

Census tracts with the largest populations (greater than 2000 people) are found within the project area east of Main Street between 1st Street and 7th Street and east of San Pedro Street between Temple Street and 1st Street. According to SCAG projections, in 2035, slightly less growth is expected in the project area compared to the whole County. The population in the project area is expected to grow by about 30 percent from about 19,396 in 2008 to 25,417 people in 2035.

The largest growth in the project area is projected in two locations:

- The area bounded by SR-110, Hill Street, 1st Street, and 3rd Street, which will increase from between 1,500 to 1,999 people to over 2,000 people; and
- The area bounded by Hill Street, Main Street, 7th Street, and 9th Street, which will increase from 1,000 to 1,499 people to 1,500 to 1,999 people.

Projected population is based on fairly conservative estimates made by SCAG in 2008. Figures 5-5 and 5-6 show the distribution of existing and projected total population within the project area.

Several planned high-rise residential projects in the project area contribute to the high level of expected growth. These include the Park Fifth condominium project at 5th and Hill Streets, the Block 8 condominium and rental project under construction between 2nd, 3rd, San Pedro, and Los Angeles Streets, and the 8th & Grand condominium and retail project at 8th Street and Grand Avenue.

The total number of households is also projected to increase 27 percent from about 10,300 in 2008 to 13,000 in 2035, which is higher than the 21 percent projected for the County.

The employment base is projected to increase by about 7 percent from over 171,700 individuals in 2008 to over 184,500 in 2035. Current and projected employment within the project area are both between three and four percent of total County employment.

Figure 5-7 shows the distribution of employment in the project area in 2005. At that time, total employment in a majority of the census tracts within the project area was over 5,000, with areas of highest concentration (greater than 12,500 jobs) in three locations:

- The area bounded by SR-110, Flower Street, 7th Street, and 9th Street;
- The area bounded by SR 110, Hill Street, US 101, and 1st Street; and
- Part of the area bounded by Hill Street, Alameda Street, US 101, and 2nd Street

A large employment base indicates that a significant number of workers commute within, into, and out of the project area. Figure 5-8 shows the projected distribution of employment in 2035.

Providing public transportation to densely-populated areas can increase ridership by making transit more accessible to a larger population. The areas of highest population density are found in two locations within the project area:

- The area bounded by 1st Street, 3rd Street, SR 110, and Hill Street; and
- The area south of 5th Street and east of Hill Street

Figure 5-9 shows the distribution of population densities according to the 2000 census. The highest employment density exists in the project area in the area bounded by US-101, 3rd Street, SR 110, and Hill Street (Figure 5-10).

Average population density is projected to grow to roughly 12,700 persons per square mile, and average employment density is expected to be over 92,000 employees per square mile. Figures 5-11 and 5-12 show projected 2035 population and employment densities.

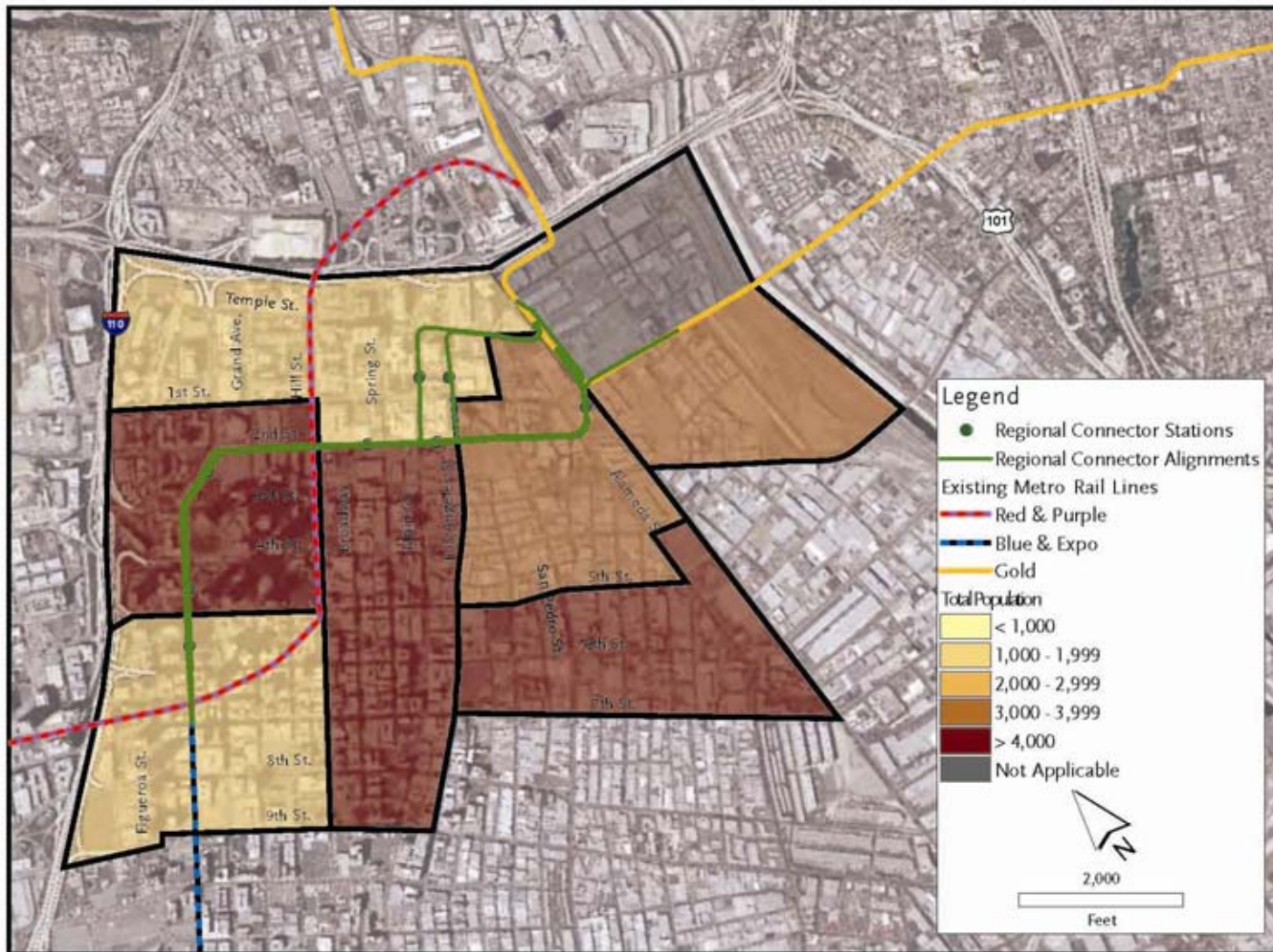


Figure 5-5. Population in Project Area (2005)

