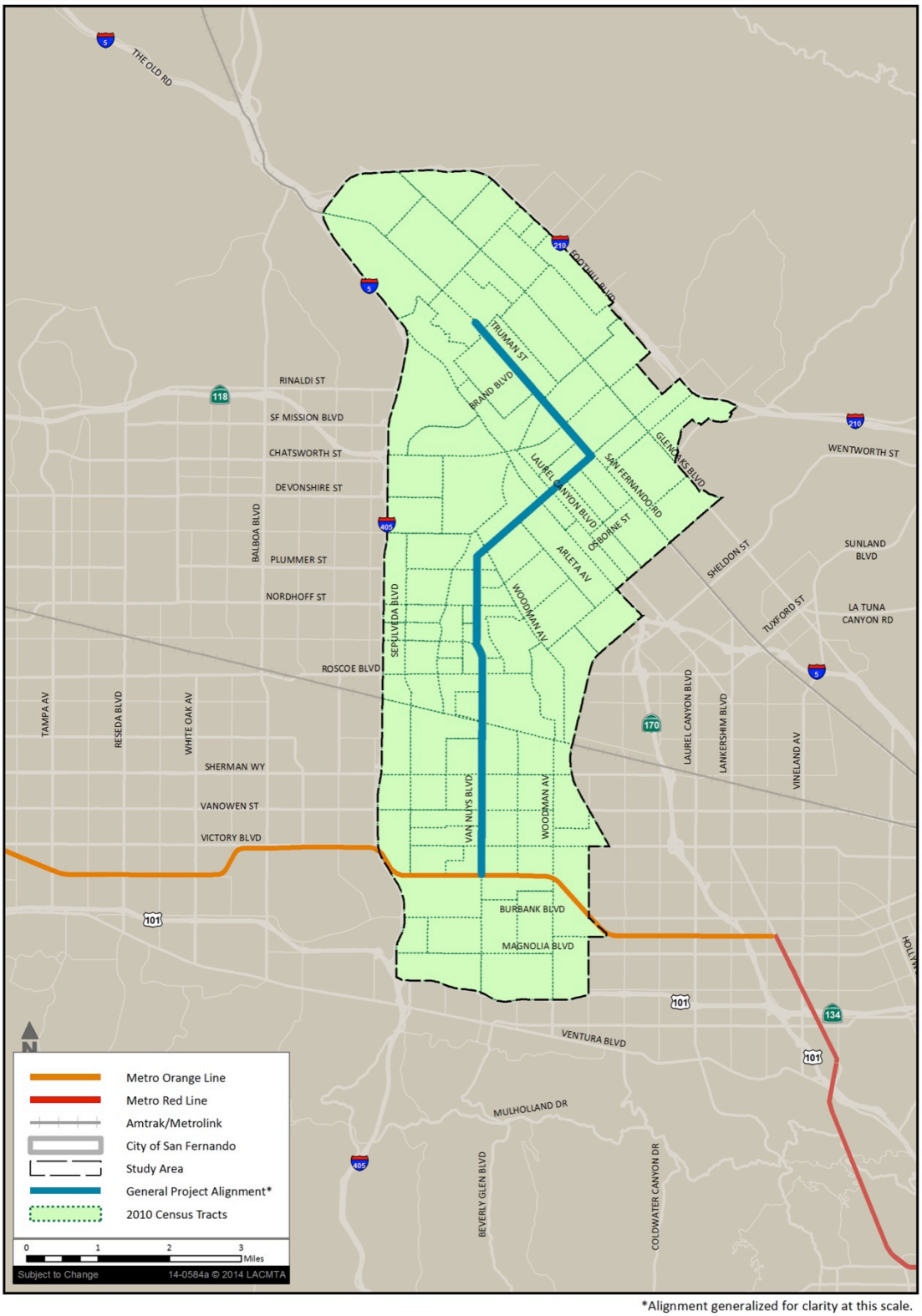
Source: Esri, 2013

Figure 3-2: Environmental Justice Study Area



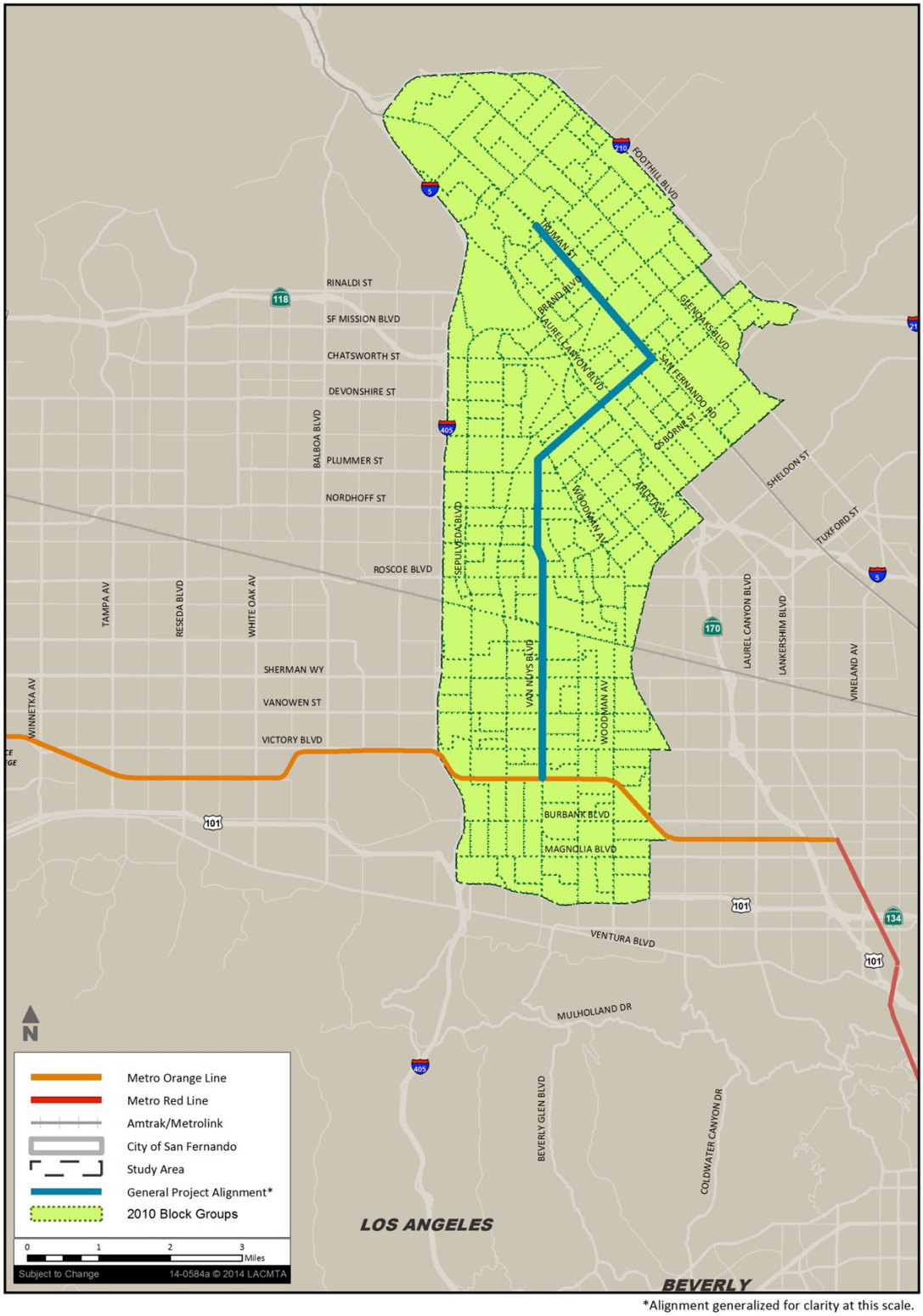
Source: Esri, 2013; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b

Figure 3-3: Census Tracts in the Environmental Justice Study Area



Source: Esri, 2013; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b

Figure 3-4: Census Block Groups in the Environmental Justice Study Area



Source: Esri, 2013; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b

3.1.2 Regional Areas

An environmental justice study area is often compared with the surrounding region in order to gain perspective and identify similarities, differences, and relationships between the project study area and the region. Generally, a region is defined as the jurisdiction that is larger than, and includes, the project study area, although some circumstances may dictate deviations from this standard. For the purpose of this report, two regional areas have been used: the County of Los Angeles (County) and the City of Los Angeles (City). These regional areas are shown in Figure 3-5.

3.2 Minority Populations

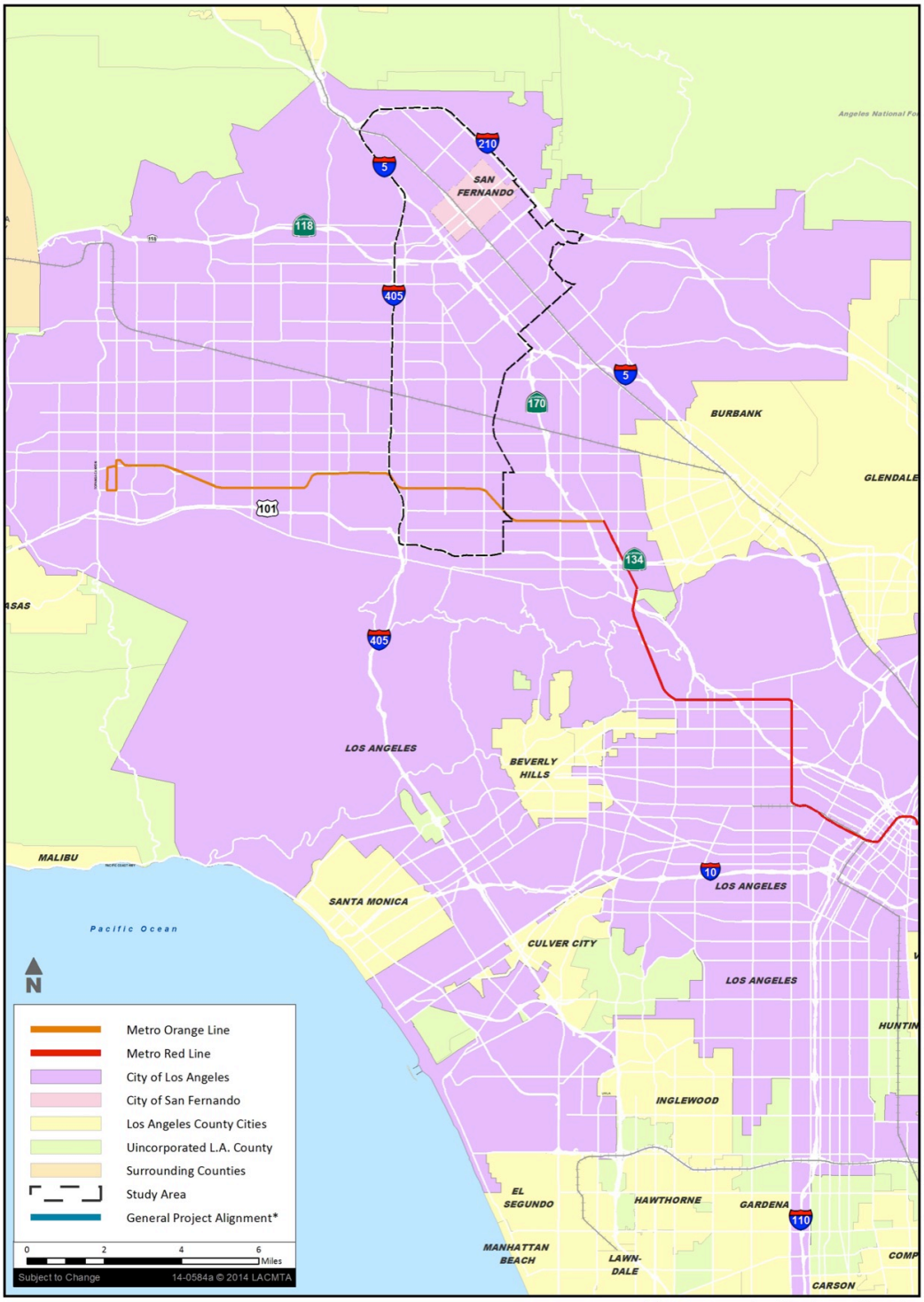
In the United States Census data used for this report, racial groups listed as White, Black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, Some Other Race, and Two or More Races are categorized as "Not Hispanic" (NH). Those listed as Hispanic or Latino are not reported as a race, but as an ethnic group, and are calculated as a proportion of all races.

In 2000, all racial categories in the project study area were a similar percentage or a lower percentage than the City and County, with the exception of the Hispanic or Latino ethnic category (see Table 3-2). At that time, the project study area was comprised predominantly of Hispanic or Latino persons at 66.8 percent, which was 20.3 percent higher than the City and 2 percent higher than the County.

In 2010, all racial categories in the project study area were either the same percentage or a proportionately lower percentage than the City and County, with the exception of the Hispanic or Latino ethnic category (see Table 3-3). The project study area was comprised predominantly of Hispanic or Latino persons at 71.7 percent, which was 23.2 percent higher than the City and 24.0 percent higher than the County.

Overall, between 2000 and 2010, there was a decrease in the proportion of Whites, Black/African Americans, American Indian/Alaska Natives, and individuals of Two or More Races in the project study area. During the same period, the proportion of Asians and Hispanic/Latino populations increased in the project study area, and the percentage of Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders remained the same. Similar trends can be seen in the City and County during that period.

Figure 3-5: Environmental Justice Regional Areas



Source: ESRI, 2013

Table 3-2: Racial and Ethnic Characteristics (2000)

	Study Area		City of Los Angeles		County of Los Angeles	
	Number	Percent of Population	Number	Percent of Population	Number	Percent of Population
Total Population	419,075	100.0	3,694,820	100.0	9,519,338	100.0
White (NH)	82,735	19.7	1,099,188	29.7	2,959,614	31.1
Black/African American (NH)	18,818	4.5	401,986	10.9	901,472	9.5
American Indian/ Alaska Native (NH)	1,112	0.3	8,897	0.2	25,609	0.3
Asian (NH)	27,441	6.5	364,850	9.9	1,124,569	11.8
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander (NH)	376	0.1	4,484	0.1	23,265	0.2
Some Other Race (NH)	673	0.2	9,065	0.2	19,935	0.2
Two or More Races (NH)	7,872	1.9	87,277	2.4	222,661	2.3
Hispanic or Latino*	280,049	66.8	1,719,073	46.5	4,242,213	44.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

* Because Hispanic or Latino populations are reported as an ethnic group and calculated as a percentage of all races, there is a slight margin of error. Total numbers may not always add up to 100 percent of the total population.

Table 3-3: Racial and Ethnic Characteristics (2010)

	Study Area		City of Los Angeles		County of Los Angeles	
	Number	Percent of Population	Number	Percent of Population	Number	Percent of Population
Total Population	444,378	100.0	3,792,621	100.0	9,818,605	100.0
White (NH)	71,259	16.0	1,086,908	28.7	2,728,321	27.8
Black/African American (NH)	15,420	3.5	347,380	9.2	815,086	8.3
American Indian/ Alaska Native (NH)	785	0.2	6,589	0.2	18,886	0.2
Asian (NH)	31,662	7.1	420,212	11.1	1,325,671	13.5
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander (NH)	378	0.1	4,300	0.1	22,464	0.2
Some Other Race (NH)	1,186	0.3	12,057	0.3	25,367	0.3
Two or More Races (NH)	5,152	1.2	76,353	2.0	194,921	2.0
Hispanic or Latino*	318,536	71.7	1,838,822	48.5	4,687,889	47.7

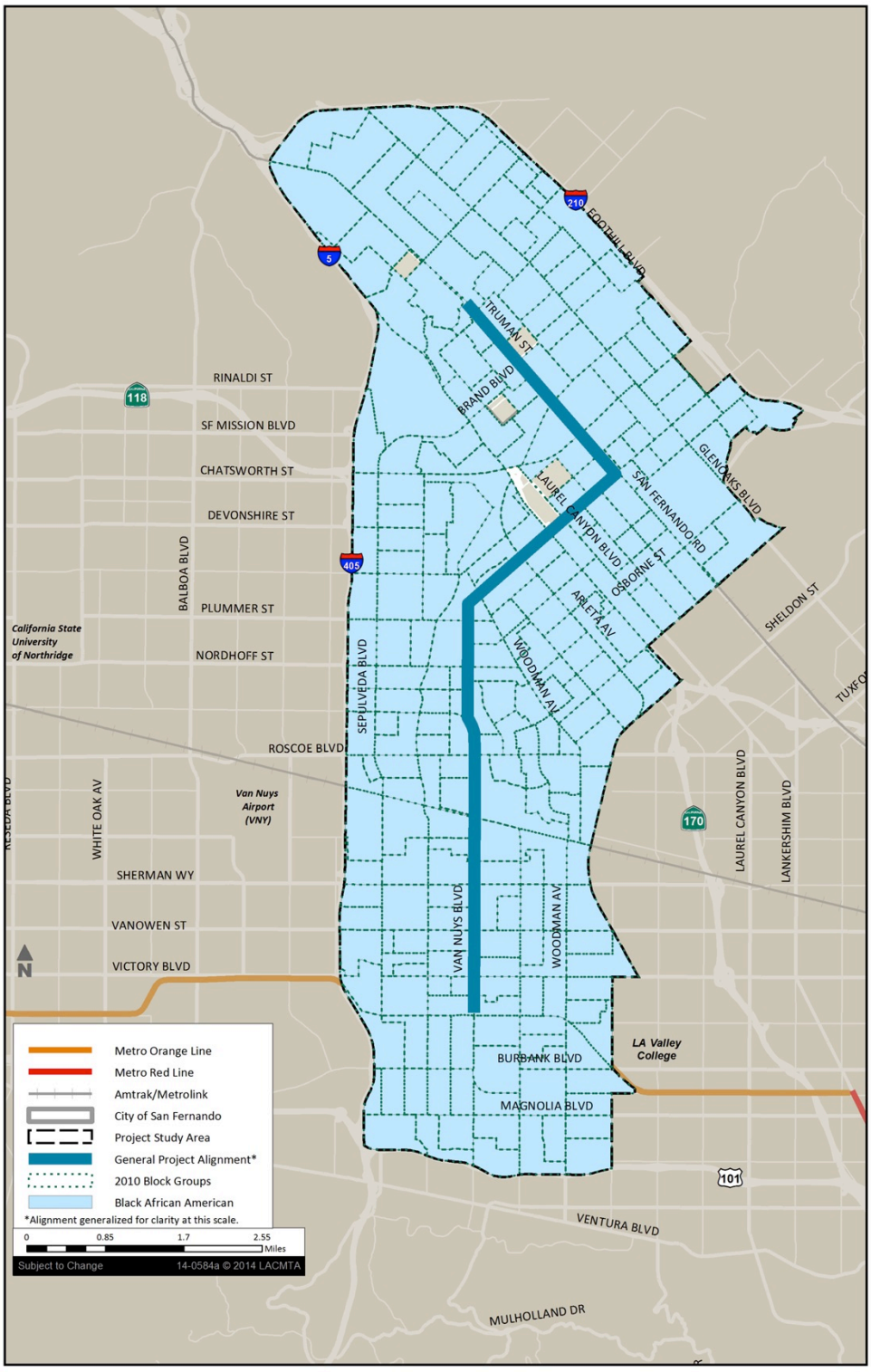
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b

* Because Hispanic or Latino populations are reported as an ethnic group and calculated as a percentage of all races, there is a slight margin of error. Total numbers may not always add up to 100 percent of the total population.

Figures 3-6 through 3-12 depict 2010 Census block groups in the project study area containing minority populations. .Of the 256 block groups in the project study area, 251 contain Black/African American populations, 205 contain American Indian/Alaska Native populations, 254 contain Asian populations, 107 contain Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander populations, and 256 contain Hispanic/Latino populations. When each separate Environmental Justice minority group in the study area is combined, 100 percent of the block groups adjacent to the project area contain minority populations. Of the 256 block groups in the project study area, 207 contain some other race, and 246 contain two or more races.