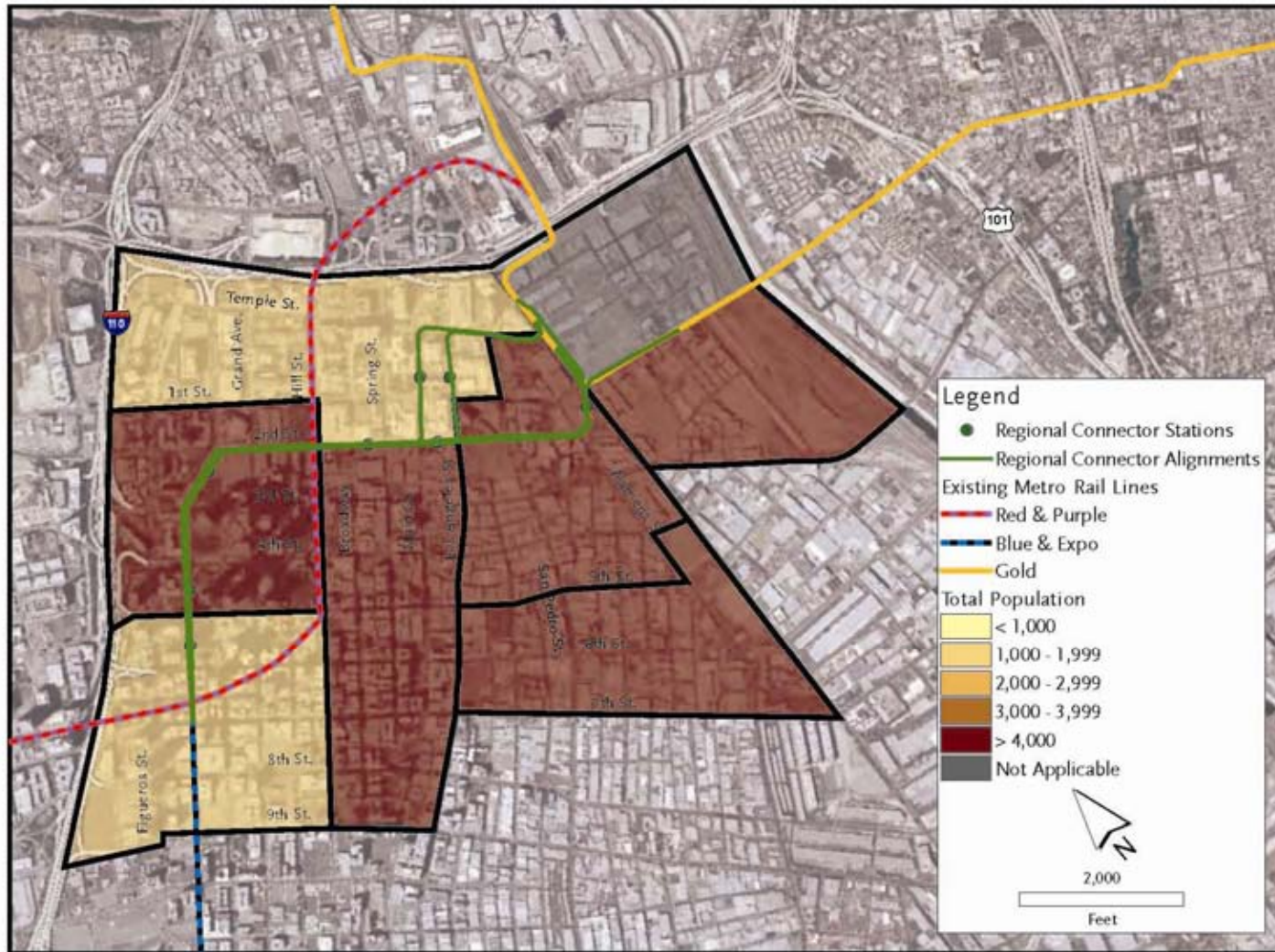


Figure 5-6. Projected Population in Project Area (2035)

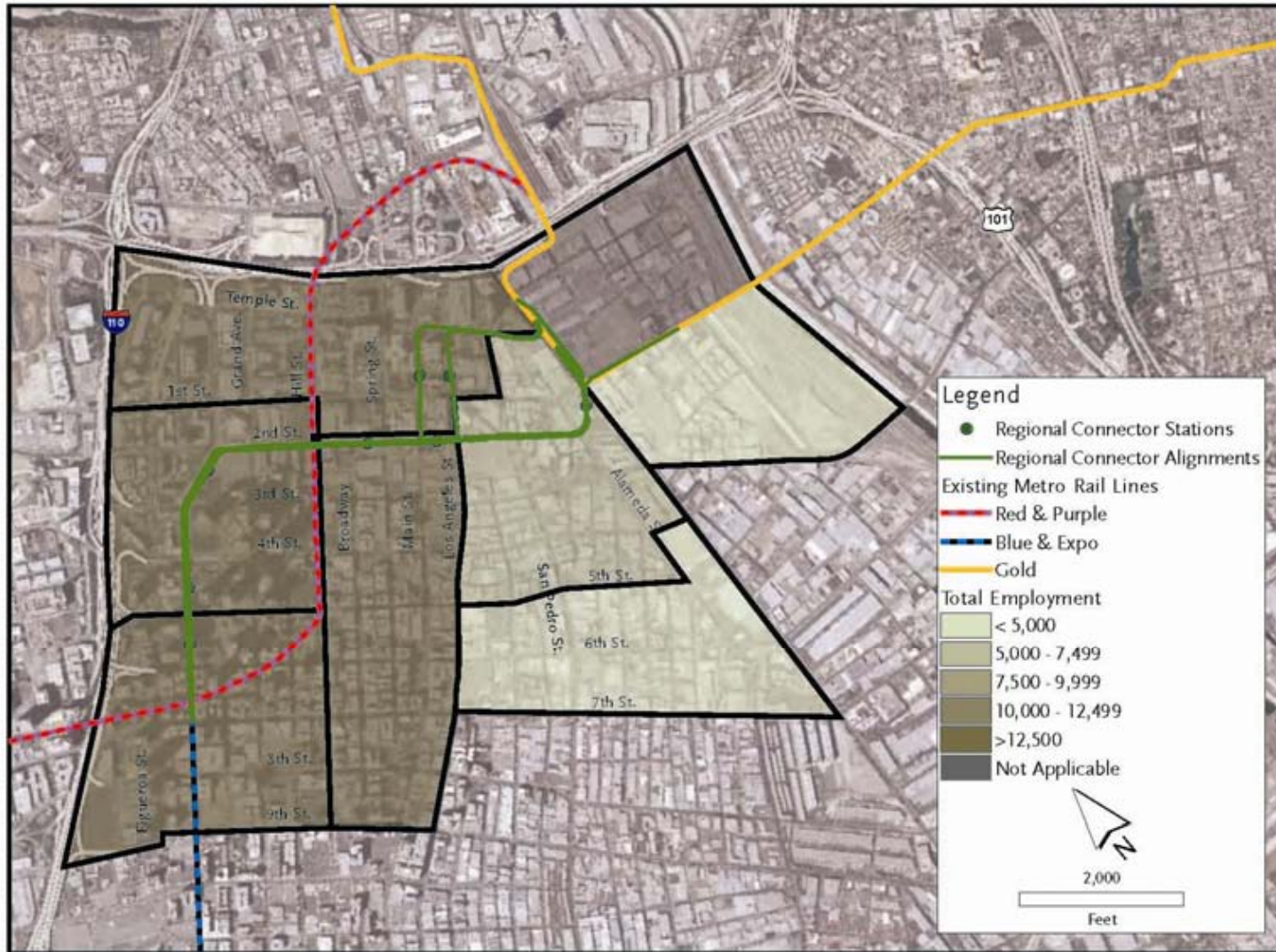


Figure 5-7. Employment in Project Area (2005)