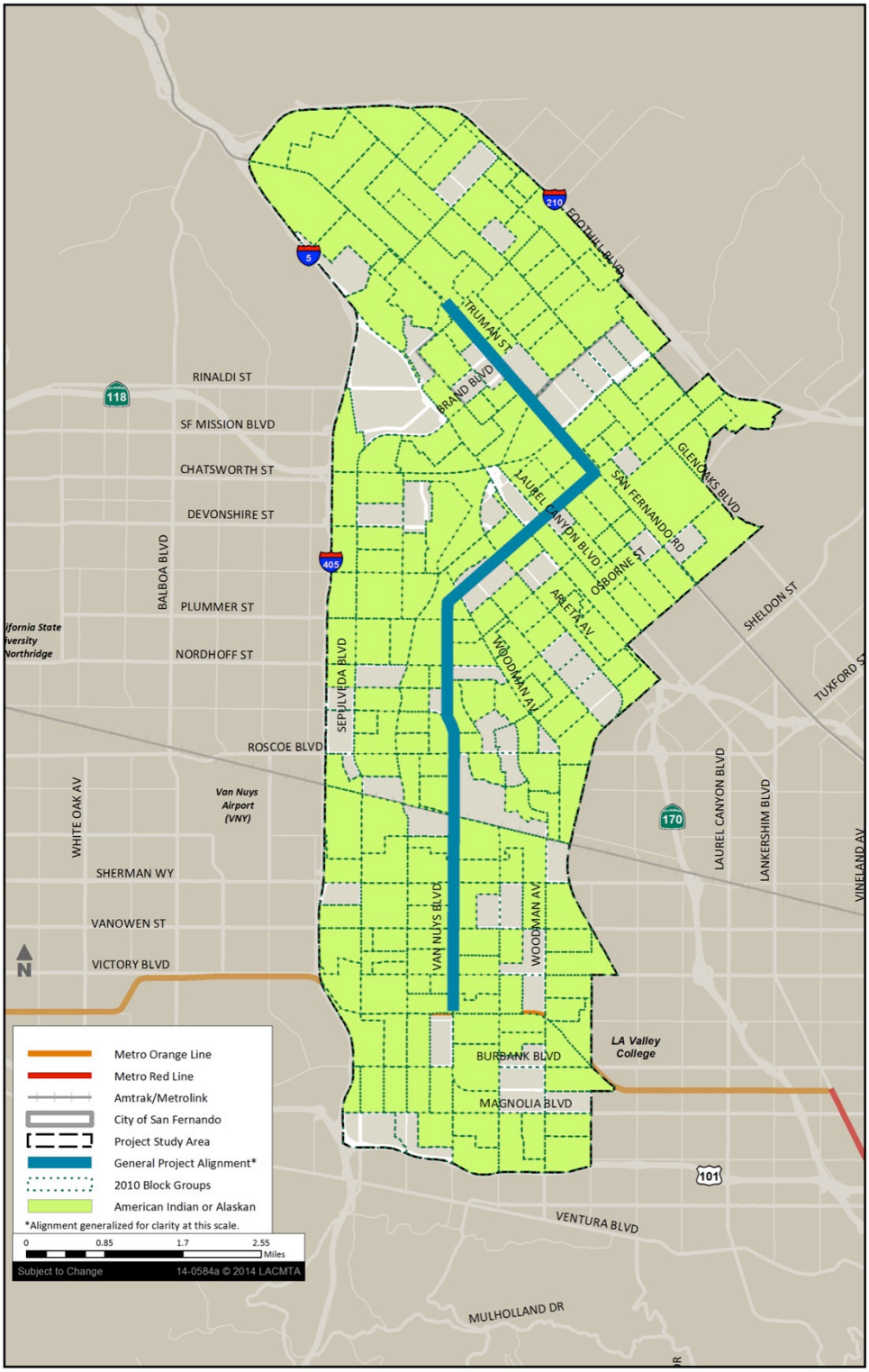
According to FTA Circular 4703.1, a very small ("statistically insignificant") minority or low-income population in the project study area does not eliminate the possibility of a disproportionately high and adverse effect on these populations. Therefore, this report addresses potential effects on all minority populations, regardless of the size of the population in the project study area.

Figure 3-6: Census Block Groups Containing Black/African American Populations



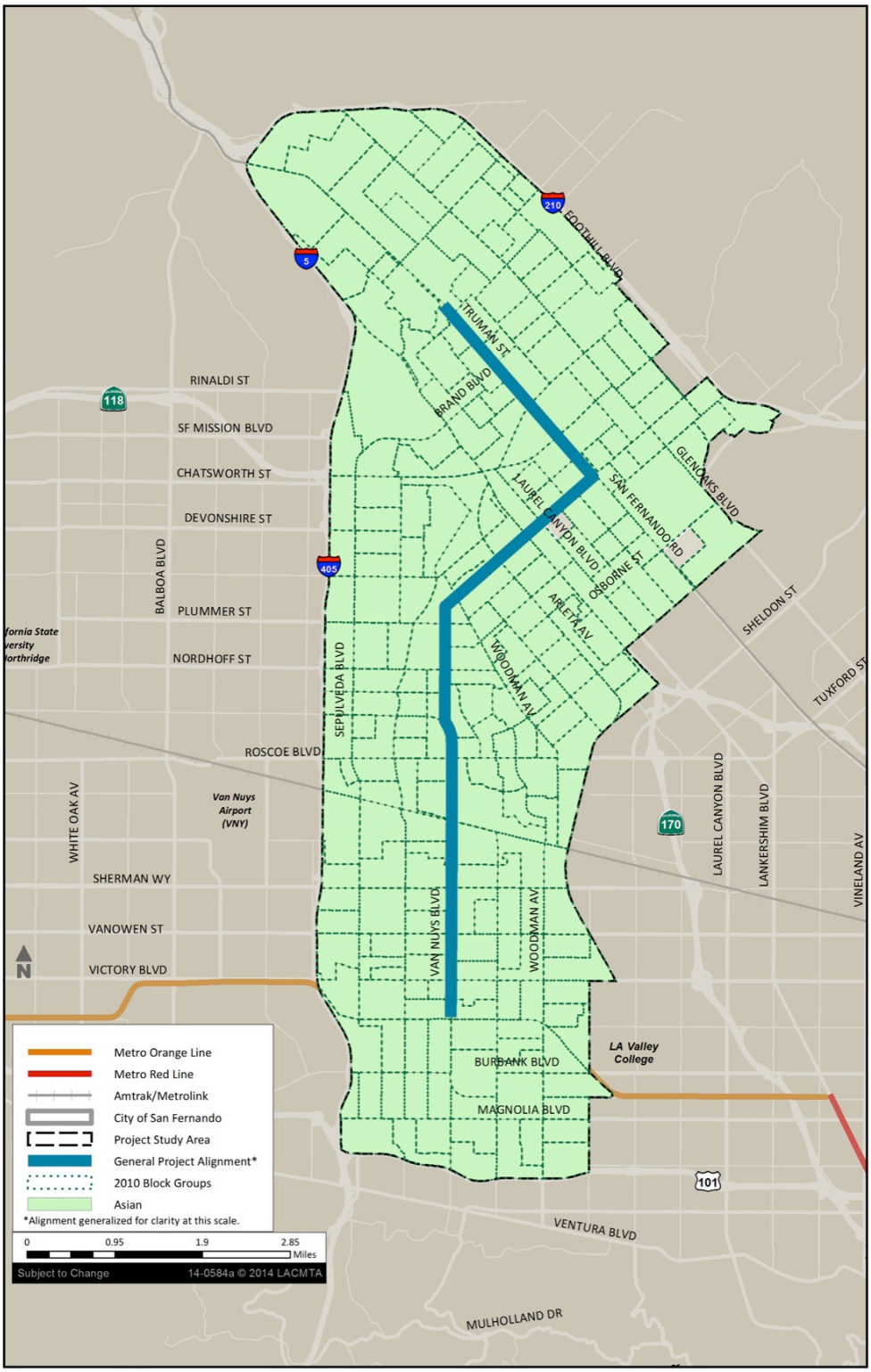
Source: ESRI, 2013; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b

Figure 3-7: Census Block Groups Containing American Indian/Alaska Native Populations



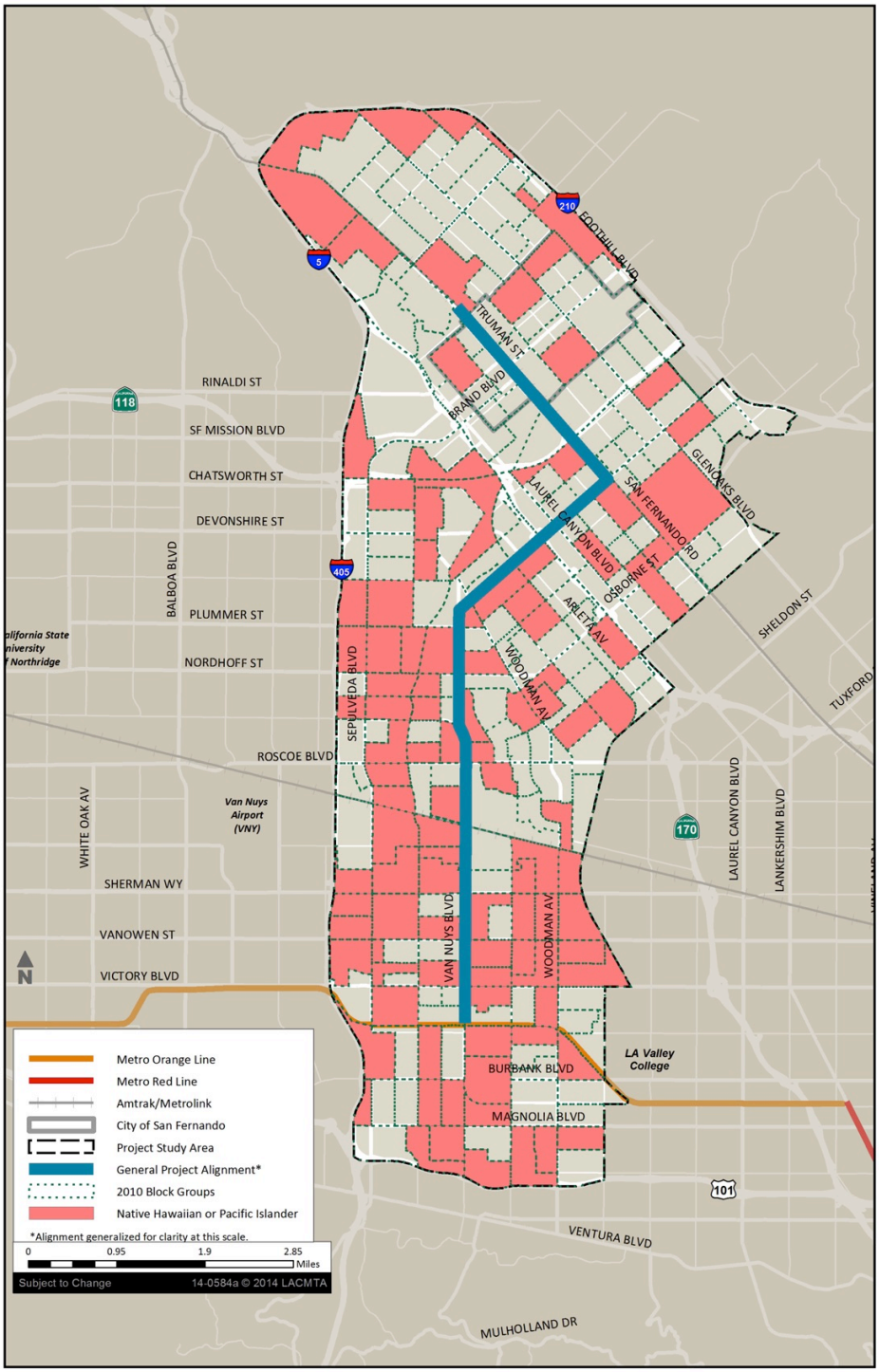
Source: ESRI, 2013; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b

Figure 3-8: Census Block Groups Containing Asian Populations



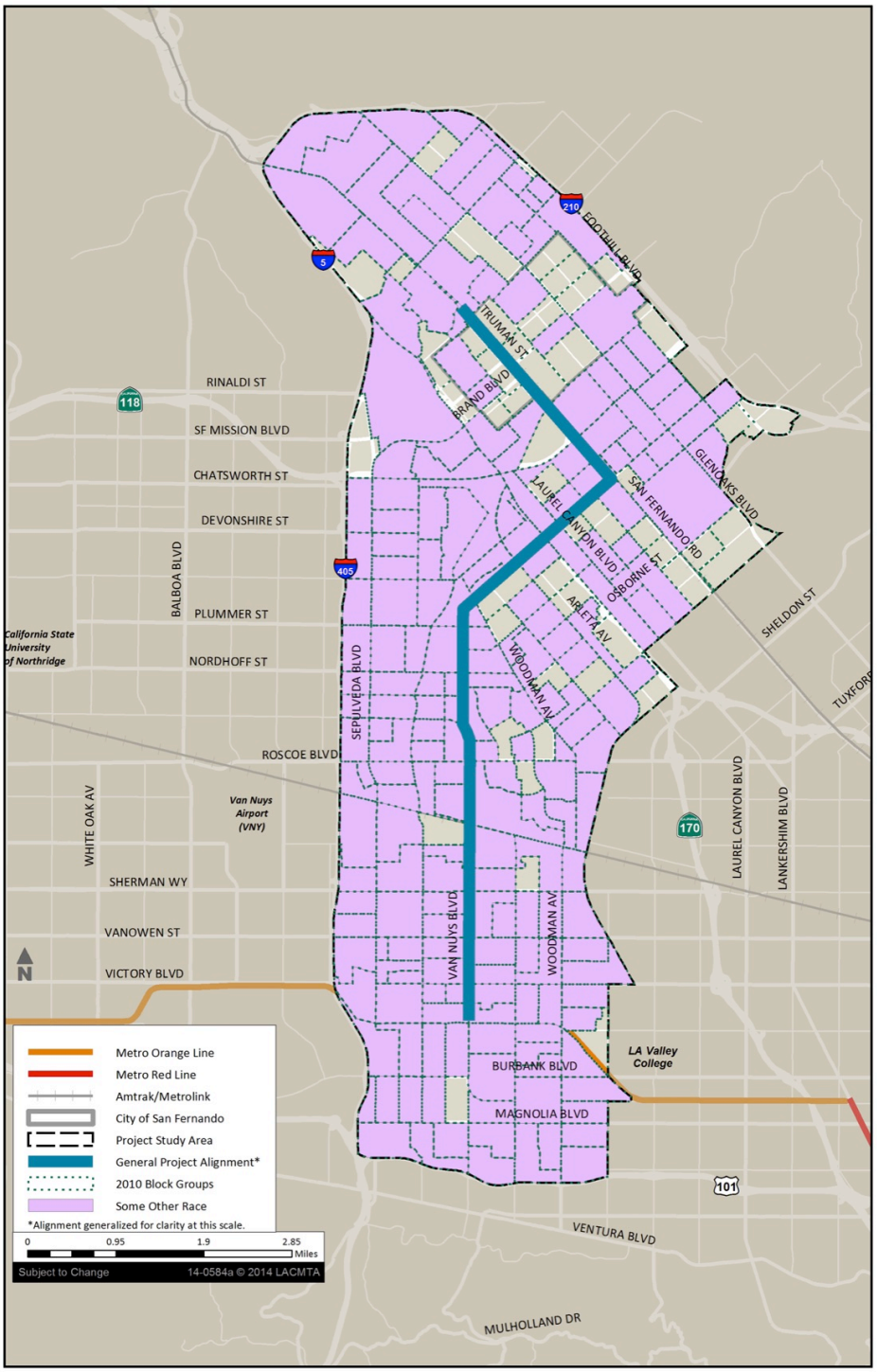
Source: ESRI, 2013; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a

Figure 3-9: Census Block Groups Containing Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander Populations



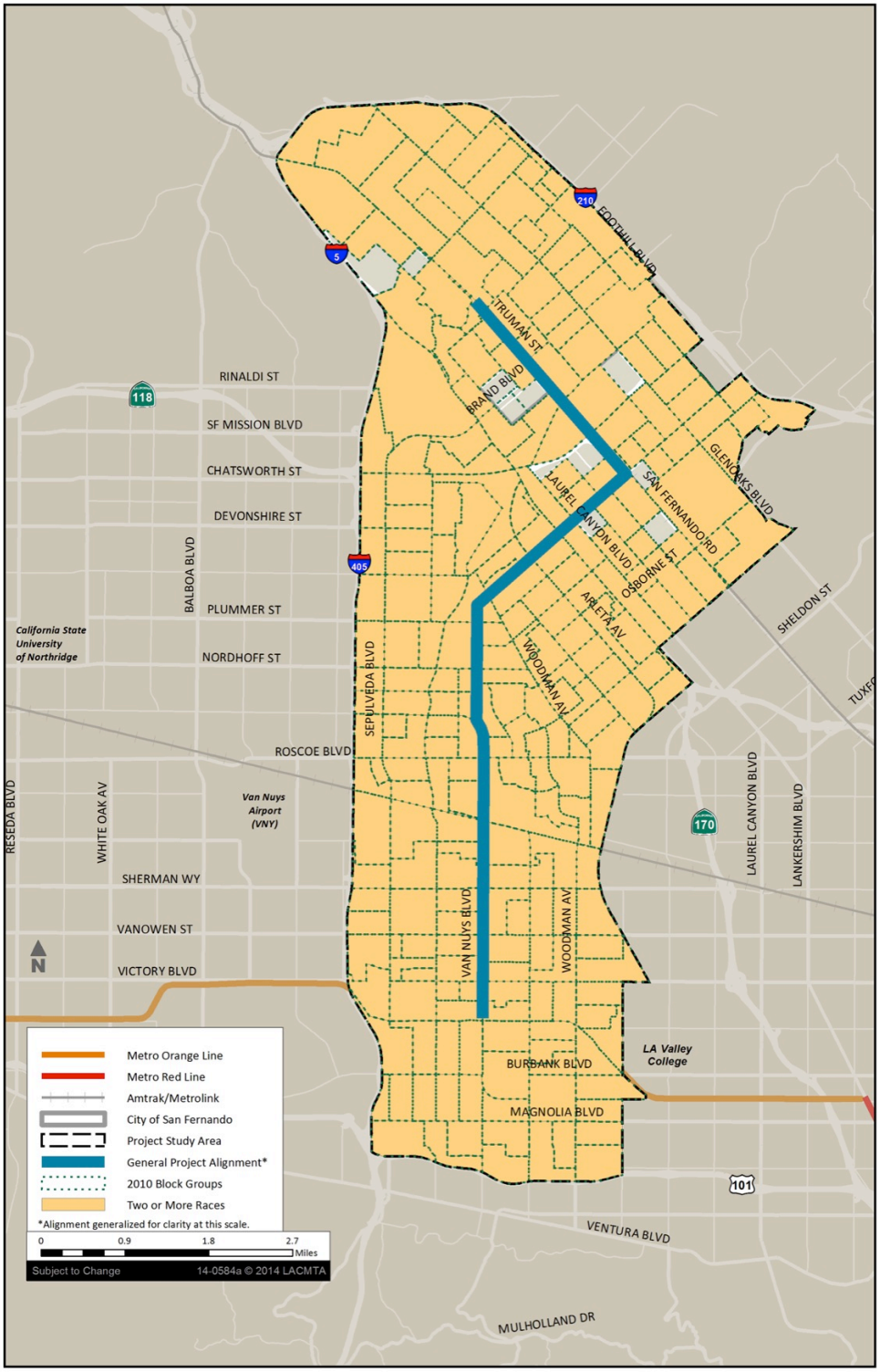
Source: ESRI, 2013; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b

Figure 3-10: Census Block Groups Containing Populations of Some Other Race



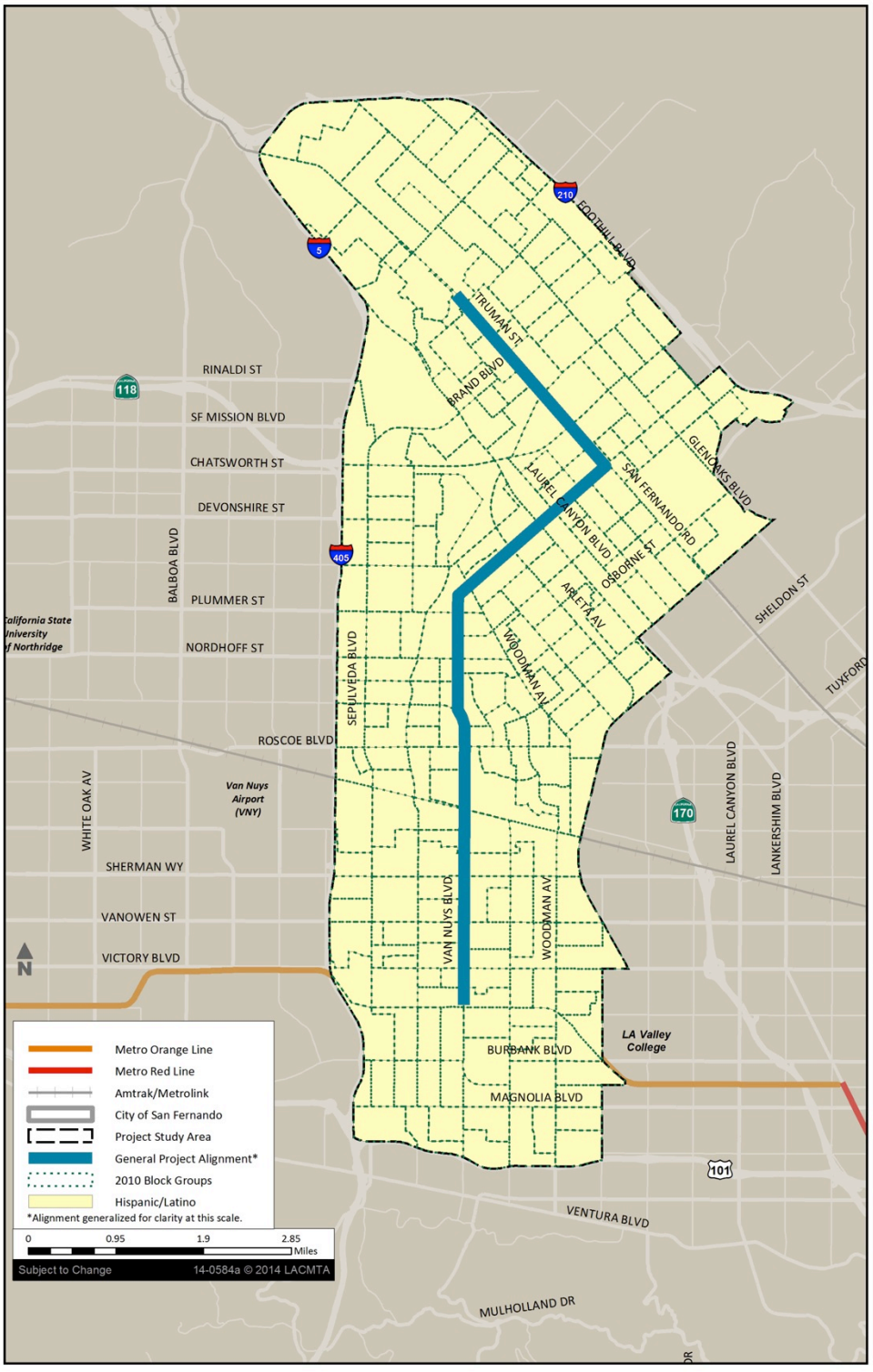
Source: ESRI, 2013; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b

Figure 3-11: Census Block Groups Containing Populations of Two or More Races



Source: ESRI, 2013; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b

Figure 3-12: Census Block Groups Containing Hispanic/Latino Populations



Source: ESRI, 2013; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b

3.3 Low-Income Populations

3.3.1 Households below Poverty Level

Households below the poverty level in 2000 are shown in Table 3-4. Approximately 17.7 percent of households in the project study area were below the poverty level, which was 0.9 percent lower than the City and 2.6 percent higher than the County.

Households below the poverty level in 2010 are shown in Table 3-5. Approximately 17.5 percent of households in the project study area were below the poverty level, which was 0.2 percent higher than the City and 3.5 percent higher than the County.

Between 2000 and 2010, the project study area, City, and County all experienced a decrease in the proportion of households below the poverty level, but the project study area experienced the smallest decrease (by 0.2 percent) compared to the City (a 1.3-percent decrease) and the County (a 1.0-percent decrease).

Table 3-4: Households below Poverty Level (2000)

	Study Area		City of Los Angeles		County of Los Angeles	
	Number	Percent of Households	Number	Percent of Households	Number	Percent of Households
Total Estimated Households	1118,329	100.0	1,276,609	100.0	3,136,279	100.0
Estimated Households with Income below Poverty Level within the Last 12 Months	20,978	17.7	238,021	18.6	474,533	15.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Table 3-5: Households below Poverty Level (2010)

	Study Area		City of Los Angeles		County of Los Angeles	
	Number	Percent of Households	Number	Percent of Households	Number	Percent of Households
Total Estimated Households	123,140	100.0	1,314,198	100.0	3,217,889	100.0
Estimated Households with Income below Poverty Level within the Last 12 Months	21,594	17.5	227,292	17.3	455,018	14.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a

Figure 3-13 depicts 2010 Census block groups in the project study area containing low-income populations. Of the 256 block groups in the project study area, 239 contain low-income populations; 100 percent of the block groups adjacent to the project area contain low-income populations and 93.4 percent of the study area contains low-income populations.

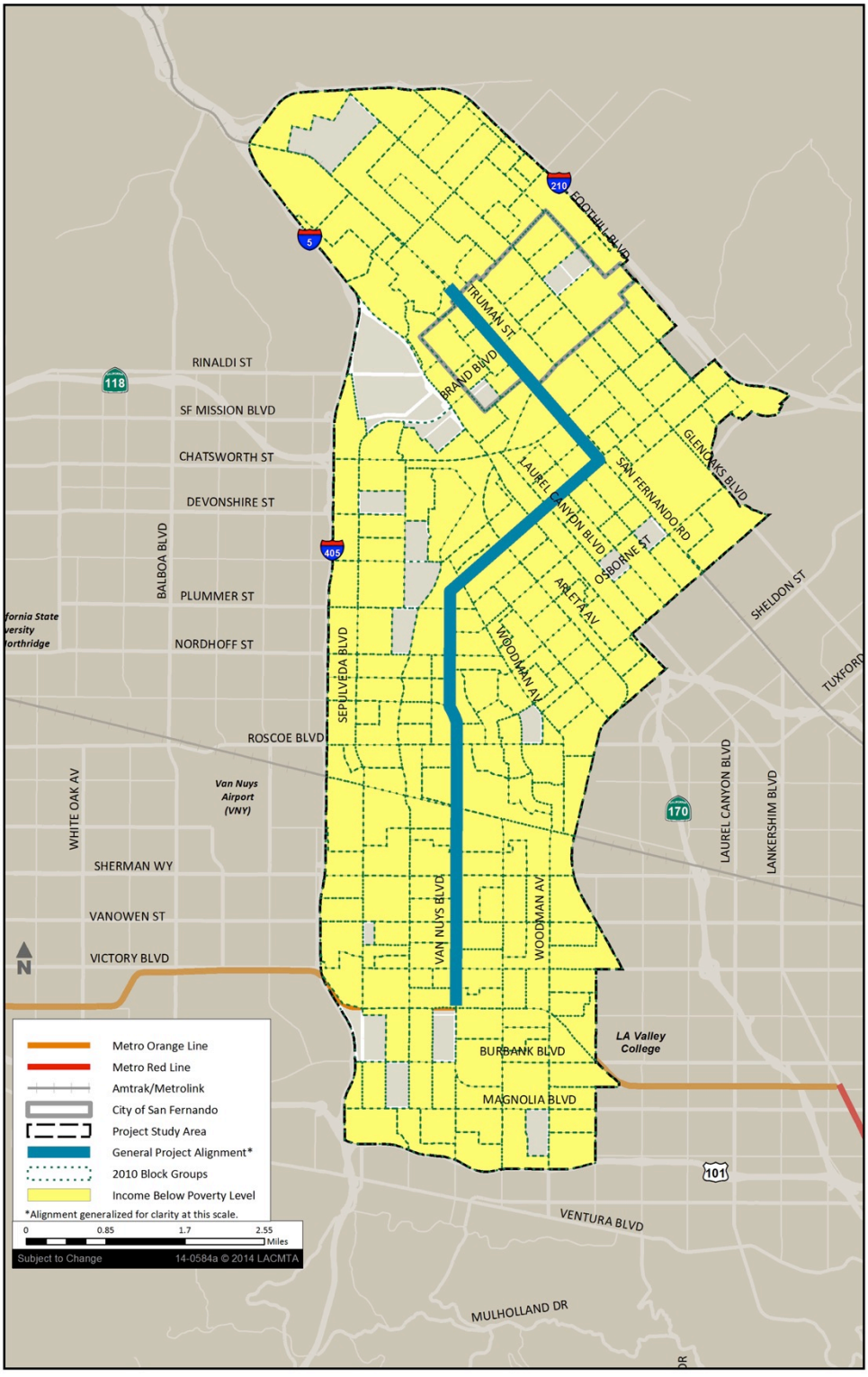
According to FTA Circular 4703.1, a very small ("statistically insignificant") minority or low-income population in the project study area does not eliminate the possibility of a disproportionately high and adverse effect on these populations. Therefore, this report addresses potential effects on all low-income populations, regardless of the size of the population in the project study area.

3.3.2 Low-Income Housing

While there are no mobile home parks adjacent to the 9.2-mile project corridor, there are five low-income housing developments:

- 12157 San Fernando Road (near Hubbard Avenue; adjacent to a TPSS Site for the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative);
- 9628 Van Nuys Boulevard (near Vesper Avenue);
- 9640 Van Nuys Boulevard (near Vesper Avenue);
- 9618 Van Nuys Boulevard (near Vesper Avenue); and
- 9247 Van Nuys Boulevard (near Tupper Street).

Figure 3-13: Census Block Groups Containing Low-Income Populations



Source: ESRI, 2013; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a

Chapter 4
Environmental Consequences/ Environmental Impacts

4.1 No-Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative would not include any new transportation infrastructure, construction, or substantial service changes beyond what is identified in Metro's 2009 LRTP and SCAG's 2012-2035 RTP/SCS. Existing Metro Rapid and Local bus service would continue to operate along the project corridor, and implementation of existing or planned pedestrian and bicycle projects would continue on Van Nuys Boulevard and connecting east/west transportation facilities. The No-Build Alternative, as advised by the CEQ, assumes environmental effects of other predictable actions and planned projects have occurred; for the project study area that would be reasonably expected to include various freeway and arterial roadway upgrades, expansions to the Metro Rapid Bus system, upgrades to the Metrolink system, and the proposed California High Speed Rail project[46].

4.1.1 Mobility and Access Impacts

The No-Build Alternative would not result in changes to existing mobility and access in the project study area. The No-Build Alternative would not result in changes to on-street parking, existing or planned pedestrian and bicycle access, access to public transportation, or vehicular access to businesses and community resources within the communities and neighborhoods in the project study area. Therefore, the No-Build Alternative would not result in any effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to mobility and access. This alternative would not result in any actions to implement Metro's Complete Streets Policy.

While this alternative would not result in effects on minority or low-income populations, it would not achieve the potential transportation benefits such as improved circulation, transit equity, reliability, and access that would be expected to result from the proposed build alternatives. As detailed in the Transportation Impacts Report, the No-Build alternative establishes a baseline for comparison to evaluate potential traffic effects of the other alternatives. Daily vehicle traffic within the study area is projected to increase under future baseline conditions (and the No-Build Alternative), as compared to existing conditions. Community mobility would be expected to deteriorate with the increased regional traffic congestion anticipated between now and 2040, which could result in a long-term reduction in access to public transportation, businesses, and community resources, as well as reduced emergency vehicle access.

4.1.2 Social and Economic Impacts

The No-Build Alternative would not result in changes to existing social and economic conditions in the project study area. This alternative would not induce population growth, result in changes to businesses or employment rates, displace housing or people, or result in changes to community cohesion, interaction, quality of life, or social values. In addition, the No-Build Alternative would not

[46] CEQ. March 1981. Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning CEQ's NEPA Regulations. Question 3. Available: <http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/G-CEQ-40Questions.pdf>. Accessed: January 8, 2015.

result in the denial of, reduction in, or substantial delay in the receipt of benefits of USDOT programs, policies, or activities for minority or low-income populations. Therefore, the No-Build Alternative would not result in effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to social and economic conditions. More information on economic impacts is provided in the Economic and Fiscal Impacts Report.

While this alternative would not result in effects on minority or low-income populations, it would not achieve the potential circulation, transit equity, and access improvements that would be expected to result from the proposed build alternatives. Community mobility would be expected to deteriorate with the increased regional traffic congestion anticipated between now and 2040, which could limit local economic growth.

4.1.3 Physical Impacts

The No-Build Alternative would not result in changes to the physical environment, including changes in land use patterns or visual character, and would not result in safety impacts or introduce physical intrusions to communities and neighborhoods in the project study area. No geological, hazardous materials, water quality, public health, historic resource, or community facility impacts are anticipated. The No-Build Alternative would not require street closures or result in reductions in community cohesion, reductions in access, or increased exclusion. Under this alternative, transportation facilities would operate entirely within existing transportation corridors, and no physical barriers would be introduced that would divide the existing communities surrounding the project corridor. This alternative would not decrease the performance or safety of public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities. The No-Build Alternative would not require displacement of any housing, people, or businesses or require the acquisition of properties. Therefore, the No-Build Alternative would not result in effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to physical conditions.

While this alternative would not result in effects on minority or low-income populations, it would not achieve the potential circulation, transit equity, and access improvements that are expected to result from the proposed build alternatives. Community mobility would be expected to deteriorate with the increased regional traffic congestion anticipated between now and 2040, which could result in increased vehicle hours traveled, fuel (energy) consumption, air quality emissions, and generation of greenhouse gas emissions.

4.1.4 Impact Conclusions

Under NEPA, the No-Build Alternative would not result in effects on minority or low-income populations.

There are no thresholds of significance in CEQA for environmental justice impacts. Therefore, no CEQA determination can be made for environmental justice impacts resulting from the No-Build Alternative.

4.2 Transportation System Management Alternative

4.2.1 Mobility and Access Impacts

The TSM Alternative would be expected to result in beneficial changes to existing mobility and access in the project study area. This alternative includes the same transportation infrastructure projects as the No-Build Alternative, plus enhanced bus frequencies for the existing Metro Rapid Bus 761 and the Local 233 lines, which would provide additional mobility and access benefits for minority and low-income populations in the project study area. Additional bus service would be available to all communities throughout the project study area as well as communities adjacent to the project study area, regardless of socioeconomic or demographic characteristics.

The TSM Alternative would retain on-street parking, retain pedestrian and bicycle access, enhance access to public transportation through increased bus frequencies, and result in improved access to businesses and community resources within the communities and neighborhoods in the project study area. The TSM Alternative would be expected to improve transit service, result in an increase of approximately 4,500 daily transit boardings, and reduce traffic congestion, which could facilitate faster response times for emergency services.

As detailed in the Transportation Impacts Report, the TSM Alternative would not substantially affect traffic at any of the study intersections. Therefore, the TSM Alternative would not result in any effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to mobility and access. This alternative would not result in any actions to implement Metro's Complete Streets Policy.

4.2.2 Social and Economic Impacts

The TSM Alternative would not be expected to result in substantial social and economic changes in the project study area. More frequent bus service may require additional drivers, providing employment opportunities; however, there is already a substantial employment base and residential population in the San Fernando Valley, and therefore potential employment opportunities would not be expected to induce substantial population growth in the project study area. More information on economic impacts is provided in the Economic and Fiscal Impacts Report.

In addition, the proposed improvements under this alternative would not displace housing or people, and would not be expected to result in substantial changes to community cohesion, interaction, quality of life, or social values. The TSM Alternative would not result in the denial of, reduction in, or substantial delay in the receipt of benefits of USDOT programs, policies, or activities for minority or low-income populations.

Under the TSM Alternative, enhanced bus frequencies would provide an increased availability of transit service, which could stimulate the local economy by facilitating access to local businesses. The additional bus service could result in a beneficial impact on low-income individuals that do not own a vehicle and rely on public transportation. All businesses within the project study area would be affected comparably, regardless of socioeconomic or demographic characteristics. Therefore, the TSM Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on, or fewer benefits for, minority or low-income populations with respect to social and economic conditions.

While this alternative would not result in effects on minority or low-income populations, it would not substantially improve regional mobility, and community access would likely continue to deteriorate

with increasing regional traffic congestion expected between now and 2040. Therefore, any social or economic benefits resulting from the TSM Alternative could eventually be cancelled out by increased traffic congestion, which could result in reduced operating speeds and service reliability, and a long-term reduction in access to local businesses.

4.2.3 Physical Impacts

The TSM Alternative would include traffic signalization improvements, bus stop amenities and improvements, and bus schedule restructuring. This alternative would not be expected to result in substantial changes to the physical environment, including changes in land use patterns or visual character, and would not result in safety impacts, or introduce substantial physical intrusions to communities and neighborhoods in the project study area. Minor modifications to the roadway network would be expected to enhance the existing transportation network, would be compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines, and would not be expected to result in pedestrian, bicycle, and/or vehicle safety impacts.

Numerous transit lines currently exist in the project study area, and adding new bus stops would not be expected to substantially change noise and vibration conditions. The installation of new bus stops and signage would require minimal excavation and would not increase the amount of impervious surface; therefore, no adverse geological, hazardous materials, water quality, public health, historic resource, or community facility impacts are anticipated.

New bus stops would be installed within the existing right-of-way and extended street closures would not be required. The TSM Alternative would operate entirely within existing transportation corridors, and would not introduce physical barriers that would divide the existing communities surrounding the project corridor. The TSM Alternative would not require any permanent acquisition of property. The TSM Alternative would not result in impacts on community access or exclusion. The proposed improvements under this alternative would not displace housing or people, and would not be expected to result in substantial changes to community cohesion, interaction, quality of life, or social values.

This alternative would not achieve circulation improvements within the existing community that would be expected as a result of the proposed build alternatives. Existing and projected transportation deficiencies would be experienced comparably among local and regional travelers, regardless of socioeconomic or demographic characteristics. Therefore, the TSM Alternative would not result in effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to physical conditions.

4.2.4 Impact Conclusions

Under NEPA, the TSM Alternative would not result in effects on minority or low-income populations.

There are no thresholds of significance in CEQA for environmental justice impacts. Therefore, no CEQA determination can be made for environmental justice impacts resulting from the TSM Alternative.

4.3 Build Alternative 1 – Curb-Running Bus Rapid Transit Alternative

4.3.1 Mobility and Access Impacts

4.3.1.1 Changes in Access to Public Transportation, Businesses, and Community Resources

Under the Curb-Running BRT Alternative, the rapid bus line would enhance connections to public transportation within the project study area and across the region, in compliance with Metro's Complete Streets Policy. This alternative would permanently improve community mobility by providing a new means of access that does not rely on driving, and the additional transit service would enhance access to public transportation, businesses, and community resources in the project study area. The Curb-Running BRT would be available to all communities throughout the project study area as well as communities adjacent to the project study area, regardless of socioeconomic or demographic characteristics. All existing motor vehicle turns into and out of cross streets and driveways would be maintained; no changes would be made to existing turning movements.

Under this alternative, the Metro Rapid 761 bus would no longer operate on Van Nuys Boulevard from north of San Fernando Road to Foothill Boulevard, which is a 1.5-mile segment of roadway within the project study area. This entire segment of roadway is adjacent to block groups containing minority and low-income populations (see Figure 3-6 through Figure 3-13). Of the block groups adjacent to this segment of roadway, 100 percent contain minority populations, and 100 percent contain low-income populations. Though the Rapid 761 bus would not operate along this segment of roadway, Metro Local Line 233 would continue to operate along the same segment of Van Nuys Boulevard after implementation of the alternative.

Local Line 233 operates Monday through Sunday, as well as holidays, at similar intervals and locations as Rapid 761. During early morning and late evening hours, Local Line 233 carries passengers along the 1.5-mile segment of Van Nuys Boulevard exclusively. Though Rapid 761 would no longer operate along the segment of roadway, public transportation would be available along the same roadway segment at similar intervals, however it should be noted that the Local Line 233 has more frequent stops and a longer trip duration than the Rapid Line 761. Passengers using Local Line 233 would be able to use the same method of payment as with Rapid 761, fares between the two lines are comparable, and riders who qualify for Metro transportation subsidy programs would be able to utilize the subsidy regardless of which line is being used. Therefore, the Curb-Running BRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on, or fewer benefits for, minority or low-income populations with respect to availability of public transportation (reduction in access).

Under the Curb-Running BRT Alternative, curbside parking along the entire 9.2 miles (in the northbound and southbound directions) of the project corridor would be prohibited, which could affect vehicle access to businesses and community resources. Of the block groups adjacent to this segment of roadway, 100 percent contain minority populations, and 100 percent contain low-income populations.

According to the Transportation Impacts Report, the Van Nuys Boulevard corridor in the study area has a weekday parking demand of 481 on-street spaces and a Saturday peak parking demand of 589 on-street spaces. A parking analysis of adjacent locations was conducted; it was determined that the available adjacent on-street parking and/or off-street parking areas can meet the weekday and weekend on-street parking demand for the area. In addition, public transit would be enhanced under

the Curb-Running BRT Alternative. The project could result in increased transit use, which could reduce the need for on-street parking. Therefore, the Curb-Running BRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on, or fewer benefits for, minority or low-income populations with respect to public transportation and reductions in parking (and any associated reduction in access).

4.3.1.2 Changes in Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

The Curb-Running BRT Alternative would retain pedestrian and bicycle access along the project corridor, in compliance with Metro's Complete Streets Policy. Existing pedestrian movements would be maintained, including all existing mid-block crossings, and portions of sidewalks along the corridor would be widened under this alternative. Some sidewalks would also be narrowed under this alternative; however, all sidewalks would be at least 10 feet wide. In addition, all existing Metro Rapid Bus stops would be upgraded with ADA-compliant design enhancements, contingent upon the legal ability to upgrade because of the City of Los Angeles' exclusive contract with a bus stop advertising company. Other modifications required to accommodate the BRT improvements would also comply with ADA guidelines. Of the block groups adjacent to the project corridor, 100 percent contain minority populations, and 100 percent contain low-income populations.