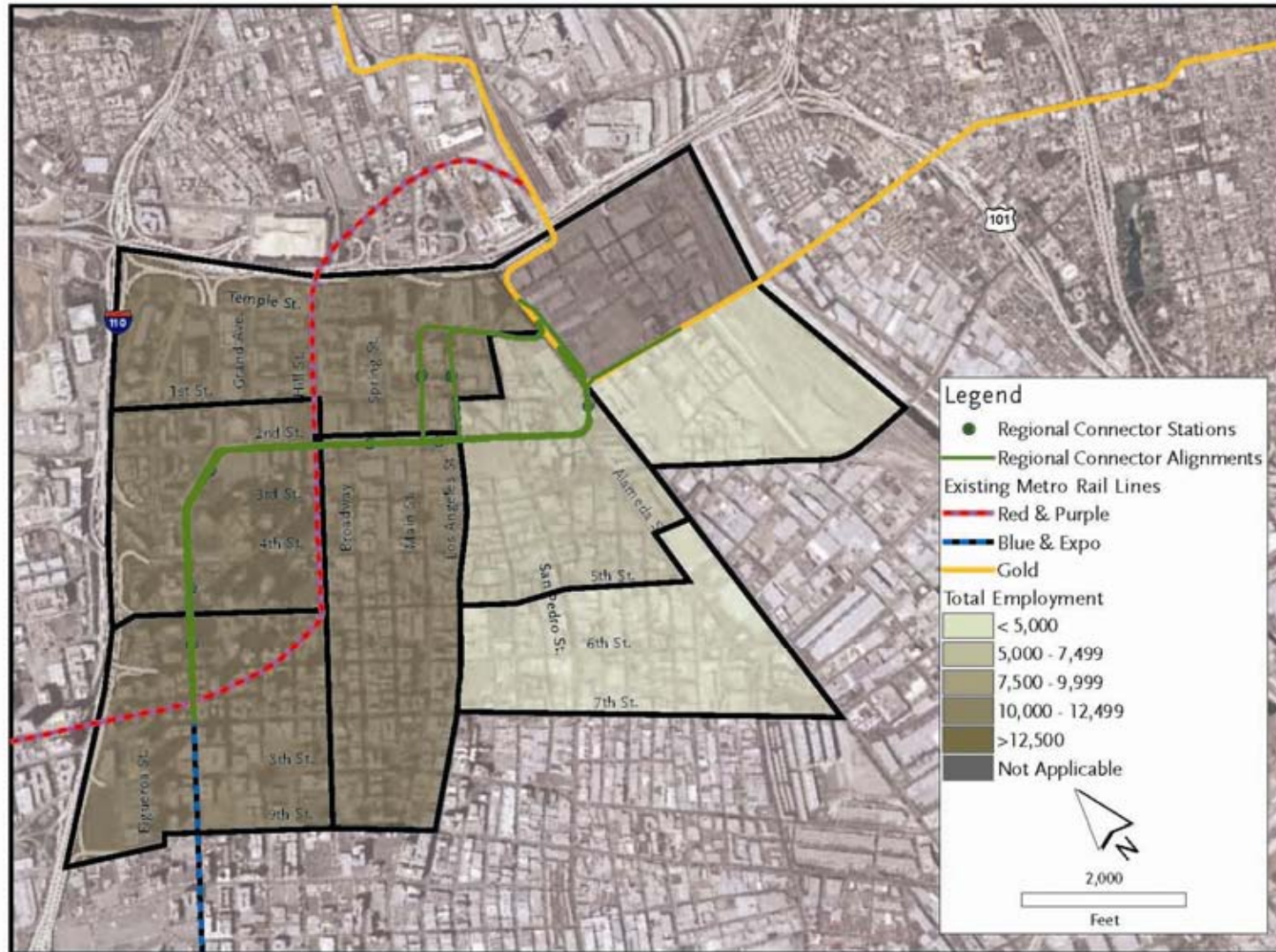


Figure 5-8. Projected Employment in Project Area (2035)

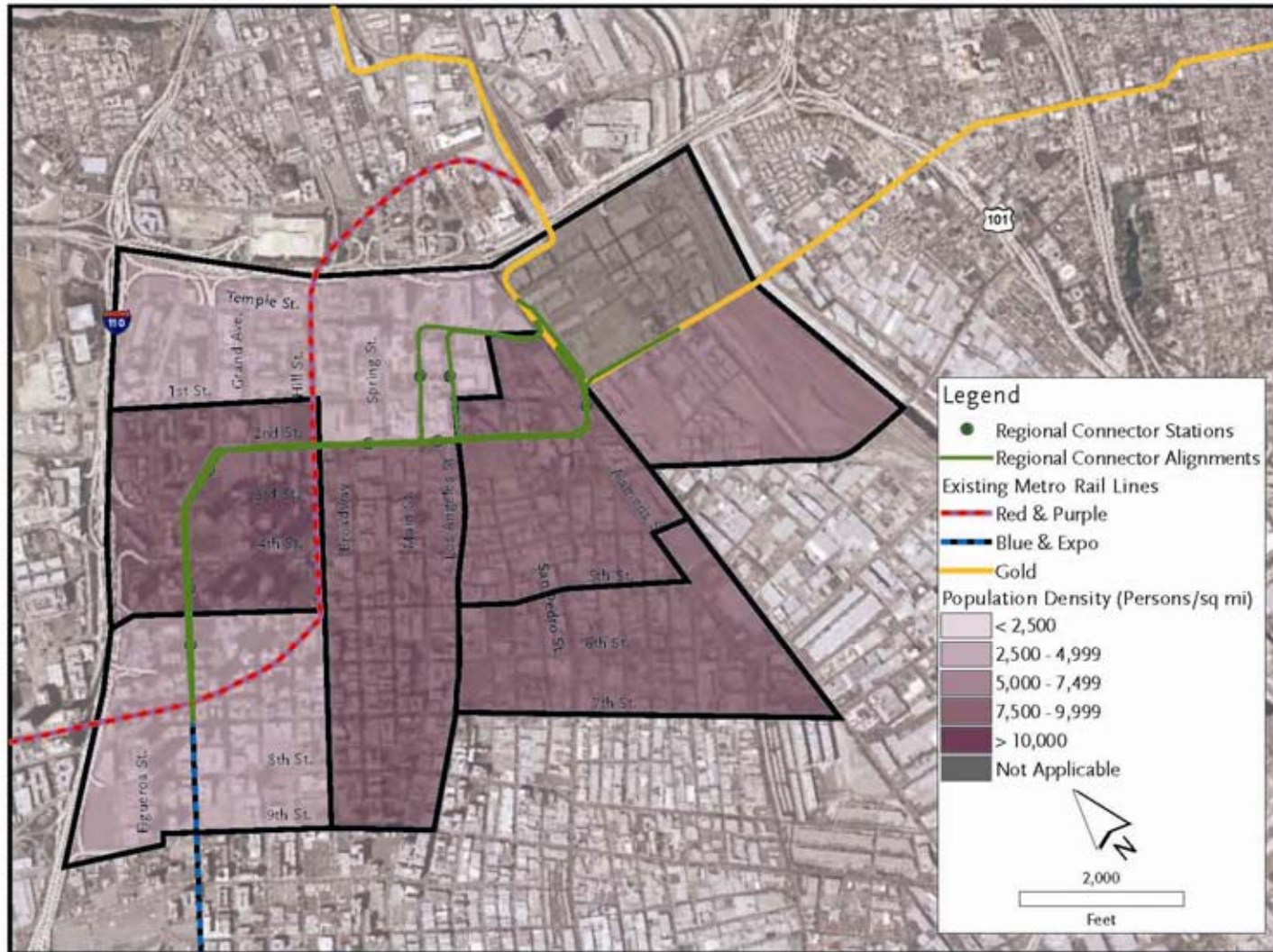


Figure 5-9. Population Density in Project Area (2005)

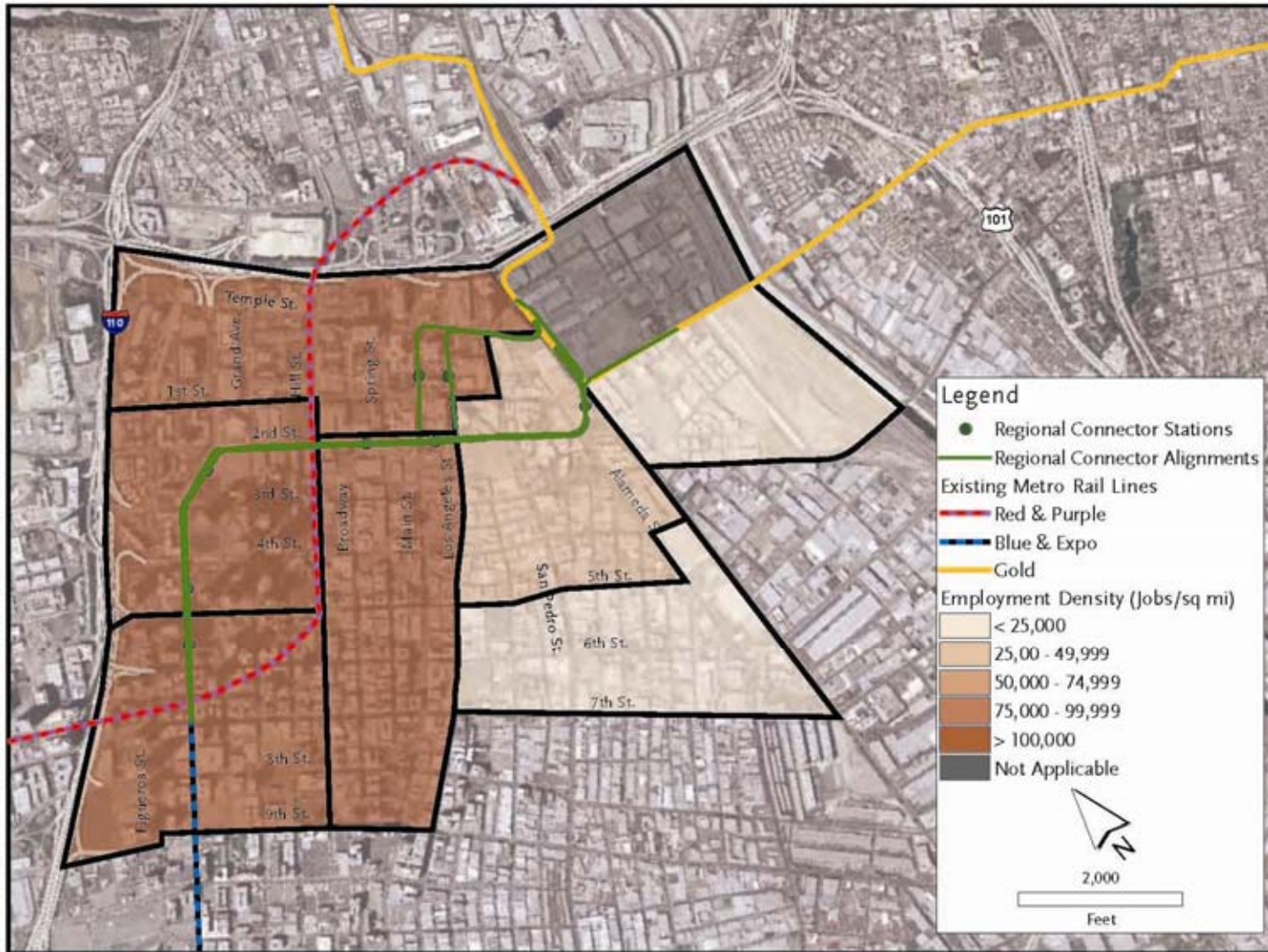


Figure 5-10. Employment Density in Project Area (2005)