The City's Bicycle Plan designates Van Nuys Boulevard as part of the "Backbone Bicycle Network", which plans an interconnected system facilitating mobility on key arterials.47 Under the Curb-Running BRT Alternative, the existing Class II bike lanes on Van Nuys Boulevard north of Parthenia Street would be removed. However, curbside lanes on Van Nuys Boulevard would be 12 feet wide or greater, except between Parthenia Street and Roscoe Boulevard where curbside lanes would be 11 feet wide. Curbside lanes on Van Nuys Boulevard would be restricted to buses and bicyclists, with other vehicles allowed in the lane only for right-turns; therefore, bicyclists would not need to share the lane with the general public. However, the removal of Class II bike lanes would conflict with the City's Bicycle Plan because designated bicycle lanes on Van Nuys Boulevard would not be feasible with the implementation of this alternative, affecting future bicycle access within the project study area. The City's General Plan designates Van Nuys Boulevard as a transit priority street, and the transit accommodations under this alternative would only be feasible with the removal of the bicycle lanes. In addition, as stated in Metro's Complete Streets Policy, a number of streets might not provide accommodations for all modes of transportation due to physical right-of-way constraints, which is the case for this alternative. The change from a Class II bike lane to a shared bicycle lane could result in safety impacts as discussed further in Section 4.3.3.

The City's Bicycle Plan includes planned bicycle lanes on Woodman Avenue (one-mile to the east of and parallel to Van Nuys Boulevard) between Ventura Boulevard and the Osborne Street and Nordhoff Street corridors. Bicycle lanes are also planned to connect the Osborne Street corridor to San Fernando Road. As detailed in the Transportation Impacts Report, mitigation for impacts on bicycle facilities would include the implementation of bicycle lanes on these parallel roadways, visual enhancement of the crosswalks at each proposed station location, completion of a community linkages study, and implementation of the study recommendations through coordination between Metro and the Cities of Los Angeles and San Fernando. To use the planned bicycle lanes on Woodman Avenue, bicyclists would need to travel one mile to the east of Van Nuys Boulevard, which may be an inconvenience for some bicyclists depending on their final destination. However, bicycle accommodations, including bicycle racks, would be provided at BRT stations and on buses so that passengers may leave their bicycles at the stations or bring them onto buses.

[47] City. March 2011. 2010 Bicycle Plan.

The average distance of a bicycle trip in Los Angeles is four miles; affected bicyclists would be expected to travel from neighborhoods within and outside of the study area, which include block groups of varying socioeconomic and demographic characteristics.[48] The changes to the Class II bike lanes along Van Nuys Boulevard would be expected to affect all bicyclists within an approximate four-mile radius comparably, regardless of socioeconomic or demographic characteristics. Therefore, the Curb-Running BRT Alternative would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to pedestrian and bicycle access.

4.3.1.3 Changes to Circulation and Emergency Access

Under the Curb-Running BRT Alternative, existing mixed-flow lanes would be converted to dedicated BRT lanes, which could result in additional roadway congestion from decreased roadway capacity for mixed-flow traffic. As detailed in the Transportation Impacts Report, the Curb-Running Alternative would be expected to improve transit service, result in an increase of approximately 12,500 daily transit boardings, and reduce traffic congestion, which could facilitate faster response times for emergency services. However, this alternative would result in adverse effects on 16 of the study intersections within the corridor, which could reduce access for emergency vehicle response or interfere with evacuation plans. Because the project study area is within a roadway corridor, emergency vehicles and travelers in the project study area would be similarly affected by increased traffic, regardless of trip origin. Traffic impacts are anticipated to affect all emergency calls or travelers within the project study area comparably. Therefore, the Curb-Running Alternative would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to emergency access and circulation.

4.3.2 Social and Economic Impacts

4.3.2.1 Population, Business, and Employment Growth

The Curb-Running BRT Alternative would not be expected to result in substantial changes to the existing population in the project study area. This alternative would not include the development of new housing or businesses that would directly induce population growth. The Curb-Running BRT Alternative would include additional bus service, and would therefore generate additional employment opportunities for bus drivers; however, there is currently a substantial employment base and residential population in the San Fernando Valley, and the employment opportunities would not be expected to result in substantial migration of additional residents to the project study area. Therefore, this alternative would not be expected to induce substantial population growth in existing communities and neighborhoods.

The Curb-Running BRT Alternative could indirectly affect growth and development in the project study area by promoting planned development and redevelopment near station areas. The type of development expected around station areas would most likely be Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), which is mixed-use residential and commercial development designed to maximize access to public transportation. The Curb-Running BRT Alternative may also attract businesses from other areas of the region to the immediate areas surrounding the proposed stations. This alternative would be located in an urban area containing a limited number of vacant or underutilized parcels; therefore, this alternative would not be expected to change existing growth and development patterns

[48] Ibid.

substantially. In addition, the Curb-Running BRT Alternative would accommodate projected population growth in the region, and any development that could result around station areas is anticipated to be consistent with current growth projections.

Under the Curb-Running BRT Alternative, enhanced transit service could stimulate the local economy by facilitating access to local businesses. In addition, business viability could improve because increased pedestrian traffic near the proposed stations would provide new potential customers. The proposed stations would be spaced relatively evenly throughout the project corridor and would have the potential to provide improved economic conditions to all businesses located near station areas comparably. Therefore, the Curb-Running BRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on, or fewer benefits for, minority or low-income populations with respect to improved economic conditions. More information on economic impacts is provided in the Economic and Fiscal Impacts Report.

4.3.2.2 Displacement of Housing and People

The Curb-Running BRT Alternative would be constructed within the curb lanes of an existing roadway, and would not result in the displacement of any housing, people, or businesses. This alternative would not require any right-of-way acquisitions for the proposed alignment. In addition, this alternative would not require the construction or expansion of an MSF; therefore, no right-of-way acquisitions associated with an MSF would be required, and the Curb-Running BRT Alternative would not result in any effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to displacement.

4.3.2.3 Changes in Community Cohesion and Interaction

The Curb-Running BRT Alternative would increase connectivity within the eastern San Fernando Valley area, and would result in more unified communities within the project study area by providing additional transit services connecting these areas. Therefore, this alternative would be expected to enhance community cohesion and interaction. In addition, the Curb-Running BRT Alternative would not result in the denial of, reduction in, or substantial delay in the receipt of benefits of USDOT programs, policies, or activities for minority or low-income populations. Because the proposed stations would be spaced relatively evenly, connectivity would be improved throughout the entire project corridor. Therefore, the Curb-Running BRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on, or fewer benefits for minority or low-income populations with respect to community cohesion.

4.3.2.4 Changes in Quality of Life or Social Values

As discussed previously, under the Curb-Running BRT Alternative, existing mixed-flow lanes would be converted to dedicated BRT lanes, which could result in additional roadway congestion from decreased roadway capacity for mixed-flow traffic. However, the Curb-Running BRT Alternative would be expected to result in a long-term overall improved quality of life for the communities and neighborhoods in the project study area resulting from the availability of enhanced transit access to businesses and between communities. The Curb-Running BRT Alternative would permanently improve community mobility by providing a new means of access that does not rely solely on driving.

The BRT line would be expected to enhance connections to other neighborhoods within the project study area and across the region, and increased pedestrian traffic near the proposed stations would provide new potential customers and improve business viability; this alternative would be expected to result in social and economic benefits for the communities and neighborhoods in the project study area. The proposed stations would be spaced evenly throughout the project corridor, and would

improve access and business viability comparably. Therefore, the Curb-Running BRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on, or fewer benefits for, minority or low-income populations with respect to improved quality of life.

4.3.3 Physical Impacts

4.3.3.1 Changes in Land Use Patterns

The Curb-Running BRT Alternative would not be expected to result in substantial changes in land use patterns. While there would be some modifications to the project corridor (e.g., changes in bicycle lanes), the project corridor is an existing transportation route with existing bus transit service; therefore, the proposed BRT operations would be consistent with existing bus operations and land use patterns.

The Curb-Running BRT Alternative could indirectly affect development in the project study area by encouraging housing, employment, and commercial development within walking distance of the proposed transit stations along the project corridor. However, because this alternative is located in an urban area containing a limited number of vacant or underutilized parcels, this alternative would not be expected to change existing growth and development patterns substantially. The proposed stations would be spaced evenly throughout the project corridor, and would affect land use comparably. Therefore, the Curb-Running BRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to land use.

4.3.3.2 Changes in Visual Character

This alternative would include new and upgraded bus stations, and the installation of dedicated BRT lanes. The BRT vehicles would be similar to existing Metro buses. The project corridor is an existing transportation route with existing bus transit service; the proposed BRT operations would be consistent with existing bus operations, and no substantial changes in visual character would result from this alternative. Station upgrades and sidewalk widening could also result in a more cohesive landscape along the corridor with canopies, additional street trees, and benches that would provide a more unified appearance in station areas. These proposed elements would be spaced relatively evenly throughout the entire project corridor. Although Metro Rapid bus stops would be upgraded under this alternative, none of the local bus stops would be upgraded. The Metro Rapid bus stops would be visually accessible to all persons traveling along the project corridor regardless of socioeconomic or demographic characteristics. Therefore, the Curb-Running BRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on, or fewer benefits for minority or low-income populations with respect to visual character.

4.3.3.3 Safety Impacts and Other Physical Intrusions

The Curb-Running BRT Alternative would not be expected to result in substantial physical intrusions (e.g., noise, dust, or odors) to the project corridor. While there would be some modifications to the project corridor (e.g., changes in bicycle lanes), the project corridor is an existing transportation route with existing bus transit service; the proposed BRT operations would be consistent with existing bus operations and physical conditions. No geological, hazardous materials, water quality, public health, historic resource, or community facility impacts are anticipated. The Curb-Running BRT Alternative would not include permanent street closures or result in reductions in community cohesion, reductions in access, or increased exclusion.

The development of new BRT facilities in the project corridor could result in security concerns because passengers may congregate at station areas, which could attract criminals and result in a higher potential for assault, robbery, or terrorist attacks. These concerns would be addressed both through design considerations (e.g., security cameras in station areas) and by coordinating with law enforcement personnel, including the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Transit Services Bureau. In addition, potential bus improvements under this alternative would follow the requirements of Metro's System Safety Program Plan, which would ensure worker and passenger safety, reduce crime, and allow for an adequate emergency response. Therefore, the Curb-Running BRT Alternative is not expected to result in a substantial increase in security risks in the project study area.

The Curb-Running BRT Alternative would run in mixed-flow curb lanes along San Fernando Road and Truman Streets, and could increase potential for conflicts between mixed-flow street traffic and other Metro bus operations. However, because existing bus service in the corridor operates in mixed-flow traffic, a substantial increase in accidents or collisions between buses and other motor vehicles is not anticipated to result from this alternative.

The Curb-Running BRT Alternative would be designed in compliance with Metro design guidelines to ensure pedestrian, motorist, and bicyclist safety; however, the removal of existing Class II bike lanes would increase the potential for conflicts between bicyclists and motor vehicles. The average distance of a bicycle trip in Los Angeles is four miles, and affected bicyclists would be expected to travel from neighborhoods within and outside of the study area, which include block groups of varying socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. This alternative could result in safety impacts along the project corridor; however, the changes to the Class II bike lanes along Van Nuys Boulevard would be expected to affect all bicyclists within an approximate four-mile radius comparably, regardless of socioeconomic or demographic characteristics.

The Curb-Running BRT Alternative would be expected to increase the capacity of the regional transportation system as a whole and to decrease emissions from passenger vehicles. According to the Air Quality Report, this alternative would not result in significant or adverse air quality impacts, including intersection areas that would experience greater congestion. Therefore, the Curb-Running BRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to physical impacts.

4.3.3.4 Physical Division of Communities

The Curb-Running BRT Alternative would operate entirely within existing transportation corridors, and would not introduce physical barriers that would divide existing communities in the project study area. Therefore, the Curb-Running BRT Alternative would not result in effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to physical divisions.

4.3.4 Impact Conclusions

Under NEPA, the Curb-Running BRT Alternative would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations.

There are no thresholds of significance in CEQA for environmental justice impacts. Therefore, no CEQA determination can be made for environmental justice impacts resulting from the Curb-Running BRT Alternative.

4.4 Build Alternative 2 – Median-Running BRT Alternative

4.4.1 Mobility and Access Impacts

4.4.1.1 Changes in Access to Public Transportation, Businesses, and Community Resources

Under the Median-Running BRT Alternative, connections to public transportation within the project study area and across the region would be strengthened by the rapid bus line. This alternative would permanently improve community mobility by providing a new means of access that does not rely solely on driving, and the additional transit service would enhance access to public transportation, businesses and community resources in the project study area. The Median-Running BRT would be available to all communities throughout the project study area as well as communities adjacent to the project study area, regardless of socioeconomic or demographic characteristics.

Under this alternative, the Metro Rapid 761 bus would no longer operate on Van Nuys Boulevard from north of San Fernando Road to Foothill Boulevard, which is a 1.5-mile segment of roadway within the project study area. This entire segment of roadway is adjacent to block groups containing minority and low-income populations. Of the block groups adjacent to this segment of roadway, 100 percent contain minority populations, and 100 percent contain low-income populations. Though the Rapid 761 bus would not operate along this segment of roadway, Metro Local Line 233 would continue to operate along the same segment of Van Nuys Boulevard after implementation of the alternative.

Local Line 233 operates Monday through Sunday, as well as holidays, at similar intervals and locations as Rapid 761. During early morning and late evening hours, Local Line 233 carries passengers along the 1.5-mile segment of Van Nuys Boulevard exclusively. Though Rapid 761 would no longer operate along the segment of roadway, public transportation would be available along the same roadway segment at similar intervals. Passengers using Local Line 233 would be able to use the same method of payment as with Rapid 761, fares between the two lines are comparable, and riders who qualify for Metro transportation subsidy programs would be able to utilize the subsidy regardless of which line they are using. Therefore, the Median-Running BRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on, or fewer benefits for minority or low-income populations with respect to availability of public transportation (reduction in access).

To implement the Median-Running BRT Alternative, restrictions on motor vehicle movements would be required to accommodate the BRT facilities and eliminate vehicle conflicts. Left turns from Van Nuys Boulevard onto cross streets would be maintained at most of the currently signalized intersections; however, some dual left-turn lanes would be reduced to a single left-turn lane, and several left-turns in the Van Nuys Civic Center area, between Calvert Street and Hartland Street, would be prohibited to accommodate median bus stop platforms. Restricted left-hand turns would be required within approximately one mile (in both the northbound and southbound directions) of Van Nuys Boulevard between Calvert Street and Hartland Street. Of the block groups adjacent to this segment of roadway, 100 percent contain minority populations, and 100 percent contain low-income populations.

Unless otherwise prohibited, U-turns would be allowed from signalized left-turn lanes on Van Nuys Boulevard; therefore, vehicles that need to turn left to access businesses and community resources would continue to have access through U-turn movements using the remaining signalized left-turn

lanes. Travelers within the project study area would be similarly affected by prohibited left turn lanes, regardless of trip origin. Therefore, the Median Running BRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on, or fewer benefits for, minority or low-income populations with respect to prohibited left turns (changes in access).

Under the Median-Running BRT Alternative, curbside parking along the entire 9.2 miles (in the northbound and southbound directions) of the project corridor would be prohibited, which could affect vehicle access to businesses and community resources. Of the block groups adjacent to this segment of roadway, 100 percent contain minority populations, and 100 percent contain low-income populations.

According to the Transportation Impacts Report prepared for the project, the Van Nuys Boulevard corridor in the study area has a weekday parking demand of 481 on-street spaces and a Saturday peak parking demand of 589 on-street spaces. A parking analysis of adjacent locations was conducted; it was determined that the available adjacent on-street parking and/or off-street parking areas can meet the weekday and weekend on-street parking demand for the area. In addition, public transit would be enhanced under the Median-Running BRT Alternative. The project could result in increased transit use, which could reduce the need for on-street parking. Therefore, the Median-Running BRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on, or fewer benefits for, minority or low-income populations with respect to public transportation and reductions in parking (and any associated reduction in access).

4.4.1.2 Changes in Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

The Median-Running BRT Alternative would retain pedestrian and bicycle access along the project corridor in compliance with Metro's Complete Streets Policy, although there would be minor changes to pedestrian and bicycle circulation to allow for the proposed improvements. Current pedestrian movements across roadways at existing signal-controlled crosswalks would be maintained; however, other pedestrian crossings on Van Nuys Boulevard at unsignalized intersections would be prohibited to avoid potential conflicts between pedestrians and BRT vehicles. In addition, under this alternative, a fence would be installed along the length of the alignment to prevent illegal pedestrian crossings over the BRT guideway. However, fence openings would be included to maintain pedestrian access at intersection locations.

These modifications to pedestrian movements and sidewalk widths would not be expected to substantially interfere with pedestrian access along the project corridor because adequate pedestrian facilities, sidewalks, and crosswalks, would be provided to ensure access and safety. In addition, all current Metro Rapid Bus stops would be upgraded and would include design enhancements that would be ADA compliant, contingent upon the legal ability to upgrade because of the City of Los Angeles' exclusive contract with a bust stop advertising company. Other modifications to the curb lanes to accommodate the BRT improvements would also comply with ADA guidelines. Of the block groups adjacent to the project corridor, 100 percent contain minority populations, and 100 percent contain low-income populations.

The City's Bicycle Plan designates Van Nuys Boulevard as part of the "Backbone Bicycle Network", which plans an interconnected system facilitating mobility on key arterials.[49] Under the Median-Running BRT Alternative, the existing Class II bike lanes on Van Nuys Boulevard north of Nordhoff Street would be removed. In addition, curbside lanes on Van Nuys Boulevard between the Metro

[49] City. March 2011. 2010 Bicycle Plan.

Orange Line and San Fernando Road would typically be 11 feet wide, requiring motorists in the curbside lane to shift to the left to pass a bicyclist. These changes would conflict with the City's Bicycle Plan because designated bicycle lanes on Van Nuys Boulevard would not be feasible with the implementation of this alternative, affecting future bicycle access within the project study area.

The City's General Plan designates Van Nuys Boulevard as a transit priority street, and the transit accommodations under this alternative would only be feasible with the removal of the bicycle lanes. In addition, as stated in Metro's Complete Streets Policy, a number of streets might not provide accommodations for all modes of transportation due to physical right-of-way constraints, which is the case for this alternative. The change from a Class II bike lane to a shared bicycle lane could result in safety impacts as discussed further in Section 4.4.3.

The City's Bicycle Plan includes planned bicycle lanes on Woodman Avenue (one-mile to the east of and parallel to Van Nuys Boulevard) between Ventura Boulevard and the Osborne Street and Nordhoff Street corridors. Bicycle lanes are also planned to connect the Osborne Street corridor to San Fernando Road. As detailed in the Transportation Impacts Report, mitigation for impacts to bicycle facilities will include the implementation of bicycle lanes on these parallel roadways. In addition, bicycle accommodations would be provided at BRT stations and on buses to provide options for passengers to leave their bicycles at the stations or to bring them onto buses.

The average distance of a bicycle trip in Los Angeles is four miles; affected bicyclists would be expected to travel from neighborhoods within and outside of the study area, which include block groups of varying socioeconomic and demographic characteristics.[50] The changes to the Class II bike lanes along Van Nuys Boulevard would be expected to affect all bicyclists within an approximate four-mile radius comparably, regardless of socioeconomic or demographic characteristics. Therefore, the Median-Running BRT Alternative would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to pedestrian and bicycle access.

4.4.1.3 Changes to Circulation and Emergency Access

Under the Median-Running BRT Alternative, existing mixed-flow lanes would be converted to dedicated BRT lanes, which could result in additional roadway congestion from decreased roadway capacity for mixed-flow traffic and turning restrictions at unsignalized intersections.

As detailed in the Transportation Impacts Report, the Median Running BRT Alternative would be expected to improve transit service, result in an increase of approximately 12,500 daily transit boardings, and reduce traffic congestion, which could facilitate faster response times for emergency services. However; this alternative would result in adverse effects on 24 of the study intersections within the corridor which could reduce access for emergency vehicle response or interfere with evacuation plans. Because the project study area is within a roadway corridor, emergency vehicles and travelers in the project study area would be similarly affected by increased traffic, regardless of trip origin. Traffic impacts are anticipated to affect all emergency calls or travelers within the project study area comparably. Therefore, the Median-Running BRT Alternative would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to emergency access and circulation.

[50] Ibid.

4.4.2 Social and Economic Impacts

4.4.2.1 Population, Business, and Employment Growth

The Median-Running BRT Alternative would not be expected to result in substantial changes to the existing population in the project study area. This alternative does not include the development of new housing or businesses that would directly induce population growth. The Median-Running BRT Alternative would generate additional permanent employment opportunities for bus drivers; however, a substantial employment base and residential population currently exist in the San Fernando Valley, and the employment opportunities would not be expected to result in substantial migration of additional residents to the project study area. Therefore, this alternative would not indirectly induce substantial population growth in communities and neighborhoods from an increase in employment opportunities.

The Median-Running BRT Alternative could indirectly affect growth and development in the project study area by promoting planned development and redevelopment near station areas. The type of development expected around station areas would most likely be TOD, which is mixed-use residential and commercial development designed to maximize access to public transportation. The Median-Running BRT Alternative may also attract businesses from other areas of the region to the immediate areas surrounding the proposed stations. However, because this alternative would be located in an urban area containing a limited number of vacant or underutilized parcels, this alternative would not be expected to change existing growth and development patterns substantially. The Median-Running BRT Alternative is also intended to accommodate future population growth that has already been projected in the region, and any development that could result around station areas is anticipated to be consistent with current growth projections.