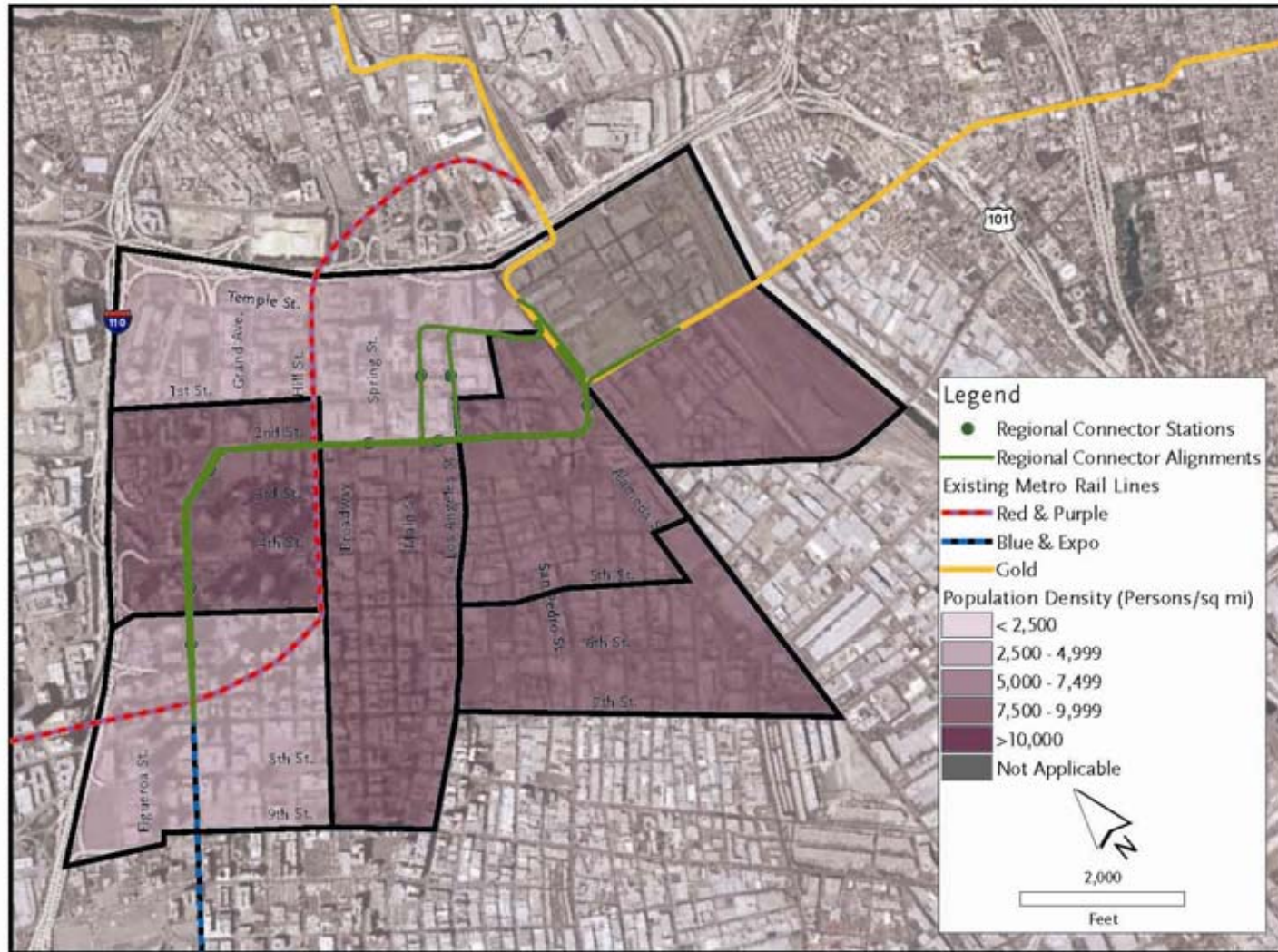


Figure 5-11. Projected Population Density in Project Area (2035)

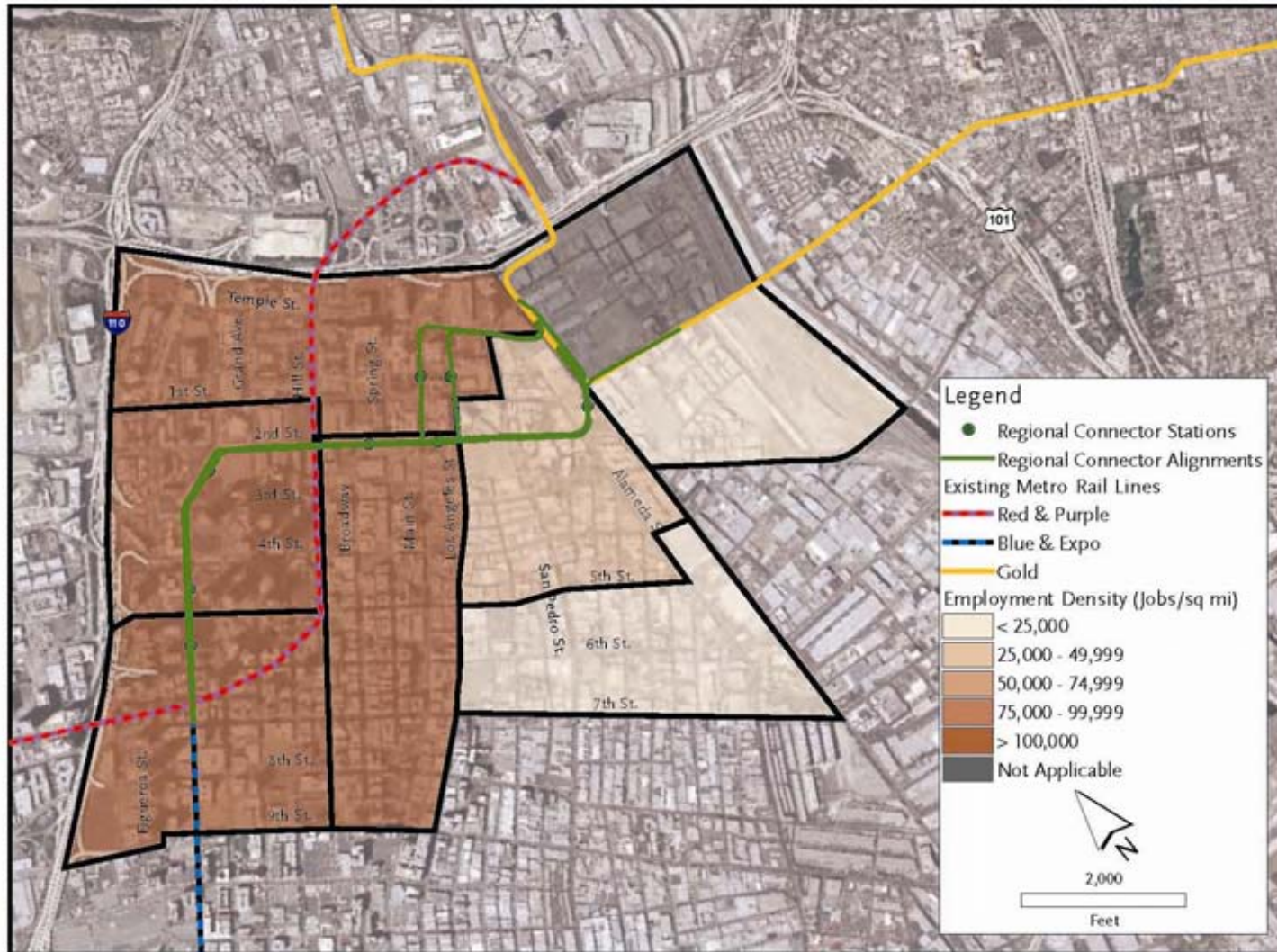


Figure 5-12. Projected Employment Density in Project Area (2035)

5.2 Regional Transit System Expansion

By 2035, the Metro rail system will have been expanded to the north and east with extensions to the Gold Line and to the west with extensions to the Purple and Expo Lines and the addition of the Crenshaw Line. This radial network centered on downtown Los Angeles will continue to funnel riders into the central city core.

Central downtown Los Angeles is a top destination for trips originating outside of the project area from both the east and west. For example, over 50,000 daily trips (approximately 25 percent of external trip destinations) are made for work from the greater eastside to central Los Angeles.

The project area is located in the crossroads of the region's transportation system. Transit riders that arrive at either the 7th Street/Metro Center Station or Union Station generally continue on to other destinations. For example, nearly three quarters of the passengers riding on the Metro Gold Line from Pasadena to Union Station transfer to the Metro Red Line for continued service into other parts of the City.

As additional service comes on line, additional riders to downtown will contribute to crowding on the platforms at these stations that serve as main transfer points to other destinations. At the 7th Street/Metro Center Station, Metro Red and Purple Line passengers wishing to use the Flower Street escalators must share the crowded passageways leading to the Metro Blue Line platform. Metro Expo Line passengers would add to the crowds on the existing Metro Blue Line platform. As riders from these lines transfer to the Metro Red and Purple Lines on the lower platform overcrowding is a concern there as well.

Additional service to downtown will increase the number of riders needing to transfer to the Red Line to continue to their ultimate destinations. This creates a concern related to insufficient Red Line capacity for connecting riders. Additional travel delays could be introduced for individuals if they are unable to get onto a particular Red Line train due to overcrowding.

The gap in rail service between the 7th Street/Metro Center Station and Union Station creates issues for riders who must transfer to the Red Line or other modes to continue their trips and contributes to overcrowding on main transfer station platforms. These issues will increase as new routes are brought into service.

Current transit usage in the region is the highest in Central Los Angeles, with additional areas of moderate transit usage in the Westside, Hollywood, Pasadena, the South Bay, and Pasadena, as shown in Figure 5-13. Transit usage is projected to increase in these areas by 2035. The highest transit usage areas are found along the existing Metro Red Line and Metro Purple Line corridors. There is also high transit usage in the Westside area where there are many students who are reliant on public transportation. It should be noted that Figure 5-13

shows the number of persons taking transit to work, and actual ridership is higher because patrons use transit for other types of trips as well. Also, the year 2000 census data predates many portions of the Metro Rail system, and transit ridership has risen in these areas since the initiation of service.