Under the Median-Running BRT Alternative, the enhanced transit service could stimulate the local economy by facilitating access to local businesses. In addition, business viability could improve because the increased pedestrian traffic near the proposed stations would provide new potential customers. The proposed stations would be spaced relatively evenly throughout the project corridor, and would have the potential to provide improved economic conditions to all businesses located near station areas comparably. Therefore, the Median-Running BRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on, or fewer benefits for, minority or low-income populations with respect to improved economic conditions. More information on economic impacts is provided in the Economic and Fiscal Impacts Report.

4.4.2.2 Displacement of Housing and People

This alternative would not displace any housing or people, as the alignment would be constructed in the median of an existing roadway, and would not require the displacement of businesses or residences. In addition, this alternative would not require the construction or expansion of an MSF; therefore, no right-of-way acquisitions associated with an MSF would be required. Therefore, the Median-Running BRT Alternative would not result in any effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to displacement.

4.4.2.3 Changes in Community Cohesion and Interaction

By providing additional transit services in the region, the Median-Running BRT Alternative would increase connectivity within the eastern San Fernando Valley area, and would result in more unified communities within the project study area. Therefore, this alternative would be expected to enhance community cohesion and interaction. In addition, the Median-Running BRT Alternative would not

result in the denial of, reduction in, or substantial delay in the receipt of benefits of USDOT programs, policies, or activities for minority or low-income populations. Because the proposed stations would be spaced relatively evenly, connectivity would be improved throughout the entire project corridor. Therefore, the Median-Running BRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on, or fewer benefits for, minority or low-income populations with respect to improved cohesion.

4.4.2.4 Changes in Quality of Life or Social Values

Under the Median-Running BRT Alternative, existing mixed-flow lanes would be converted to dedicated BRT lanes, which could result in additional roadway congestion from decreased roadway capacity for mixed-flow traffic. However, when long-term operational benefits are considered for the Median-Running BRT Alternative, an overall improved quality of life would be expected for the communities and neighborhoods in the project study area through the availability of new transit access to businesses and between communities. The Median-Running BRT Alternative would permanently improve community mobility by providing a new means of access that does not rely solely on driving.

Connections to other neighborhoods within the project study area and across the region would be strengthened by the BRT line. Business viability would be expected to improve because the increased pedestrian traffic near the proposed stations would provide new potential customers. Therefore, this alternative would be expected to result in social and economic benefits for the communities and neighborhoods in the project study area. The proposed stations would be spaced evenly throughout the project corridor, and would improve access and business viability comparably. Therefore, the Median-Running BRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on, or fewer benefits for, minority or low-income populations with respect to improved quality of life.

4.4.3 Physical Impacts

4.4.3.1 Changes in Land Use Patterns

The Median-Running BRT Alternative would not be expected to result in substantial changes in land use patterns. While there would be some modifications to the project corridor (e.g., changes in pedestrian crossings, bicycle lanes, turning movements), the project corridor is an existing transportation route with existing bus transit service; therefore, the proposed BRT operations would be consistent with existing bus operations.

The Median-Running BRT Alternative could indirectly affect development in the project study area by focusing growth in housing, employment, and commercial development within walking distance of the proposed transit stations along the project corridor. However, because this alternative would be located in an urban area containing a limited number of vacant or underutilized parcels, this alternative would not be expected to change existing growth and development patterns substantially. The proposed stations would be spaced evenly throughout the project corridor, and would affect land use comparably. Therefore, the Median-Running BRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to land use.

4.4.3.2 Changes in Visual Character

This alternative would include new and upgraded bus stations, and the installation of dedicated BRT lanes. The BRT vehicles would be similar to existing Metro buses. The project corridor is an existing transportation route with existing bus transit service; the proposed BRT operations would be

consistent with existing bus operations, and no substantial changes in visual character would result from this alternative. Station upgrades and sidewalk widening could also result in a more cohesive landscape along the corridor with canopies, additional street trees, and benches that would provide a more unified appearance in station areas. These proposed elements would be spaced relatively evenly throughout the entire project corridor. Although Metro Rapid bus stops would be upgraded under this alternative, none of the local bus stops would be upgraded. The Metro Rapid bus stops would be visually accessible to all persons traveling along the project corridor regardless of socioeconomic or demographic characteristics. Therefore, the Median-Running BRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on, or fewer benefits for, minority or low-income populations with respect to visual character.

4.4.3.3 Safety Impacts and Other Physical Intrusions

The Median-Running BRT Alternative would not be expected to introduce substantial physical intrusions (e.g., noise, dust, or odors) to the project corridor. While there would be some modifications to the project corridor (e.g., changes in pedestrian crossings, bicycle lanes, turning movements, and median fences), the project corridor is an existing transportation route in an urbanized area with existing bus transit service; the proposed BRT operations would be consistent with existing bus operations. No geological, hazardous materials, water quality, public health, historic resource, or community facility impacts are anticipated. The Median-Running BRT Alternative would not include permanent street closures or result in reductions in community cohesion, reductions in access, or increased exclusion.

The development of new BRT facilities in the project corridor could result in security concerns because passengers may congregate at station areas, which could attract criminals and result in a higher potential for assault, robbery, or terrorist attacks. These concerns would be addressed both through design considerations (e.g., security cameras in station areas) and by coordinating with law enforcement personnel, including the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Transit Services Bureau. In addition, potential bus improvements under this alternative would be subject to Metro's System Safety Program Plan, which is implemented to ensure worker and passenger safety, reduce crime, and allow for an adequate emergency response. Therefore, the Median-Running BRT Alternative is not expected to result in a substantial increase in security risks in the project study area.

The Median-Running BRT Alternative would run in mixed-flow lanes along San Fernando Road and Truman Streets, and there could be a potential for conflicts between street traffic and other Metro bus operations. However, potential bus improvements under this alternative would be subject to Metro's System Safety Program Plan. In addition, because existing bus service in the corridor operates in mixed-flow traffic, it is not expected that there would be a substantial increase in accidents or collisions between buses and other motor vehicles as a result of this alternative.

To guard motorists from accidentally driving onto the guideway on Van Nuys Boulevard, directional signs would be installed on busway entrances. In addition, Metro guidelines pertaining to the prevention of accidents and collisions would further increase safety and reduce the potential for conflicts, accidents, and collisions.

While the proposed changes to the roadway network would comply with Metro design guidelines to ensure pedestrian, motorist, and bicyclist safety, the removal of Class II bike lanes and replacement with shared bike lanes would increase the potential for conflicts between bicyclists and motor vehicles. The average distance of a bicycle trip in Los Angeles is four miles, and affected bicyclists would be expected to travel from neighborhoods within and outside of the study area, which include block groups of varying socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. This alternative could result

in safety impacts along the project corridor; however, the changes to the Class II bike lanes along Van Nuys Boulevard would be expected to affect all bicyclists within an approximate four-mile radius comparably, regardless of socioeconomic or demographic characteristics.

The Median-Running BRT Alternative would be expected to increase the capacity of the regional transportation system as a whole and to decrease emissions from passenger vehicles. According to the Air Quality Report, this alternative would not result in significant or adverse air quality impacts, including intersection areas that would experience greater congestion. Therefore, the Median-Running BRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on minority of low-income populations with respect to physical conditions.

4.4.3.4 Physical Division of Communities

Under this alternative, a fence would be installed along the length of the alignment to prevent illegal pedestrian crossings over the BRT guideway. However, fence openings would be included to maintain pedestrian access at intersection locations. The installation of barriers and fencing could be considered a physical intrusion to the communities and neighborhoods in the project study area. However, the Median-Running BRT Alternative would operate entirely within existing transportation corridors, and would not introduce physical barriers that would substantially affect access between the existing communities and neighborhoods in the project study area. Therefore, the Median-Running BRT Alternative would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to physical divisions.

4.4.4 Impact Conclusions

Under NEPA, the Median-Running BRT Alternative would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations.

There are no thresholds of significance in CEQA for environmental justice impacts. Therefore, no CEQA determination can be made for environmental justice impacts resulting from the Median-Running BRT Alternative.

4.5 Build Alternative 3 – Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative

4.5.1 Mobility and Access Impacts

4.5.1.1 Changes in Access to Public Transportation, Businesses, and Community Resources

Under the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative, connections to public transportation within the project study area and across the region would be strengthened by the low-floor LRT/tram line, in compliance with Metro's Complete Streets Policy. This alternative would permanently improve community mobility by providing a new means of access that does not rely solely on driving, and the additional transit service would enhance access to public transportation, businesses, and community resources in the project study area. By providing transit stations and facilities along San Fernando Road, this alternative would be consistent with the proposed City of San Fernando TOD Overlay Zone, which would create a transit-oriented district on San Fernando Road between the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station and the San Fernando Mall (on San Fernando Road between Kittridge Street and San Fernando Mission Boulevard).

According to Metro fare policies, additional fares would not be required for transfers from Metro Rapid and Local buses to the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative. Therefore, the low-floor LRT/tram service would not be cost-prohibitive and would comply with Metro fare policies. Public outreach would be conducted to ensure that community and neighborhood concerns, including fare policies, are addressed.

Under this alternative, the Metro Rapid 761 bus would no longer operate on Van Nuys Boulevard from north of San Fernando Road to Foothill Boulevard, which is a 1.5-mile segment of roadway within the project study area. This entire segment of roadway is adjacent to block groups containing minority and low-income populations. Of the block groups adjacent to this segment of roadway, 100 percent contain minority populations, and 100 percent contain low-income populations. Though the Rapid 761 bus would not operate along this segment of roadway, Metro Local Line 233 would continue to operate along the same segment of Van Nuys Boulevard after implementation of the alternative.

Local Line 233 operates Monday through Sunday, as well as holidays, at similar intervals and locations as Rapid 761. During early morning and late evening hours, Local Line 233 carries passengers along the 1.5-mile segment of Van Nuys Boulevard exclusively. Though Rapid 761 would no longer operate along the segment of roadway, public transportation would be available along the same roadway segment at similar intervals. Passengers using Local Line 233 would be able to use the same method of payment as with Rapid 761, fares between the two lines are comparable, and riders who qualify for Metro transportation subsidy programs would be able to utilize the subsidy regardless of which line they are using. Therefore, the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on, or fewer benefits for, minority or low-income populations with respect to availability of public transportation (reduction in access).

To implement the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative, restrictions on motor vehicle movements would be required to accommodate the low-floor LRT/tram facilities and eliminate vehicle conflicts. Restricted left-hand turns would be required within approximately one mile (in both the northbound and southbound directions) of Van Nuys Boulevard between Calvert Street and Hartland Street. Of the block groups adjacent to this segment of roadway, 100 percent contain minority populations, and 100 percent contain low-income populations.

Most left turns from San Fernando Road would be prohibited through the City of San Fernando where a median dedicated guideway for the low-floor LRT/tram vehicle is proposed between the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station and Wolfskill Street. In addition, to maintain the pedestrian-oriented retail character of San Fernando Road between San Fernando Mission Boulevard and Chatsworth Drive, through traffic would be directed off San Fernando Road on the block between Maclay Avenue and Brand Boulevard by means of turn restrictions. These changes on San Fernando Road would be expected to facilitate pedestrian access to local businesses, which could provide new customers or improved economic conditions. All existing turning movements would be maintained on San Fernando Road between Wolfskill Street and Van Nuys Boulevard where the low-floor LRT/tram would share travel lanes with motor vehicles.

Under the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative, curbside parking along the entire 9.2 miles (in the northbound and southbound directions) of the project corridor would be prohibited, which could affect vehicle access to businesses and community resources. Of the block groups adjacent to this segment of roadway, 100 percent contain minority populations, and 100 percent contain low-income populations.

According to the Transportation Impacts Report, the Van Nuys Boulevard corridor in the study area has a weekday parking demand of 481 on-street spaces and a Saturday peak parking demand of 589 on-street spaces. A parking analysis of adjacent locations was conducted; it was determined that the

available adjacent on-street parking and/or off-street parking areas can meet the weekday and weekend on-street parking demand for the area. In addition, public transit would be enhanced under the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative. The project could result in increased transit use, which could reduce the need for on-street parking. Therefore, the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on, or fewer benefits for, minority or low-income populations with respect to public transportation and reductions in parking (and any associated reduction in access).

4.5.1.2 Changes in Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

The Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would retain pedestrian and bicycle access along the project corridor, in compliance with Metro's Complete Streets Policy, although there would be minor changes to pedestrian and bicycle circulation to allow for the proposed improvements. Current pedestrian movements across roadways at existing signal-controlled crosswalks would be maintained; however, other pedestrian crossings on Van Nuys Boulevard at unsignalized intersections would be prohibited to avoid potential conflicts between pedestrians and low-floor LRT/tram vehicles.

In addition, on Van Nuys Boulevard from the Metro Orange Line to El Dorado Avenue in Pacoima, the existing 13-foot-wide sidewalks on each side of the roadway would be narrowed to 10 feet to accommodate the installation of the low-floor LRT/tram facilities, while providing two vehicle travel lanes in each direction. These modifications are not expected to substantially interfere with pedestrian access along the project corridor. In addition, all stations would be ADA compliant, and would be designed to meet accessibility requirements. Of the block groups adjacent to the project corridor, 100 percent contain minority populations, and 100 percent contain low-income populations.

The City's Bicycle Plan designates Van Nuys Boulevard as part of the "Backbone Bicycle Network", which plans an interconnected system facilitating mobility on key arterials.[51] Under the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative, the existing bike lanes on Van Nuys Boulevard north of Nordhoff Street would be removed. In addition, curbside lanes on Van Nuys Boulevard between the Metro Orange Line and San Fernando Road would typically be 11 feet wide, requiring motorists in the curbside lane to shift to the left to pass a bicyclist. These changes would conflict with the City's Bicycle Plan because designated bicycle lanes on Van Nuys Boulevard would not be feasible with the implementation of this alternative, affecting future bicycle access within the project study area. The City's General Plan designates Van Nuys Boulevard as a transit priority street, and the transit accommodations under this alternative would only be feasible with the removal of the bicycle lanes. In addition, as stated in Metro's Complete Streets Policy, a number of streets might not provide accommodations for all modes of transportation due to physical right-of-way constraints, which is the case for this alternative. The change from a Class II bike lane to a shared bicycle lane could result in safety impacts as discussed further in Section 4.5.3.

The City's Bicycle Plan includes planned bicycle lanes on Woodman Avenue (one-mile to the east of and parallel to Van Nuys Boulevard) between Ventura Boulevard and the Osborne Street and Nordhoff Street corridors. Bicycle lanes are also planned to connect the Osborne Street corridor to San Fernando Road. As detailed in the Transportation Impacts Report, mitigation for impacts to bicycle facilities will include the implementation of bicycle lanes on one or more parallel roadways. To use the planned bicycle lanes on Woodman Avenue, bicyclists would need to travel one mile to the east of Van Nuys Boulevard, which may be an inconvenience for some bicyclists depending on their final destination. However, bicycle accommodations would be provided at low-floor LRT/tram stations to provide options for passengers to leave their bicycles at the stations or to bring them onto the low-floor LRT/tram.

[51] City. March 2011. 2010 Bicycle Plan.

The average distance of a bicycle trip in Los Angeles is four miles, and affected bicyclists would be expected to travel from neighborhoods within and outside of the study area, which include block groups of varying socioeconomic and demographic characteristics.[52] The changes to the Class II bike lanes along Van Nuys Boulevard would be expected to affect all bicyclists within an approximate four-mile radius comparably, regardless of socioeconomic or demographic characteristics. Therefore, the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to pedestrian and bicycle access.

4.5.1.3 Changes to Circulation and Emergency Access

Existing mixed-flow lanes on Van Nuys Boulevard would be converted to a dedicated guideway for low-floor LRT/trams, which could result in additional roadway congestion from decreased roadway capacity for mixed-flow traffic and turning restrictions at unsignalized intersections.

As detailed in the Transportation Impacts Report, the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would be expected to improve transit service, result in an increase of approximately 19,685 daily transit boardings, and reduce traffic congestion, which could facilitate faster response times for emergency services. However; this alternative would result in adverse effects on 32 study intersections within the corridor, which could reduce access for emergency vehicle response or interfere with evacuation plans. Because the project study area is within a roadway corridor, emergency vehicles and travelers in the project study area would be similarly affected by increased traffic, regardless of trip origin. Traffic impacts are anticipated to affect all emergency calls or travelers within the project study area comparably. Therefore, the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to emergency access and circulation.

4.5.2 Social and Economic Impacts

4.5.2.1 Population, Business, and Employment Growth

The Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would not be expected to result in substantial changes to the existing population in the project study area. This alternative does not include the development of new housing or businesses that would directly induce population growth. The Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would generate additional permanent employment opportunities for low-floor LRT/tram operators, and maintenance and storage facility employees; however, a substantial employment base and residential population currently exist in the San Fernando Valley, and the employment opportunities would not be expected to result in substantial migration of additional residents to the project study area. Therefore, this alternative would not result in substantial population growth in communities and neighborhoods from an increase in employment opportunities.

The Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative could indirectly affect growth and development in the project study area by promoting planned development and redevelopment near station areas. The type of development expected around station areas would most likely be TOD, which is mixed-use residential and commercial development designed to maximize access to public transportation. The Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative may also attract businesses from other areas of the region to the immediate areas surrounding the proposed stations. However, because this alternative would be located in an urban area containing a limited number of vacant or underutilized parcels, this alternative would not be expected to change existing growth and development patterns substantially. The Low-Floor

[52] City. March 2011. 2010 Bicycle Plan.

LRT/Tram Alternative is also intended to accommodate future population growth that has already been projected in the region, and any development that could result around station areas is anticipated to be consistent with current growth projections.

Under the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative, the enhanced transit service could stimulate the local economy by facilitating access to local businesses. In addition, business viability could improve because the increased pedestrian traffic near the proposed stations could provide new customers. The proposed stations would be spaced relatively evenly throughout the project corridor, and would have the potential to provide improved economic conditions to all businesses located near station areas comparably. Therefore, the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on, or fewer benefits for, minority or low-income populations with respect to improved economic conditions. More information on economic impacts is provided in the Economic and Fiscal Impacts Report.

4.5.2.2 Displacement of Housing and People

To assess the types of potential displacement from the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative, conceptual engineering plans for the proposed alignment, station options, and rights-of-way were reviewed. When an acquisition is required, it typically results in either a partial or full take of a parcel. A partial take would result if a portion of the parcel is required to accommodate the project. A full take would result if either: (1) the majority of the property is required for the horizontal alignment due to insufficient right-of-way, or the need to construct storage or maintenance facilities, and (2) a severe loss of access reduces the useful operation of the property.

The majority of the Low-Floor LRT/Tram alignment would be constructed in the median of an existing roadway and would not require the displacement of businesses or residences along the majority of the project corridor. As shown in Figure 4-1 and as detailed in the Real Estate and Acquisition Report, some areas of the project alignment would require commercial property acquisitions to accommodate the low-floor LRT/tram facilities, including:

- At Van Nuys Boulevard and Bessemer Street,
- At the Van Nuys/San Fernando Station at Van Nuys Boulevard and El Dorado Avenue,
- At San Fernando Road and Pinney Street, and
- At the Paxton Station at San Fernando Road and Weidner Street.

Partial property acquisitions would also be required for TPSSs; these acquisitions would be located near potential stations or at the MSF site, primarily using vacant lots, parking lots, and commercial properties.

In addition to the acquisitions required to construct the track and support facilities, the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would also require full right-of-way acquisitions for the construction of the MSF. The location of the proposed low-floor LRT/tram MSF has not been finalized; however, three potential locations have been selected for consideration along Van Nuys Boulevard at Aetna Street (MSF Option A), Keswick Street (MSF Option B), and Arminta Street (MSF Option C).

Figure 4-1: Build Alternative 3 – Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative Acquisitions (Index Map)

Source: ICF International, 2014.

Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative with MSF Option A

The Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative alignment with MSF Option A would require the full or partial acquisition of 90 parcels. The majority of the acquisitions would be from light manufacturing and commercial properties that are occupied by automobile repair and supply businesses and other general commercial retail uses. Where located in low-income or minority neighborhoods, these businesses could be supported by owners, workers, or customers from low-income or minority block groups that could be affected by the economic changes or job losses associated with these displacements. However, within the larger surrounding urban area, it is anticipated that there would be enough available properties to accommodate most, if not all, of the displaced businesses.

Three residentially zoned parcels would be fully acquired under MSF Option A. While these parcels are zoned for residential use, they are currently developed with a single parking lot serving an adjacent warehouse. According to the Real Estate and Acquisition Report, one parcel (2241-025-014) zoned for industrial use is developed with approximately four housing units. Displacement of these four units would be required under MSF Option A. According to the Real Estate and Acquisition Report, relocation assistance for residents may not be required because these units are rental housing and would likely be vacated in advance of right-of-way acquisitions. It is anticipated that there would be sufficient available properties to accommodate the relocation of these residents, and construction of additional residential units would not be required.

All of the census block groups in the project study area contain minority populations, and 93.4 percent of the census block groups in the project study area contain low-income populations. In addition, of the 90 acquisitions required for the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative with MSF Option A, the minority population of the affected area is approximately 70 percent; therefore, the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative with MSF Option A would result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations with respect to displacements. Mitigation measures have been developed to address these effects and are discussed further in Chapter 5.

Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative with MSF Option B

The Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative alignment with MSF Option B would require the full or partial acquisition of 65 parcels. The majority of the acquisitions would be from light manufacturing and commercial properties, which contain businesses oriented toward automobile repair and supplies or raw materials supply and manufacturing. No residential acquisitions would be required for MSF Option B.

While this option would require fewer acquisitions than Option A, there may not be enough available real estate immediately adjacent to the businesses' existing locations to accommodate all of the displaced businesses. In particular, it may be difficult to find comparable properties for larger industrial facilities near their existing locations. For businesses located in low-income or minority neighborhoods, displacement could affect owners, workers, or customers from low-income or minority populations through economic changes or job losses. However, within the larger surrounding urban area, it is anticipated that there would be enough available properties to accommodate most, if not all, of the displaced businesses.

All of the census block groups in the project study area contain minority populations, and 93.4 percent of the census block groups in the project study area contain low-income populations. In addition, of the 65 total acquisitions required for the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative with MSF Option B, the minority population of the affected area is approximately 89 percent; therefore, the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative with MSF Option B would result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations with respect to displacements.

Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative with MSF Option C

The Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative alignment with MSF Option C would require the full or partial acquisition of 70 parcels. As with Option B, a majority acquisitions would be from light manufacturing and commercial properties oriented toward automobile repair and raw materials supply and manufacturing. No acquisitions from residential properties would be required for MSF Option C.

While this option would require fewer acquisitions than Option A, there may not be enough available real estate immediately adjacent to the businesses' existing locations to accommodate all of the displaced businesses. In particular, it may be difficult to find comparable properties for larger industrial facilities near their existing locations. For businesses located in low-income or minority neighborhoods, displacement could affect owners, workers, or customers from low-income or minority populations through economic changes or job losses. However, within the larger surrounding urban area, it is anticipated that there would be enough available properties to accommodate most, if not all, of the displaced businesses.

All of the census block groups in the project study area contain minority populations, and 93.4 percent of the census block groups in the project study area contain low-income populations. In addition, of the 70 total acquisitions required for the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative with MSF Option C, the minority population of the affected area is approximately 97 percent; therefore, the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative with MSF Option C would result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations with respect to displacements. Mitigation measures have been developed to address these effects and are discussed further in Chapter 5.

Conclusions

For businesses located in low-income or minority neighborhoods, displacement could affect owners, workers, or customers from low-income or minority populations through economic changes, neighborhood vitality, or job losses. Local business viability may be affected by the relocations as customers would need to access new businesses, or old businesses at new locations. The removal of some businesses from their local customer base may lead to the disruption and termination of the businesses, resulting in localized job losses. Coordination would be conducted with the appropriate jurisdictions regarding business relocations so that job losses are minimized to the extent feasible. In addition, joint-use agreements (allowing concurrent transportation and business uses) would be considered for land acquisitions required for stations and construction staging to avoid the displacement of businesses and potential job losses in these areas to the extent feasible. According to the Real Estate and Acquisitions Report, it is anticipated that most jobs at relocated businesses would be retained, and there would be no net loss of jobs overall. No adverse effects from job loss are anticipated.

Public controversy among community members and business owners could result from business displacements; therefore, early and ongoing public outreach would be conducted to discuss potential concerns and communicate with property owners and community members.

The Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations with respect to displacements. Each business displaced by the Low-Floor Tram/LRT Alternative would be given advance written notice and would be informed of their eligibility for relocation assistance and payments under the Uniform Act, described in Section 2.1.1 (Federal Regulations). Mitigation measures have been developed to address these effects and are discussed further in Chapter 5.

4.5.2.3 Changes in Community Cohesion and Interaction

Business displacements required for the low-floor LRT/tram alignment and MSF site could result in substantial changes to local neighborhood character, and potentially the social fabric of the local community. Social fabric is defined as cohesive characteristics of an area usually influenced by factors such as wealth, ethnic composition, level of education, and rate of employment. Neighborhood residents or visitors may be accustomed to accessing businesses in their existing locations, and the displacement of those businesses could be psychologically or socially disruptive, and could affect professional and social interactions. However, if relocation sites are available within proximity to the existing business sites, disruptions to professional and social interactions may be temporary because residents would likely become accustomed to accessing the displaced businesses at their new locations.

Removing businesses from their local customer base could lead to the disruption and termination of the businesses, resulting in localized job losses. Public controversy among community members and business owners could result from business displacements; therefore, early and ongoing public outreach would be conducted to discuss potential concerns and communicate with property owners and community members.

By providing additional transit services in the region, the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would increase connectivity within the eastern San Fernando Valley area, and would result in more unified communities. While displacements could result in changes to local neighborhood character, this alternative would be expected to enhance long-term community cohesion and interaction. Because the proposed stations would be spaced relatively evenly, connectivity would be improved throughout the project corridor. In addition, the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would not result in the denial of, reduction in, or substantial delay in the receipt of benefits of USDOT programs, policies, or activities for minority or low-income populations. Therefore, the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on, or fewer benefits for, minority or low-income populations with respect to improved community cohesion.

4.5.2.4 Changes in Quality of Life or Social Values

Existing mixed-flow lanes on Van Nuys Boulevard would be converted to a dedicated guideway for low-floor LRT/trams, which could result in additional roadway congestion from decreased roadway capacity for mixed-flow traffic. However, when long-term operational benefits are considered for the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative, overall long-term improvements to quality of life would be expected for the communities and neighborhoods in the project study area through the availability of new transit access to businesses and between communities. The Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would permanently improve community mobility by providing a new transportation option other than driving. Connections to other neighborhoods within the project study area and across the region would be improved by the low-floor LRT/tram line. Business viability would also be expected to improve because increased pedestrian traffic near the proposed stations could provide new customers. Therefore, this alternative would be expected to result in enhanced connectivity and business viability for the communities and neighborhoods in the project study area.

The proposed stations would be spaced relatively evenly throughout the project corridor and would improve access and business viability comparably. Therefore, the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on, or fewer benefits for, minority or low-income populations with respect to improved quality of life.

4.5.3 Physical Impacts

4.5.3.1 Changes in Land Use Patterns

The Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would not be expected to result in substantial changes in land use patterns. While there would be some modifications to the project corridor (e.g., changes in bicycle lanes and turning movements, and the addition of an OCS, TPSSs, and MSF), the project corridor is an existing transportation route in an urbanized area with existing bus transit service, and the proposed low-floor LRT/tram operations would be consistent with existing transportation uses.

The Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative could indirectly affect development in the project study area by focusing growth in housing, employment, and commercial development within walking distance of the proposed transit stations along the project corridor. However, because this alternative would be located in an urban area containing a limited number of vacant or underutilized parcels, this alternative would not be expected to change existing growth and development patterns substantially. The proposed stations would be spaced evenly throughout the project corridor, and would affect land use comparably. Therefore, the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to land use.

4.5.3.2 Changes in Visual Character

The project corridor is an existing transportation route in an urbanized area with existing bus transit service, and the proposed low-floor LRT/tram operations would be consistent with existing transportation uses. New stations in the median and along the sides of the roadway would present new vertical features in the landscape that could affect existing visual character and quality by limiting views directly adjacent to, or within, the stations. New stations and sidewalk widening could also result in a more cohesive landscape design along the corridor with canopies, additional street trees, and benches that would provide a more unified appearance in station areas. This alternative would require several elements to support vehicle operations, including median fences, an OCS, TPSSs, signaling, and an MSF.

The median fences and OCS, in particular, would introduce additional vertical elements that could substantially change the existing visual character and quality within the project corridor, especially for residents, pedestrians, and bicyclists, who would be expected to have high viewer sensitivity to their surroundings. The Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would have substantial adverse effects on scenic views, scenic resources, and visual character in several areas within the project corridor, and would have minor adverse effects on visual quality in several areas within the project corridor. This alternative would also result in minor beneficial impacts on visual quality related to the new stations. Changes in visual character from the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would be expected to be substantial in areas where sensitive viewers are located, and would require consideration during community outreach efforts.

These proposed elements would be spaced relatively evenly throughout the project corridor, and would result in comparative changes to visual character. In addition, individuals travelling form outside the project study area would also be affected by these visual impacts. Therefore, the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to visual character. Potential impacts on visual character from the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative are also addressed in more detail in the Visual and Aesthetics Impacts Report.

4.5.3.3 Safety Impacts and Other Physical Intrusions

The Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would not be expected to introduce substantial physical intrusions (e.g., noise, dust, or odors) to the project corridor. While there would be some modifications to the project corridor (e.g., changes in bicycle lanes and turning movements, the addition of an OCS and TPSSs, median fences, and an MSF site), the project corridor is an existing transportation route in an urbanized area with existing bus transit service, and the proposed low-floor LRT/tram operations would be consistent with existing transportation uses. No geological, hazardous materials, water quality, public health, or community facility impacts are anticipated. The Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would not require permanent street closures or result in reductions in community cohesion, reductions in access, or increased exclusion.

The development of new low-floor LRT/tram facilities in the project corridor could result in security concerns because passengers may congregate at station areas, which could attract criminals and increase potential for assault, robbery, or terrorist attacks. These concerns would be addressed both through design considerations (e.g., security cameras in station areas) and by coordinating with law enforcement personnel, including the Los Angeles Police Department's Foothill Community Police Station and the Van Nuys Community Police Station, the City of San Fernando Police Department, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Transit Services Bureau, and the Transportation Security Administration. In addition, potential low-floor LRT/tram improvements under this alternative would be subject to Metro's System Safety Program Plan, which is implemented to ensure worker and passenger safety, reduce crime, and allow for an adequate emergency response. A complete Threat and Vulnerability Assessment in compliance with FTA regulations would also be conducted for the alternative. Therefore, the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative is not expected to result in a substantial increase in security risks in the project study area.

The low-floor LRT/tram would run in mixed-flow lanes along San Fernando Road just north of Wolfskill Street, and there would continue to be the potential for conflicts between street traffic and low-floor LRT/tram operations. However, potential low-floor LRT/tram improvements under this alternative would be subject to Metro's System Safety Program Plan. In addition, because existing bus service in the corridor, which would be replaced by the low-floor LRT/tram, operates in mixed-flow traffic, this alternative would not be expected to result in a substantial increase in accidents or collisions between low-floor LRT/trams and other motor vehicles.

Low-floor LRT/tram vehicles would not exceed the posted adjacent roadway speed limit, which is typically 35 mph. In addition, Metro would prepare grade crossing applications in coordination with local public agencies to further increase safety and reduce the potential for conflicts, accidents, and collisions.

The Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative could result in several pedestrian safety concerns. Median stations could result in a potential for collisions between pedestrians and low-floor LRT/tram vehicles. In addition, the introduction of low-floor LRT/tram vehicles into mixed-flow traffic lanes on San Fernando Road, just north of Wolfskill Street, would result in a potential for similar collisions at intersection pedestrian crossings. Illegal crossings by pedestrians would also result in potential safety hazards.Pedestrian traffic control and channelization techniques would be used to control pedestrian movements at intersections and encourage the use of designated pedestrian crossings. Metro would prepare grade crossing applications in coordination with local public agencies to further increase safety and reduce the potential for conflicts, accidents, and collisions.

While the project would comply with Metro design guidelines to ensure pedestrian, motorist, and bicyclist safety, the removal of Class II bike lanes and replacement with shared bike lanes would increase the potential for conflicts between bicyclists and motor vehicles, which could result in

impacts on safety within the communities and neighborhoods in the project study area. The risk of bicycle collisions would affect all bicyclists within an approximate four-mile radius comparably, regardless of socioeconomic or demographic characteristics.

The Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would be expected to increase the capacity of the regional transportation system as a whole and to decrease pollutant emissions from passenger vehicles. According to the Air Quality Report, this alternative would not result in significant or adverse air quality impacts, including intersection areas that would experience greater congestion. Therefore, the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to physical conditions.

4.5.3.4 Physical Division of Communities

Under this alternative, all vehicle and pedestrian movements at unsignalized intersections would be blocked by a median fence. The installation of fencing could be considered a physical intrusion in the communities and neighborhoods in the project study area. However, the low-floor LRT/tram would operate almost entirely within an existing transportation corridor, and crossings at most signalized intersections would be maintained. This alternative would not introduce physical barriers that would substantially affect access between the existing communities and neighborhoods in the project study area. Therefore, the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to physical divisions.

4.5.4 Impact Conclusions

Under NEPA, the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative would result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations with respect to displacements. Mitigation measures are included in Chapter 5 to reduce or minimize these potentially substantial adverse effects, where feasible. After implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, disproportionately high and adverse effects would not be substantial.

There are no thresholds of significance in CEQA for environmental justice impacts. Therefore, no CEQA determination can be made for environmental justice impacts resulting from the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative.

4.6 Build Alternative 4 – Light Rail Transit Alternative

4.6.1 Mobility and Access Impacts

4.6.1.1 Changes in Access to Public Transportation, Businesses, and Community Resources

Under the LRT Alternative, connections to public transportation within the project study area and across the region would be strengthened by the light rail line, in compliance with Metro's Complete Streets Policy. This alternative would permanently improve community mobility by providing a new means of access that does not rely solely on driving, and the additional transit service would enhance access to public transportation, businesses, and community resources in the project study area. According to Metro fare policies, additional fares would not be required for transfers from Metro Rapid and Local buses to the LRT Alternative. Therefore, the light rail service would not be cost-

prohibitive and would comply with Metro fare policies. Public outreach would be conducted to ensure that community and neighborhood concerns, including fare policies, are addressed. Therefore, the LRT would be available to all communities throughout the project study area, regardless of their socioeconomic or demographic characteristics.

Under this alternative, the Metro Rapid 761 bus would no longer operate on Van Nuys Boulevard from north of San Fernando Road to Foothill Boulevard, which is a 1.5-mile segment of roadway within the project study area. This entire segment of roadway is adjacent to block groups containing minority and low-income populations. Of the block groups adjacent to this segment of roadway, 100 percent contain minority populations, and 100 percent contain low-income populations. Though the Rapid 761 bus would not operate along this segment of roadway, Metro Local Line 233 would continue to operate along the same segment of Van Nuys Boulevard after implementation of the alternative.

Local Line 233 operates Monday through Sunday, as well as holidays, at similar intervals and locations as Rapid 761. During early morning and late evening hours, Local Line 233 carries passengers along the 1.5-mile segment of Van Nuys Boulevard exclusively. Though Rapid 761 would no longer operate along the segment of roadway, public transportation would be available along the same roadway segment at similar intervals. Passengers using Local Line 233 would be able to use the same method of payment as with Rapid 761, fares between the two lines are comparable, and riders who qualify for Metro transportation subsidy programs would be able to utilize the subsidy regardless of which line they are using. Therefore, the LRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on, or fewer benefits for minority or low-income populations with respect to availability of public transportation (reduction in access).

To implement the LRT Alternative, restrictions on motor vehicle movements would be required to accommodate the light rail facilities and eliminate vehicle conflicts. Restricted left-hand turns would be required within approximately one mile (in both the northbound and southbound directions) of Van Nuys Boulevard between Calvert Street and Hartland Street. Of the block groups adjacent to this segment of roadway, 100 percent contain minority populations, and 100 percent contain low-income populations.

Under the LRT Alternative, curbside parking along the entire 9.2 miles (in the northbound and southbound directions) of the project corridor would be prohibited, which could affect vehicle access to businesses and community resources. Of the block groups adjacent to this segment of roadway, 100 percent contain minority populations, and 100 percent contain low-income populations.

According to the Transportation Impacts Report, the Van Nuys Boulevard corridor in the study area has a weekday parking demand of 481 on-street spaces and a Saturday peak parking demand of 589 on-street spaces. A parking analysis of adjacent locations was conducted; it was determined that the available adjacent on-street parking and/or off-street parking areas can meet the weekday and weekend on-street parking demand for the area. In addition, public transit would be enhanced under the LRT Alternative. The project could result in increased transit use, which could reduce the need for on-street parking. In addition, under this alternative, vehicle movements and parking would be maintained along San Fernando Road and Truman Street where the LRT alignment would run along the Metro-owned railroad right-of-way. Therefore, the LRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on, or fewer benefits for, minority or low-income populations with respect to public transportation and reductions in parking (and any associated reduction in access).

4.6.1.2 Changes in Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

The LRT Alternative would retain pedestrian and bicycle access along the project corridor, in compliance with Metro's Complete Streets Policy, although there would be minor changes to pedestrian and bicycle circulation to allow for the proposed improvements. Current pedestrian movements across roadways at existing signal-controlled crosswalks would be maintained; however, other pedestrian crossings on Van Nuys Boulevard at unsignalized intersections would be prohibited to avoid potential conflicts between pedestrians and light rail vehicles. In addition, at the Van Nuys Civic Center from the Metro Orange Line to the planned subway portal north of Hartland Street, the existing 13-foot-wide sidewalks on each side of the roadway would be narrowed to 10 feet to accommodate the installation of the light rail facilities, while providing two vehicle travel lanes in each direction. Sidewalks would also be narrowed along Van Nuys Boulevard north of the subway portal near Rayen Street in Panorama City, where the LRT vehicles would resume a surface alignment in the roadway median and proceed to El Dorado Avenue in Pacoima.

These modifications to pedestrian movements and sidewalk widths would not be expected to substantially interfere with pedestrian access along the project corridor. In addition, all stations would be ADA compliant and would be designed to meet accessibility requirements. A pedestrian bridge would also be provided at the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station from the LRT platform to the parking lot. Of the block groups adjacent to the project corridor, 100 percent contain minority populations, and 100 percent contain low-income populations.

The City's Bicycle Plan designates Van Nuys Boulevard as part of the "Backbone Bicycle Network", which plans an interconnected system facilitating mobility on key arterials.[53] Under the LRT Alternative, the existing Class II bike lanes on Van Nuys Boulevard north of Nordhoff Street would be removed. In addition, curbside lanes on Van Nuys Boulevard between the Metro Orange Line and San Fernando Road would typically be 11 feet wide, requiring motorists in the curbside lane to shift to the left to pass a bicyclist. These changes would conflict with the City's Bicycle Plan because designated bicycle lanes on Van Nuys Boulevard would not be feasible with the implementation of this alternative, affecting future bicycle access within the project study area. The City's General Plan designates Van Nuys Boulevard as a transit priority street, and the transit accommodations under this alternative would only be feasible with the removal of the bicycle lanes. In addition, as stated in Metro's Complete Streets Policy, a number of streets might not provide accommodations for all modes of transportation due to physical right-of-way constraints, which is the case for this alternative. The change from a Class II bike lane to a shared bicycle lane could result in safety impacts as discussed further in Section 4.6.3.

The bicycle path, also known as the Mission City Trail located in the City of San Fernando along the Metro-owned railroad right-of-way, would be maintained under this alternative because the right-of-way is sufficiently wide enough to allow the bicycle path to remain alongside a pair of LRT tracks and relocated tracks for Metrolink and Union Pacific trains. At the point where the LRT Alternative crosses the bicycle path, near the intersection of Pinney Street and San Fernando Road, a signalized grade crossing would be provided. The bike path would be shifted from the east side of the railroad alignment to the west side of the tracks through the City of San Fernando to reduce the number of bike-rail crossings, reduce the amount of right-of-way acquisitions, and provide a better alignment of the railroad and LRT tracks.

[53] City. March 2011. 2010 Bicycle Plan.

The City's Bicycle Plan includes planned bicycle lanes on Woodman Avenue (one-mile to the east of and parallel to Van Nuys Boulevard) between Ventura Boulevard and the Osborne Street and Nordhoff Street corridors. Bicycle lanes are also planned to connect the Osborne Street corridor to San Fernando Road. As detailed in the Transportation Impacts Report, mitigation for impacts to bicycle facilities will include the implementation of bicycle lanes on one or more of these parallel roadways. To use the planned bicycle lanes on Woodman Avenue, bicyclists would need to travel one mile to the east of Van Nuys Boulevard, which may be an inconvenience for some bicyclists depending on their final destination. However, bicycle accommodations would be provided at light rail stations to provide options for passengers to leave their bicycles at the stations or to bring them onto the light rail vehicles.

The average distance of a bicycle trip in Los Angeles is four miles, and affected bicyclists would be expected to travel from several neighborhoods within and outside of the study area, which include block groups of varying socioeconomic and demographic characteristics[54]. The changes to the Class II bike lanes along Van Nuys Boulevard would be expected to affect all bicyclists within an approximate four-mile radius comparably, regardless of socioeconomic or demographic characteristics. Therefore, the LRT Alternative would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to pedestrian and bicycle access.

4.6.1.3 Changes to Circulation and Emergency Access

Existing mixed-flow lanes on Van Nuys Boulevard would be converted to a dedicated guideway for light rail vehicles and could result in additional roadway congestion from decreased roadway capacity for mixed-flow traffic and turning restrictions at unsignalized intersections.