Additional transit opportunities created by the Regional Connector for commuters on the Metro Blue and Gold lines are expected to increase the number of trips along the corridors of both. The Regional Connector will alleviate congestion on the already heavily-used Metro Red and Purple Lines by eliminating the need for Metro Blue and Gold line commuters to transfer through them.

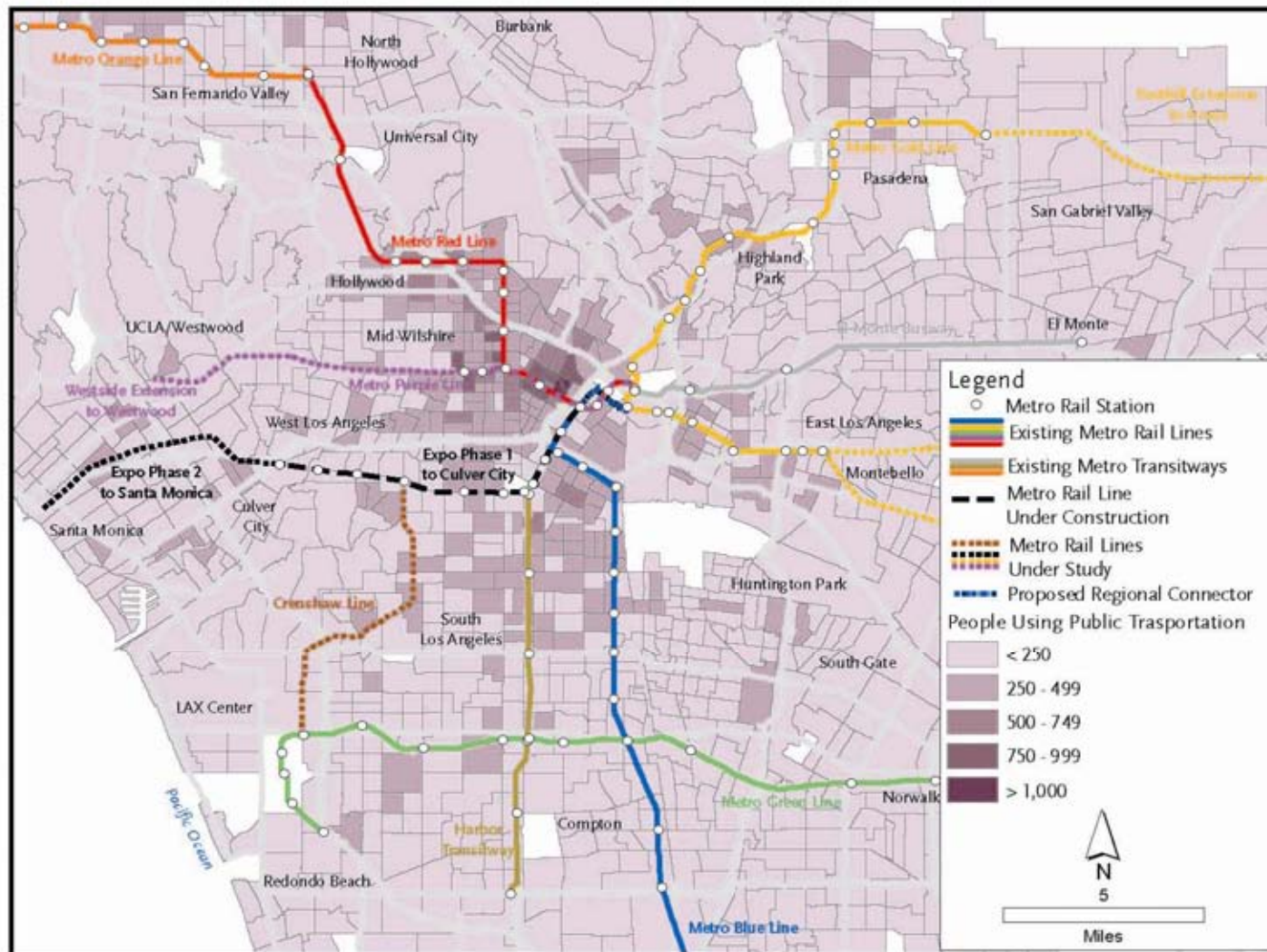


Figure 5-13. Regional Work-bound Transit Trips (2000)

5.3 Transit Dependent Populations

Transit dependent populations are those groups that rely on public transit to meet their mobility and access needs to a greater degree than the general population. Within the project area, transit dependent populations include low income households, seniors, and zero car households (Table 5-2).

Low-income households were defined by the US Census Bureau in 2005 as those below the poverty threshold with an annual average salary of \$12,755 for a two-person household. Low-income households represented about 38 percent of the total households in the project area. This high proportion of low-income households underscores the need for public transit.

Senior residents within the Project Area are more likely to depend on public transit because of an inability to drive or lack of private vehicle accessibility. Almost 20 percent of the project area population is seniors. Young people, under 18 years of age, may also be considered transit dependent for similar reasons. Approximately 6 percent of the population in the project area is under the age of 18.

Over two thirds of the households in the project area have no car. Eleven percent of employed residents age 16 and over rely on public transit for their commuting needs. When comparing vehicle accessibility and public ridership patterns in the project area, the trends suggest that even households with one or more cars have a higher propensity to use public transportation than similar households elsewhere in the County.

Table 5-2. Transit Dependent Demographic Information

Demographic	Project Area	Percent (%) of Project Area	LA County	Percent (%) of County
Population	19,396	NA	10,010,315	NA
Under 18 years	1,188	6.1	2,798,604	27.9
Over 65 years	3,795	19.6	926,670	9.2
Households	9,648	NA	3,298,210	NA
No vehicle households	6,505	67.4	671,214	20.3
Use public transportation	1,121	11.6	254,091	7.7
Households below poverty level	3,575	37.0	1,481,896	44.9

Source: SCAG, 2005 data and 2030 projections and U.S. Census Data Summary Files 1 and 3, 2000

Some of the project area's transit-dependent population lives within convenient walking distance (one-quarter to one-half mile) of the Regional Connector termini, while much of the rest of the area will be able to easily access the corridor and potential stops along the corridor.

The project area can be characterized as more transit-dependent than the County as a whole because of its dense population, proportionately low income levels, number of households with zero vehicles, and public transportation users. A significant portion of the County's transit riders live and/or work within the project area; this is projected to increase through 2035.

Transit dependent populations are particularly impacted by deficiencies in the transit system. The gap in the light rail system between the 7th Street/Metro Center Station and Union Station that creates travel delays affects these populations disproportionately.

Figure 5-14 shows the distribution of low-income households in 2005. Census tracts within the project area that have greater than 1,000 low-income households were:

- The area bounded by SR-110, Hill Street, 1st Street, and 3rd Street; and
- The area bounded by Hill Street, Alameda Street, 5th Street, and 7th Street.

Figure 5-15 shows the distribution of residents age 65 and over in the project area. The senior population is highest west of Hill Street and south of 1st Street. Figure -16 shows the distribution of residents age 18 and under in the project area. The youth population is found primarily in the southern part of the project area, south of 5th Street.