As detailed in the Transportation Impacts Report, the LRT Alternative would be expected to improve transit service, result in an increase of approximately 32,800 daily transit boardings, and reduce traffic congestion, which could facilitate faster response times for emergency services. However, this alternative would result in adverse effects on 20 study intersections within the corridor, which could reduce access for emergency vehicle response or interfere with evacuation plans. Because the project study area is within a roadway corridor, emergency vehicles and travelers in the project study area would be similarly affected by increased traffic, regardless of trip origin. Traffic impacts are anticipated to affect all emergency calls or travelers within the project study area comparably. Therefore, the LRT Alternative would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to emergency access and circulation.

4.6.2 Social and Economic Impacts

4.6.2.1 Population, Business, and Employment Growth

The LRT Alternative would not be expected to result in substantial changes to the existing population in the project study area. This alternative does not include the development of new housing or businesses that would directly induce population growth. The LRT Alternative would generate additional permanent employment opportunities for light rail operators, and maintenance and storage facility employees; however, a substantial employment base and residential population currently exist in the San Fernando Valley, and the employment opportunities would not be expected to result in substantial migration of additional residents to the project study area. Therefore, this

[54] City. March 2011. 2010 Bicycle Plan.

alternative would not induce substantial population growth in communities and neighborhoods from an increase in employment opportunities.

The LRT Alternative could indirectly affect growth and development in the project study area by promoting planned development and redevelopment near station areas. The type of development expected around station areas would most likely be TOD, which is mixed-use residential and commercial development designed to maximize access to public transportation. The LRT Alternative may also attract businesses from other areas of the region to the immediate areas surrounding the proposed stations. However, because this alternative would be located in an urban area containing a limited number of vacant or underutilized parcels, this alternative would not be expected to change existing growth and development patterns substantially. The LRT Alternative is also intended to accommodate future population growth that has already been projected in the region, and any development that could result around station areas is anticipated to be consistent with current growth projections.

Under the LRT Alternative, the enhanced transit service could stimulate the local economy by facilitating access to local businesses. In addition, business viability could improve because the increased pedestrian traffic near the proposed stations would provide new potential customers. The proposed stations would be spaced relatively evenly throughout the project corridor, and would have the potential to provide improved economic conditions to all businesses located near station areas comparably. Therefore, the LRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on, or fewer benefits for, minority or low-income populations with respect to improved economic conditions. More information on economic impacts is provided in the Economic and Fiscal Impacts Report.

4.6.2.2 Displacement of Housing and People

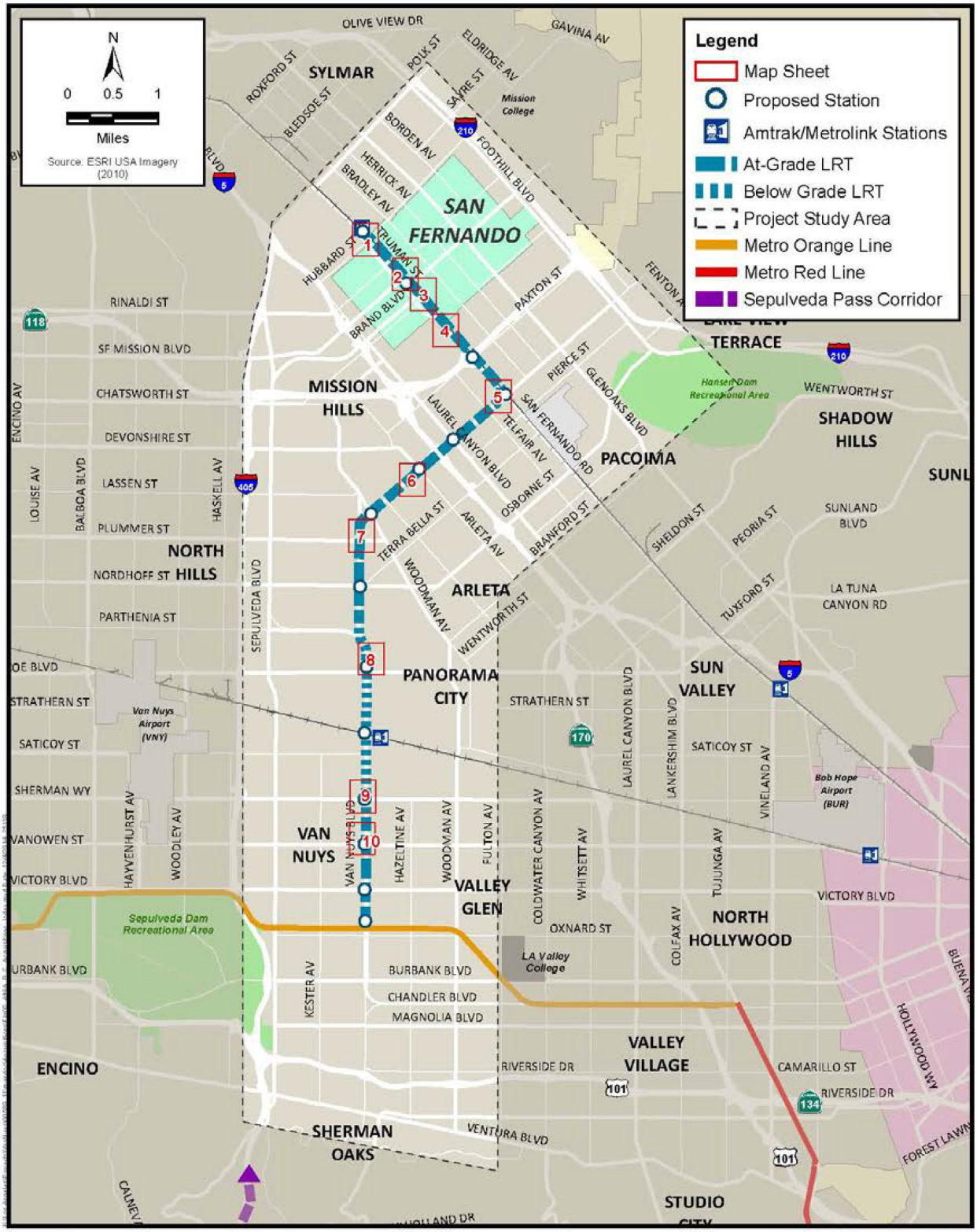
To assess the types of potential displacement from the LRT Alternative, conceptual engineering plans for the proposed alignment, station options, and rights-of-way were reviewed. When an acquisition is required, it typically results in either a partial or full take of a parcel. A partial take would result if a portion of the parcel is required to accommodate the project. A full take would result if either: (1) the majority of the property is required for the horizontal alignment due to insufficient right-of-way, or the need to construct storage or maintenance facilities, and (2) a severe loss of access reduces the useful operation of the property.

An easement is the right to use another person's land for a stated purpose. An easement can involve a general or specific portion of the property and can be either at the surface level or beneath the property. Easements can be temporary (for example, during construction) or permanent. Temporary construction easements required for the project are discussed further in Section 4.7. Permanent underground easements are required due to the need for tunneling and subway operations. The LRT Alternative would require permanent underground easements from properties located above subway tunnels, within a 10-foot vertical buffer from the exterior tunnel wall.

The majority of the LRT alignment would be constructed in the median of an existing roadway, and would not require the displacement of businesses or residences along most of the project corridor. As shown in Figure 4-2 and as detailed in the Real Estate and Acquisition Report, some areas of the project alignment would require commercial/industrial property acquisitions to accommodate the light rail facilities, including:

- At the Sherman Way Station at Van Nuys Boulevard and Sherman Way,
- At the Keswick Street Station at Van Nuys Boulevard and Keswick Street,
- At the Roscoe Boulevard Station at Van Nuys Boulevard and Roscoe Boulevard,

Figure 4-2: Build Alternative 4 – LRT Alternative Acquisitions (Index Map)



Source: ICF International, 2014.

- At the Pacoima Station at Van Nuys Boulevard and El Dorado Avenue,
- At San Fernando Road and Pinney Street,
- Along the Metro-owned railroad right-of-way between Maclay Avenue and Workman Street, and
- Between Lazard Street and the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station.

Partial property acquisitions would also be required at the Vanowen Station at Van Nuys Boulevard and Hartland Street, and along the Metro-owned railroad right-of-way between Wolfskill Street and Maclay Avenue. In addition, partial property acquisitions would be required for TPSSs; these acquisitions would be located near potential stations or at the MSF site, primarily using vacant lots, parking lots, and commercial properties.

Three residential parcels would be affected by the LRT Alternative; the properties are located along Hartland Street. The properties would be acquired to accommodate a TPSS facility. While these parcels are zoned and designated for residential use, they appear to be vacant lots; therefore, no displacement or relocation of residents would be required under the LRT Alternative. All other acquisitions associated with the LRT Alternative consist of commercial and/or light industrial land uses.

The LRT Alternative would also require full right-of-way acquisitions of light industrial, manufacturing, and commercial properties for the construction of the MSF and connections to the MSF from the LRT alignment. The location of the proposed low-floor LRT/tram MSF has not been finalized; however, three potential locations have been selected for consideration along Van Nuys Boulevard at Aetna Street (MSF Option A), Keswick Street (MSF Option B), and Arminta Street (MSF Option C).

LRT Alternative with MSF Option A

The LRT Alternative with MSF Option A would require full or partial acquisition of 120 parcels. A majority of the acquisitions would be from light manufacturing and commercial properties, which contain businesses oriented toward automobile repair and supplies and other general commercial retail uses. Where located in low-income or minority neighborhoods, these businesses could be supported by owners, workers, or customers from low-income or minority block groups that could be affected by the economic changes or job losses associated with these displacements. However, within the larger surrounding urban area, it is anticipated that there would be enough available properties to accommodate most, if not all, of the displaced businesses.

Three residentially zoned parcels would also be fully acquired under MSF Option A. While these parcels are zoned for residential use, they are currently developed with a single parking lot serving an adjacent warehouse. According to the Real Estate and Acquisition Report, one parcel (2241-025-014) zoned for industrial use is developed with approximately four housing units. Displacement of these four units would be required under MSF Option A. According to the Real Estate and Acquisition Report, relocation assistance for residents may not be required because these units are rental housing and would likely be vacated in advance of right-of-way acquisitions. It is anticipated that there would be sufficient available properties to accommodate the relocation of these residents, and construction of additional residential units would not be required.

All of the census block groups in the project study area contain minority populations, and 93.4 percent of the census block groups in the project study area contain low-income populations. In addition, of the 120 total acquisitions required for the LRT Alternative with MSF Option A, the minority population of the affected area is approximately 70 percent; therefore, the LRT Alternative

with MSF Option A would result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations with respect to displacements. Mitigation measures have been developed to address these effects and are discussed further in Chapter 5.

LRT Alternative with MSF Option B

The LRT Alternative alignment with MSF Option B would require full or partial acquisition of 110 parcels. The majority of the acquisitions would be from light manufacturing and commercial properties that are occupied by automobile repair and supply businesses, raw materials supply, or manufacturing. No acquisitions from residential properties would be required for MSF Option B.

While this option would require fewer acquisitions than Option A, there may not be enough available real estate immediately adjacent to the businesses' existing locations to accommodate all of the displaced businesses. In particular, it may be difficult to find comparable properties for larger industrial facilities near their existing locations. For businesses located in low-income or minority neighborhoods, displacement could affect owners, workers, or customers from low-income or minority populations through economic changes or job losses. However, within the larger surrounding urban area, it is anticipated that there would be enough available properties to accommodate most, if not all, of the displaced businesses.

All of the census block groups in the project study area contain minority populations, and 93.4 percent of the census block groups in the project study area contain low-income populations. In addition, of the 110 total acquisitions required for the LRT Alternative with MSF Option B, the minority population of the affected area is approximately 89 percent; therefore, the LRT Alternative with MSF Option B would result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations with respect to displacements. Mitigation measures have been developed to address these effects and are discussed further in Chapter 5.

LRT Alternative with MSF Option C

The LRT Alternative alignment with MSF Option C would require full or partial acquisition of 117 parcels. The majority of the acquisitions would be from light manufacturing and commercial properties that are occupied by automobile repair and supply businesses, raw materials supply, or manufacturing. No acquisitions from residential properties would be required for MSF Option C.

While this option would require fewer acquisitions than Option A, there may not be enough available real estate immediately adjacent to the businesses' existing locations to accommodate all of the displaced businesses. In particular, it may be difficult to find comparable properties for larger industrial facilities near their existing locations. For businesses located in low-income or minority neighborhoods, displacement could affect owners, workers, or customers from low-income or minority populations through economic changes or job losses. However, within the larger surrounding urban area, it is anticipated that there would be enough available properties to accommodate most, if not all, of the displaced businesses.

While acquisitions would be fewer than proposed under Option A, there may not be enough available real estate immediately adjacent to the businesses' existing locations to accommodate all of the displaced businesses. The larger industrial facilities, in particular, may have difficulty finding comparable properties near their existing locations. Where located in low-income or minority neighborhoods, these businesses could be supported by owners, workers, or customers from low-income or minority block groups that could be affected by the economic changes or job losses associated with these displacements. However, within the larger surrounding urban area, it is anticipated that there would be enough available properties to accommodate most, if not all, of the displaced businesses.

All of the census block groups in the project study area contain minority populations, and 93.4 percent of the census block groups in the project study area contain low-income populations. In addition, of the 117 total acquisitions required for the LRT Alternative with MSF Option C, the minority population of the affected area is approximately 97 percent; therefore, the LRT Alternative with MSF Option C would result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations with respect to displacements. Mitigation measures have been developed to address these effects and are discussed further in Chapter 5.

Conclusions

If business displacements are required in low-income or minority neighborhoods, owners, workers, or customers from low-income or minority populations could be affected by the economic changes, neighborhood vitality, or job losses associated with these displacements. Because it is anticipated that most displaced businesses would be relocated to nearby properties, the LRT Alternative would not be expected to result in substantial changes to the local economic conditions in the project study area by the displacements. Local business viability may be affected by the relocations as customers would need to access new businesses, or old businesses at their new locations.

The removal of some businesses from their local customer base may lead to the disruption and termination of the businesses, resulting in localized job losses. Coordination would be conducted with the appropriate jurisdictions regarding business relocations so that job losses are minimized to the extent feasible. In addition, joint-use agreements (allowing concurrent transportation and business uses) would be considered for land acquisitions required for stations and construction staging to avoid the displacement of businesses and potential job losses in these areas to the extent feasible. According to the Real Estate and Acquisitions Report, for businesses that must be relocated, it is anticipated that most of the jobs would be retained and there would be no net loss of jobs overall. No adverse effects from job loss are anticipated.

Public controversy among community members and business owners could result from business displacements; therefore, early and ongoing public outreach would be conducted to discuss potential concerns and communicate with property owners and community members.

The LRT Alternative would result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations with respect to displacements. Each business displaced by the LRT Alternative would be given advance written notice and would be informed of their eligibility for relocation assistance and payments under the Uniform Act, described in Section 2.1.1 (Federal Regulations). Mitigation measures have been developed to address these effects and are discussed further in Chapter 5.

4.6.2.3 Changes in Community Cohesion and Interaction

Business displacements required for the LRT alignment and MSF site could result in substantial changes to local neighborhood character, and potentially the social fabric of the local community. Neighborhood residents or visitors may be accustomed to accessing businesses in their existing locations, and the displacement of those businesses could be psychologically or socially disruptive, and could affect professional and social interactions. However, if relocation sites are available within proximity to the existing business sites, disruptions to professional and social interactions may be temporary because residents would likely become accustomed to accessing the displaced businesses at their new locations.

The removal of some businesses from their local customer base may lead to the disruption and termination of the businesses, resulting in localized job losses. Public controversy among community members and business owners could result from business displacements; therefore, early and ongoing public outreach would be conducted to discuss potential concerns and communicate with property owners and community members.

By providing additional transit services in the region, the LRT Alternative would increase connectivity within the eastern San Fernando Valley area, and would result in more unified communities. While displacements could result in changes to local neighborhood character, this alternative would be expected to enhance long-term community cohesion and interaction. Because the proposed stations would be spaced relatively evenly, connectivity would be improved throughout the project corridor. In addition, the LRT Alternative would not result in the denial of, reduction in, or substantial delay in the receipt of benefits of USDOT programs, policies, or activities for minority or low-income populations. Therefore, the LRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on or fewer benefits for minority or low-income populations with respect to improved community cohesion.

4.6.2.4 Changes in Quality of Life or Social Values

Existing mixed-flow lanes on Van Nuys Boulevard would be converted to a dedicated guideway for LRT vehicles, and could result in additional roadway congestion from decreased roadway capacity for mixed-flow traffic. However, when long-term operational benefits are considered for the LRT Alternative, overall long-term improvements to quality of life would be expected for the communities and neighborhoods in the project study area through the availability of new transit access to businesses and between communities. The LRT Alternative would permanently improve community mobility by providing a new means of access that does not rely solely on driving. Connections to other neighborhoods within the project study area and across the region would be improved by the LRT line. Business viability would also be expected to improve because increased pedestrian traffic near the proposed stations could provide new customers. Therefore, this alternative would be expected to result in enhanced connectivity and business viability for the communities and neighborhoods in the project study area. The proposed stations would be spaced relatively evenly throughout the project corridor and would improve access and business viability comparably. Therefore, the LRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on, or fewer benefits for, minority or low-income populations with respect to improved quality of life.

4.6.3 Physical Impacts

4.6.3.1 Changes in Land Use Patterns

The LRT Alternative would not be expected to result in substantial changes in land use patterns. While there would be some modifications to the project corridor (e.g., changes in bicycle lanes and turning movements, and the addition of an OCS, TPSSs, and MSF), the project corridor is an existing transportation route in an urbanized area with existing bus transit service, and, the proposed LRT operations would be consistent with existing transportation uses.

The LRT Alternative could indirectly affect development in the project study area by focusing growth in housing, employment, and commercial development within walking distance of the proposed transit stations along the project corridor. However, because this alternative would be located in an urban area containing a limited number of vacant or underutilized parcels, this alternative would not be expected to change existing growth and development patterns substantially. The proposed stations would be spaced evenly throughout the project corridor, and would affect land use comparably. Therefore, the LRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to land use.

4.6.3.2 Changes in Visual Character

The project corridor is an existing transportation route in an urbanized area with existing bus transit service, and the proposed light rail operations would be consistent with existing transportation uses. New stations in the median and along the sides of the roadway would present new vertical features in the landscape that could affect existing visual character and quality by limiting views directly adjacent to, or within, the stations. New stations and sidewalk widening could result in a more cohesive landscape along the corridor with canopies, additional street trees, and benches that would provide a more unified appearance in station areas. This alternative would require several elements to support vehicle operations, including median fences, an OCS, TPSSs, signaling, and an MSF.

The median fences and OCS, in particular, would introduce additional vertical elements that could substantially change the existing visual character and quality in these areas of the project corridor, especially for residents, pedestrians, and bicyclists, who would be expected to have high viewer sensitivity to their surroundings. The LRT Alternative would have substantial adverse effects on scenic views, scenic resources, and visual character in several areas within the project corridor; and would have minor adverse effects on visual quality in several areas within the project corridor. This alternative would also result in minor beneficial impacts on visual quality related to the new stations. Changes in visual character from the LRT Alternative would be expected to be substantial in areas where sensitive viewers are located, and would require consideration during community outreach efforts.

These proposed elements would be spaced relatively evenly throughout the project corridor, and would result in comparative changes to visual character. In addition, individuals travelling form outside the project study area would also be affected by these visual impacts. Therefore, the LRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to aesthetics. Potential impacts on visual character from the LRT Alternative are also addressed in more detail in the Visual and Aesthetics Impacts Report.

4.6.3.3 Safety Impacts and Other Physical Intrusions

The LRT Alternative would not be expected to introduce substantial physical intrusions (e.g., noise, dust, or odors) to the project corridor. While there would be some modifications to the project corridor (e.g., changes in bicycle lanes and turning movements, the addition of an OCS and TPSSs, median fences, and an MSF site), the project corridor is an existing transportation route in an urbanized area with existing bus transit service, and the proposed light rail operations would be consistent with existing transportation uses. No geological, hazardous materials, water quality, public health, or community facility effects are anticipated. The LRT Alternative would not include permanent street closures or result in reductions in community cohesion, reductions in access, or increased exclusion.

The development of new light rail facilities in the project corridor could result in security concerns because passengers may congregate at station areas, which could attract criminals and result in a higher potential for assault, robbery, or terrorist attacks. These concerns would be addressed both through design considerations (e.g., security cameras in station areas) and by coordinating with law enforcement personnel, including the Los Angeles Police Department's Foothill Community Police Station and the Van Nuys Community Police Station, the City of San Fernando Police Department, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Transit Services Bureau, and the Transportation Security Administration. In addition, potential light rail improvements under this alternative would be subject to Metro's System Safety Program Plan, which is implemented to ensure worker and passenger safety, reduce crime, and allow for an adequate emergency response. A complete Threat

and Vulnerability Assessment in compliance with FTA regulations would also be conducted for the alternative. Therefore, the LRT Alternative is not expected to result in a substantial increase in security risks in the project study area.

The LRT would run in a dedicated guideway along Van Nuys Boulevard from the Metro Orange Line to San Fernando Road, and then within the existing Metro-owned railroad right-of-way on separate dedicated tracks from Van Nuys Boulevard to the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station. Therefore, this alternative would not be expected to result in a substantial increase in accidents or collisions between light rail vehicles and other motor vehicles.

Light rail vehicles would not exceed the posted adjacent roadway speed limit, which is typically 35 mph. The LRT Alternative would have an average speed of 30 mph when underground. In addition, Metro would prepare grade crossing applications in coordination with local public agencies to further increase safety and reduce the potential for conflicts, accidents, and collisions.

The LRT Alternative could result in several pedestrian safety concerns. Pedestrian safety issues would mostly apply to proposed at-grade stations, and less to the proposed underground LRT facilities as the latter can be designed to avoid these concerns. At-grade stations could result in potential collisions between pedestrians and light rail vehicles. In addition, a potential safety hazard could result if pedestrians attempt to cross streets and tracks illegally. Pedestrian traffic control and channelization techniques would be used to control pedestrian movements at intersections, and to encourage the use of designated pedestrian crossings. A pedestrian bridge at the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station between the LRT platform and the parking lot is also proposed under this alternative.

While the proposed changes to the roadway network would comply with Metro design guidelines to ensure pedestrian, motorist, and bicyclist safety, the removal of Class II bike lanes and replacement with shared bike lanes would increase the potential for conflicts between bicyclists and motor vehicles. Therefore, the LRT Alternative could result in safety impacts to the communities and neighborhoods in the project study area from the potential for bicycle collisions. The risk of bicycle collisions would affect all bicyclists within an approximate four-mile radius comparably, regardless of socioeconomic or demographic characteristics.

The LRT Alternative would be expected to increase the capacity of the regional transportation system as a whole and to decrease emissions from passenger vehicles. According to the Air Quality Report, this alternative would not result in significant or adverse air quality impacts, including intersection areas that would experience greater congestion. Therefore, the LRT Alternative would not result in disproportionate effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to physical conditions.

4.6.3.4 Physical Division of Communities

Under this alternative, all vehicle and pedestrian movements at unsignalized intersections would be blocked by a median fence. The installation of fencing could be considered a physical intrusion in the communities and neighborhoods in the project study area. However, the light rail would operate almost entirely within an existing transportation corridor, and crossings at most signalized intersections would be maintained. This alternative would not introduce physical barriers that would substantially affect access between the existing communities and neighborhoods in the project study area. Therefore, the LRT Alternative would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to physical divisions.

4.6.4 Impact Conclusions

Under NEPA, the LRT Alternative would result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations with respect to displacements. Mitigation measures are included in Chapter 5 to reduce or minimize these potentially substantial adverse effects, where feasible. After implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, disproportionately high and adverse effects would not be substantial.

There are no thresholds of significance in CEQA for environmental justice impacts. Therefore, no CEQA determination can be made for environmental justice impacts resulting from the LRT Alternative.

4.7 Construction Impacts

4.7.1 No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative would not involve new transportation or infrastructure improvements aside from projects currently under construction or funded for future construction. Therefore, the No-Build Alternative would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to construction.

4.7.2 TSM Alternative

The TSM Alternative would involve minimal construction activities, including the installation of new bus stops and signage. Typical construction methods for the minimal sub-surface work needed for bus stop installation would be used. Bus stops would be located within the existing right-of-way, extended street closures would not be required, and mobility would not be substantially limited during construction. During construction, this alternative would result in minor effects on the social, economic, and physical conditions of the communities and neighborhoods in the project study area. These minor temporary effects are anticipated to affect all communities within the project study area and communities adjacent to the project study area comparably;therefore, the TSM Alternative would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to construction.

4.7.3 Build Alternatives 1 through 4

Construction impacts would vary for the build alternatives, with less severe impacts resulting from the Curb-Running and Median-Running BRT Alternatives, moderately severe impacts resulting from the Low-Floor LRT/Tram Alternative, and the most severe impacts resulting from the LRT Alternative. The two BRT alternatives would require less infrastructure improvements, and construction activities would be shorter in duration and the least disruptive to communities and neighborhoods in the project study area. The Low-Floor LRT/Tram and LRT Alternatives would require more infrastructure improvements, including an OCS, TPSSs, an MSF, and larger station platforms than the BRT alternatives, requiring a longer construction period. The LRT Alternative would require tunneling to construct underground portions of the alignment, as well as underground stations, which would result in the most severe construction impacts among the build alternatives. Specific construction impacts on communities and neighborhoods from the build alternatives are discussed in the following sections.

4.7.3.1 Mobility and Access Impacts

Construction of stations and the alignment would require temporary sidewalk, lane, and road closures, and temporary removal of parking on Van Nuys Boulevard, San Fernando Road, Truman Street, and their cross streets. These closures could reduce pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle access to parklands and community facilities along the project corridor during construction. These temporary effects are anticipated to affect all communities within the project study area and communities adjacent to the project study area comparably. To minimize potential impacts, adequate pedestrian and bicycle accommodations would be made available during construction, including signage, construction barriers, and supervision. On-street bicycle detour routes would be used to address temporary effects on bicycle circulation. In addition, signage would be posted, stating that "Bikes May Use Full Lane," and/or alternative route signage would be provided. Uneven surfaces would also be clearly marked.

Road and sidewalk closures, and the addition of construction vehicles and equipment on major City of Los Angeles and City of San Fernando streets, could reduce public access to annual festivals and events in the various communities along the alignment. In addition, construction could disrupt traffic patterns and make public access to businesses and community resources more difficult. Lane closures, traffic detours, and designated truck routes associated with construction could also result in decreased access for emergency vehicles and delayed response times for emergency services. Lane and/or road closures would be scheduled to minimize disruptions, and a Traffic Management Plan would be approved, in coordination with both the Cities of Los Angeles and San Fernando, prior to construction. Lane and/or road closures, and any potential for temporary effects associated with emergency vehicle response, would affect all neighborhoods along the alignment, regardless of trip origin. Therefore, no disproportionate adverse effects on minority or low-income populations are anticipated.

4.7.3.2 Social and Economic Impacts

Construction of the build alternatives would not be expected to result in substantial changes to the existing population in the project study area. The LRT Alternative would be the most costly and take the longest to construct, and it would generate the greatest number of construction jobs. However, a substantial employment base and residential population currently exist in the San Fernando Valley within commuting distance of the project corridor, and the employment opportunities would not be expected to result in substantial migration of additional residents to the project study area. In addition, because of the temporary nature of construction jobs, the employment opportunities resulting from construction would not be expected to induce substantial population growth in communities and neighborhoods in the project study area.

Construction activities would likely result in a decrease in accessibility to many businesses, and could reduce on-street and off-street parking. This could negatively affect business activity levels because the number of customers may temporarily decline. All attempts would be made to provide adequate detours and to minimize road closures; however, some consumers may avoid the area altogether, which could have an indirect effect on businesses within the project area. Construction activities would be required throughout the project corridor, and temporary decreases in accessibility would affect all businesses comparably.

The required construction easements (i.e., the areas needed temporarily during construction in addition to the actual project footprint) would vary along the alignment, depending on the type of construction and the adjacent land use. The Low-Floor LRT and LRT Alternatives would have greater needs for construction easements than the two BRT alternatives.

Storage areas for construction equipment and materials would be established near the project alignment and used for equipment and material storage. The storage areas would be located within the right-of-way, parking lots, vacant land, or on the parcels for the proposed MSF sites for the Low-Floor and LRT Alternatives. No parcels would be acquired for the BRT alternatives, and no businesses would be displaced for the construction of these alternatives. During construction, the contractor would choose staging locations among the parcels along the alignment to be acquired as needed for construction of the Low-Floor LRT/Tram and LRT Alternatives. However, some construction easements for the Low-Floor LRT/Tram and LRT Alternatives may require additional permanent right-of-way acquisitions and the permanent displacement of businesses.

Because it is anticipated that most businesses permanently displaced by construction easements for the Low-Floor LRT/Tram and LRT Alternatives would be relocated to nearby properties, construction of these alternatives would not be expected to result in substantial changes to the local economic conditions in the project study area. Local business viability may be affected by the relocations as customers would need to access new businesses, or old businesses at new locations.

The removal of some businesses from their local customer base may lead to the disruption and termination of the businesses, resulting in localized job losses. Coordination would be conducted with the appropriate jurisdictions regarding business relocations so that job losses are minimized to the extent feasible. In addition, joint-use agreements (allowing concurrent transportation and business uses) would be considered for land acquisitions required for stations and construction staging to avoid the displacement of businesses and potential job losses in these areas to the extent feasible. According to the Real Estate and Acquisitions Report, for businesses that must be relocated, it is anticipated that most of the jobs would be retained and there would be no net loss of jobs overall. No adverse effects from job loss are anticipated.

Business displacements required for construction easements for the Low-Floor LRT/Tram and LRT Alternatives could result in substantial changes to local neighborhood character, and potentially the social fabric of the local community. Neighborhood residents or visitors may be accustomed to accessing businesses in their existing locations, and the displacement of those businesses could be psychologically or socially disruptive, and could affect professional and social interactions. However, if relocation sites are available within proximity to the existing business sites, disruptions to professional and social interactions may be temporary because residents would likely become accustomed to accessing the displaced businesses at their new locations.

The removal of some businesses from their local customer base may lead to the disruption and termination of the businesses, resulting in localized job losses. Public controversy among community members and business owners could result from business displacements; therefore, early and ongoing public outreach is required to discuss potential concerns and communicate with property owners and community members.

These effects are anticipated to affect all communities within the project study area and communities adjacent to the project study area comparably. Therefore, Alternatives 1 through 4 would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to construction.

4.7.3.3 Physical Impacts

Construction of the build alternatives would not likely result in changes to land use patterns or physical division of communities, because construction would be short-term and would not affect land use designations or introduce barriers that would divide communities. However, construction activities would result in several other physical impacts and intrusions, including noise, dust, odors,

and traffic delays resulting from haul trucks and construction equipment in public streets and staging areas. Local neighborhoods, businesses, and community facilities may be inconvenienced temporarily, and community activities could be disrupted by construction.

Construction of the build alternatives may also result in several visual impacts within and surrounding the project corridor. Construction areas could be visible from residential land uses on some of the adjacent parcels, either directly through fencing, through entrance gates, or over fencing from second story and higher windows. Construction activities at staging areas, proposed stations, and the selected MSF site for the Low-Floor LRT/Tram and LRT Alternatives may include the use of heavy equipment such as cranes and associated vehicles, including bulldozers, backhoes, graders, scrapers, and trucks, which could be visible from public streets, sidewalks, and adjacent properties. Viewers in the construction area may be affected by the presence of this equipment, as well as stockpiled construction-related materials. In addition, mature vegetation, including trees, could be temporarily removed from some areas. Construction impacts associated with noise, air quality, visual quality/aesthetics, and traffic would be reduced or minimized through construction management and abatement measures, as detailed in the Communities and Neighborhoods Report.

Construction of the build alternatives could also have temporary effects on public safety and security within the project study area. During construction, motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists would be exposed to additional safety hazards because of proximity to construction activities. The potential for safety and security effects would be minimized by compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal/OSHA), and Metro safety and security programs, which are designed to reduce potential construction effects. In addition, an adequate level of signage, construction barriers, and supervision of trained safety personnel would be maintained as part of the construction to ensure that pedestrian and motorist safety is maintained during construction.

Incidents of crime adjacent to the project alignment would not likely increase during construction of the build alternatives. Construction machinery and materials could be stolen at construction sites; however, these incidents would be minimized through implementation of standard site security practices.

According to the Initial Site Assessment, right-of-way acquisitions and excavations would be required for construction of the project, and a Phase II Site Assessment would be recommended to evaluate individual locations.[55] There are properties within the project area that are listed on hazardous waste databases, and/or are reported to have soil or groundwater contamination. Construction of the LRT Alternative would include tunneling, which could result in contacting hazardous materials from adjacent industrial and commercial land uses. The effects from potential hazardous materials would be reduced through construction management and abatement measures, as detailed in the Environmental Site Assessment. In addition, the Phase II Site Assessment would include recommendations to treat or handle any hazardous materials that have the potential to be encountered during construction of the project. Therefore, the LRT Alternative would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to tunneling.

Alternatives 1 through 4 would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to construction.

[55] Diaz Yourman & Associates. November 2014. Environmental Site Assessment: Eastern San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor.

4.7.3.4 Impact Conclusions

Construction impacts would be temporary, and are anticipated to affect all populations within the project study area comparably in terms of severity and magnitude. Therefore, Alternatives 1 through 4 would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations with respect to construction.

4.8 Cumulative Impacts

Per CEQA Section 15130 (b), the cumulative impacts analysis can consider either a "list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts" or "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." The cumulative impacts analysis in the following sections are based on an approach that considers related projects. The CEQA guidelines identify that the displacement of a substantial number of affordable housing units could trigger the construction of replacement housing, which could result in a significant environmental impact. However, there are no thresholds of significance in CEQA for environmental justice impacts. Therefore, no CEQA determination can be made for environmental justice impacts resulting from the project.

4.8.1 No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative would not result in effects on minority or low-income populations; therefore, this alternative would not contribute to cumulative impacts on environmental justice communities.

4.8.2 TSM Alternative

The TSM Alternative would not result in effects on minority or low-income populations; therefore, this alternative would not contribute to cumulative impacts on environmental justice communities.

4.8.3 Build Alternatives 1 and 2

The Curb-Running BRT Alternative and the Median-Running BRT Alternative would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations; therefore, these alternatives would not contribute to cumulative impacts on environmental justice communities.

4.8.4 Build Alternatives 3 and 4

As discussed in Section 4.5.2 and Section 4.6.2, the Low-Floor LRT/Tram and LRT Alternatives would result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations with respect to displacements required for right-of-way acquisitions and/or temporary construction easements. Alternatives 3 and 4 would result in between 65 and 120 acquisitions of commercial and industrial property within the project study area, depending on the alternative and MSF Option selected.

In addition, MSF Option A would result in the acquisition of one parcel that appears to include four housing units within a block group containing minority populations, potentially requiring relocation of four families. It is anticipated that a majority of displaced businesses and residents could be relocated within the project study area or in surrounding communities. It is not anticipated that

relocated businesses or residences displaced by the project would require construction of a substantial amount of commercial and industrial development or new housing that would result in substantial adverse indirect impacts. Therefore, the proposed and related projects are not expected to result in substantial adverse cumulative real estate and acquisitions impacts.

Mitigation measures are included in Chapter 5 to reduce or minimize these potentially substantial adverse effects and significant impacts, where feasible. After implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, adverse effects on minority and low-income populations would not be substantial and would be less than cumulatively considerable.

4.9 Summary of Environmental Justice Impacts

Table 4-1 summarizes the potential environmental justice impacts for each alternative, (where "N" indicates that impacts would not be disproportionate, and "D" indicates that impacts would be disproportionate). Build Alternatives 3 and 4 would result in disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and low-income populations; therefore, mitigation measures are included in Chapter 5 to reduce or minimize these potentially substantial adverse effects, where feasible. After implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, disproportionately high and adverse effects would not be substantial.

Table 4-1: Summary Chart – Comparison of Alternatives

Topic	No-Build	TSM	Build Alt. 1	Build Alt. 2	Build Alt. 3	Build Alt. 4
	Mobility and Access					
Access to Public Transportation	N	N	N	N	N	N
Parking	N	N	N	N	N	N
Pedestrian and Bicycle Access	N	N	N	N	N	N
Traffic Circulation	N	N	N	N	N	N
Emergency Access	N	N	N	N	N	N
	Social and Economic Impacts					
Economic	N	N	N	N	N	N
Growth	N	N	N	N	N	N
Displacements	N	N	N	N	**D**	**D**
Cohesion and Quality of Life	N	N	N	N	N	N

Topic	No-Build	TSM	Build Alt. 1	Build Alt. 2	Build Alt. 3	Build Alt. 4
USDOT Benefits	N	N	N	N	N	N
Access to Jobs/Services	N	N	N	N	N	N
	Physical Impacts					
Land Use	N	N	N	N	N	N
Aesthetics	N	N	N	N	N	N
Safety, Security	N	N	N	N	N	N
Noise and Vibration	N	N	N	N	N	N
Geology	N	N	N	N	N	N
Hazardous Materials	N	N	N	N	N	N
Water Quality	N	N	N	N	N	N
Public Health	N	N	N	N	N	N
Historic	N	N	N	N	N	N
Community Facilities	N	N	N	N	N	N
Street Closures	N	N	N	N	N	N
Air Quality	N	N	N	N	N	N
Energy	N	N	N	N	N	N
Climate Change	N	N	N	N	N	N

D = Disproportionate; N = Not Disproportionate

Chapter 5
Mitigation Measures

5.1 Operational Mitigation Measures

Metro would also provide relocation assistance and compensation for all displaced businesses as required by both the Uniform Act and the California Act. Where acquisitions and relocations are unavoidable, FTA and Metro would follow the provisions of both Acts and their Amendments. All real property acquired by Metro would be appraised to determine its fair market value. Just compensation, which shall not be less than the approved appraisal would be made to each property owner. Each business and residence displaced as a result of the project would be given advance written notice and would be informed of their eligibility for relocation assistance and payments.

MM-CN-1 (Alternatives 3 and 4): A formal educational and public outreach campaign will be implemented to discuss potential community and neighborhood concerns, including relocations, visual/aesthetics changes, and fare policies, and to communicate information about the project with property owners and community members.

5.2 Construction Mitigation Measures

5.2.1 Community Mobility and Access

Metro would coordinate with local transit agencies in advance to communicate closures, communicate information on any changes to bus service that would result from the Project build alternatives, and develop detours as appropriate. Bus stops within work areas would need to be relocated, with warning signs posted in advance of the closure, and warnings and alternate stop notifications posted during the extent of the closure.

Metro, the construction contractor and LADOT would coordinate on the preparation of a traffic management plan to facilitate the flow of traffic in and around the construction zones. This mitigation measure would also apply to transit service. Although more measures may be added, typical measures included in a traffic management plan are:

- Schedule a majority of construction-related travel (i.e., deliveries, hauling, and worker trips) during the off-peak hours;
- Construction activities would be minimized during weekday AM and PM peak hours (typically 7:00 to 9:00 AM and 4:00 to 6:00 PM);
- Develop detour routes to facilitate traffic movement through construction zones without significantly increasing cut-through traffic in adjacent residential areas;
- Temporarily restripe roadway such as restriping turning lanes, through lanes, and parking lanes at the affected intersections to maximize the vehicular capacity at those locations affected by construction closures;
- Temporarily remove on-street parking to maximize the vehicular capacity at those locations affected by construction closures;

- Place station traffic control officers at major intersections during peak hours to minimize delays related to construction activities;
- Develop and implement an outreach program to inform the general public about the construction process and planned roadway closures; and
- Develop and implement a program with business owners to minimize effects to businesses during construction activity, including but not limited to signage programs.
- Metro would also coordinate with the local jurisdictions and Caltrans to designate and identify haul routes for trucks and to establish hours of operation. The selected routes should minimize noise, vibration, and other effects.
- To the extent practical, traffic lanes will be maintained in both directions, particularly during the morning and afternoon peak hours, and access to adjacent businesses via existing or temporary driveways would be maintained throughout the construction period.
- Metro would coordinate with local school districts to disclose potential road closures and suggest detour routes for carpooling and accessing schools.

Existing and planned pedestrian and bicycle facilities would be affected during construction activities for the implementation of this alternative. Closure of these facilities, and establishment of detours to parallel routes, would be implemented as part of TMPs to be approved by LADOT.

Mitigation measures for potential impacts to pedestrian and bicycle impacts during the construction period are as follows:

- Provision of bicycle detour signs, as appropriate, to route bicyclists away from detour areas with minimal-width travel lanes and onto parallel roadways.
- Provision of sidewalk closure and pedestrian route detour signs, as appropriate, to safely provide alternate routes around work areas where sidewalks would be closed for safety reasons or for specific construction work within the sidewalk area.

5.2.2 Safety and Security

Safety MM-16 (All Build Alternatives): Alternate walkways for pedestrians shall be provided around construction staging sites in accordance with American with Disability Act (ADA) requirements.

Safety MM-17 (All Build Alternatives): All pedestrian and bike detour locations around staging sites shall be signed and marked in accordance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices “work zone” guidance, and other applicable local and state requirements.

Safety MM-18 (All Build Alternatives): Work plans and traffic control measures shall be coordinated with emergency responders to prevent effects to emergency response times.

Chapter 6
Impacts Remaining After Mitigation

6.1 Impacts Remaining Under NEPA

Under NEPA, the Low-Floor LRT and LRT Alternatives would result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations with respect to displacements. All other effects would not be disproportionately high or adverse.

These alternatives would also result in new transit opportunities that are anticipated to result in improved connectivity and transit equity. Mitigation measures are included in Chapter 5 to reduce or minimize the adverse effects, where feasible. After implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, disproportionately high and adverse effects would not be substantial and would be less than cumulatively considerable.

6.2 Impacts Remaining Under CEQA

There are no thresholds of significance in CEQA for environmental justice impacts. Therefore, no CEQA determination can be made for environmental justice impacts resulting from the project.

Chapter 7
CEQA Determination

There are no thresholds of significance in CEQA for environmental justice impacts. Therefore, no CEQA determination can be made for environmental justice impacts resulting from the project.

Chapter 8
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