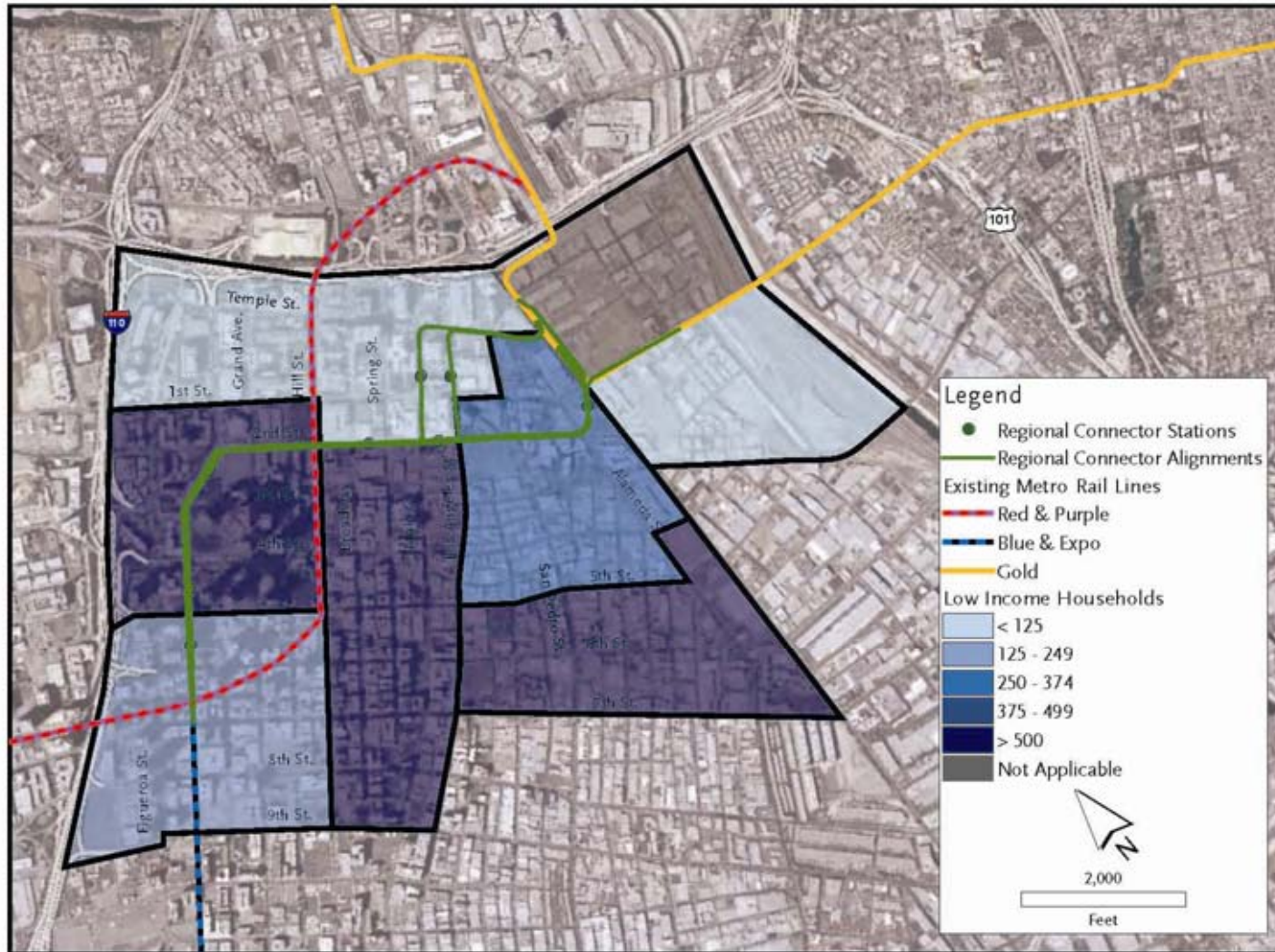


Figure 5-14. Distribution of Low Income Households in Project Area (2006)

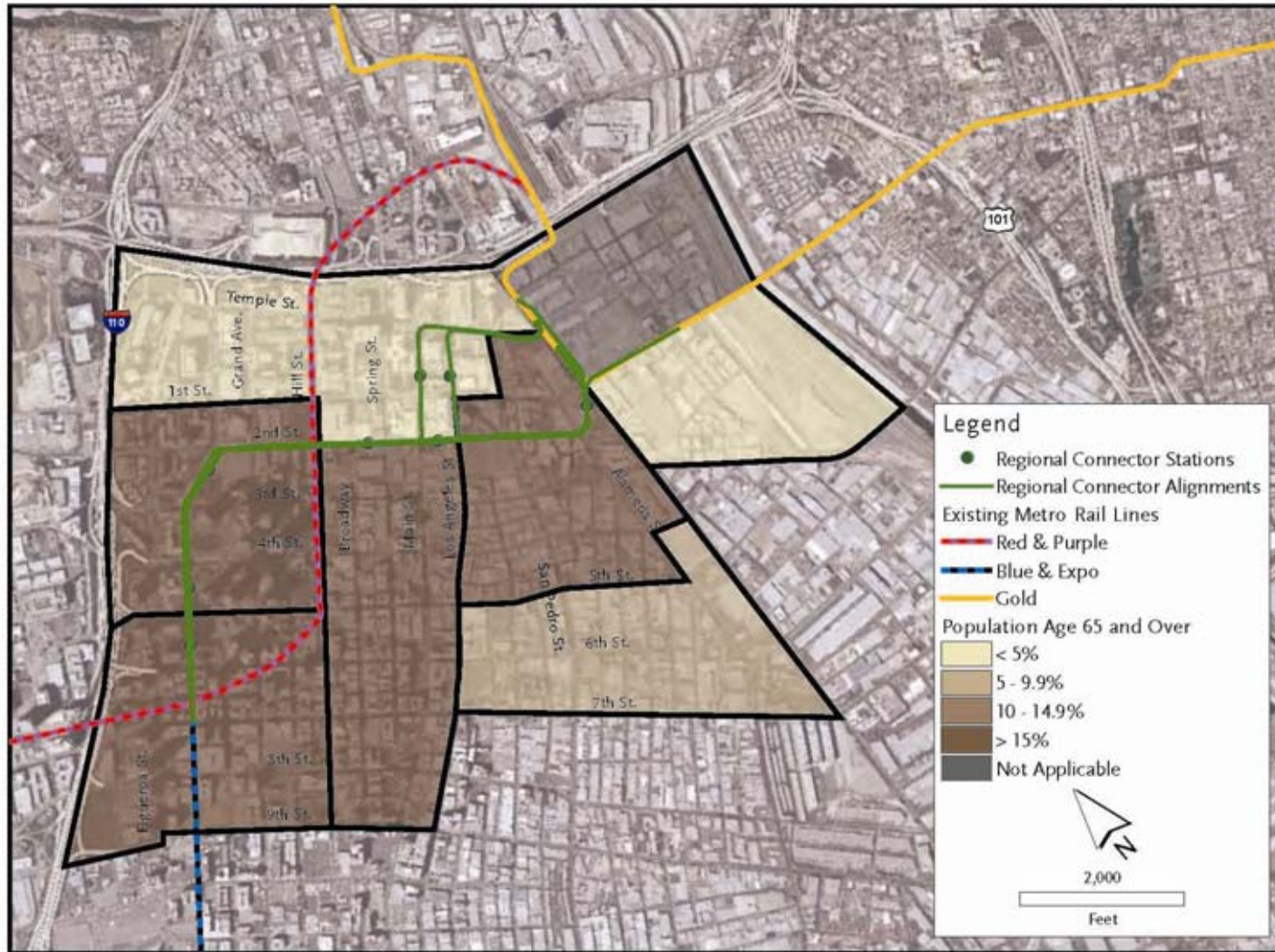


Figure 5-15. Distribution of Population Age 65 and Over in Project Area

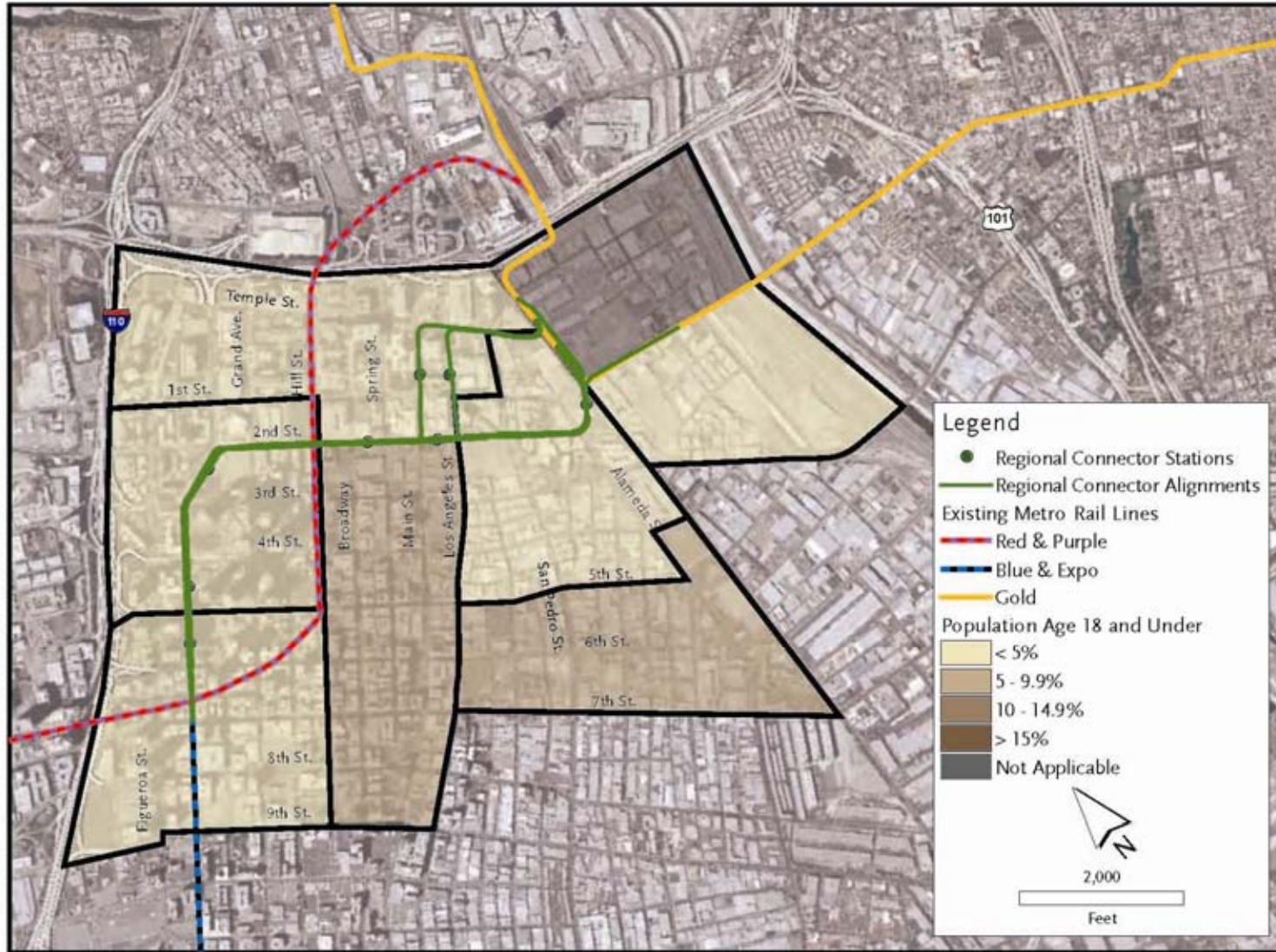


Figure 5-16. Distribution of Population Age 18 and Under in Project Area

5.4 Travel Demand

The majority of the congestion within the project area and the region is from travel on the highways and local arterial network regardless of transportation mode. If the current trend persists, travel delays are expected to rise to 5.7 million person hours by 2035, more than double currently experienced delays, which will deeply affect highway productivity (SCAG 2008).

Bus service runs in a grid pattern through the downtown area, with most lines terminating at the periphery after having passed through. Nearly all streets within the project area have bus service during peak hours. Transit service within the project area is highly dependent on the condition of the surface streets and connections to the freeway system.

Performance of intersections is measured by LOS. LOS D is a “fair” level of service with potential delays at the intersection between 35 and 55 seconds; LOS F represents intersection failure with backups preventing movement out of the intersection. LOS is a measure of how congested an area is which helps to identify areas that need transportation improvements.

All of the key intersections currently operate at LOS D or better during both the AM and PM peak hours. Only the Figueroa Street and Wilshire Boulevard intersection is operating at LOS F in the PM peak hour. By 2035, up to 28 intersections in the project area will be at LOS E or F in the PM peak hour without transit improvements in the project area.

Demand for transit service in the project area is also high. There are 51 bus lines, mostly operated by Metro, with over 174,000 daily passenger boardings and alightings within the project area. On several routes, during rush hour the time between buses on a particular line shrinks to less than five minutes, and some stops are served by over a dozen lines.

Without transit improvements in the project area, service for all transportation modes within the project area will continue to decline.

5.5 Transit Usage

Downtown Los Angeles has long been considered a major destination for employment, education, and services; it is now experiencing a resurgence as a center for entertainment and the arts, and increasingly, residential living. However, travel to and from activity centers both in the project area and in the surrounding region often require more than one transfer. Examples of key activity centers include the University of Southern California, downtown Long Beach and Culver City, Old Town Pasadena, Chinatown, Los Angeles Coliseum, or the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History.

The ridership benefits of increasing trip speeds have been demonstrated in Los Angeles by the Metro Rapid program. The 2002 Demonstration Program Final Report noted that the

implementation of the rapid bus service led to 23-29 percent improvement in trip speeds, an increase from 9mph to 12mph. While this difference may seem small, ridership on the Wilshire/Whittier corridor increased by 42 percent as a result.

According to Metro’s 2004 Metro Rail Onboard Survey, 42 percent of Metro Gold Line riders indicated that they rode two trains on their one-way trips, and seven percent rode three trains. Since Union Station is the only current rail-to-rail transfer point on the Metro Gold Line, these results suggest that a large portion of Metro Gold Line riders are transferring to the Metro Red Line to complete their trips.

The transfer between the Metro Red or Purple Line and the Metro Gold Line at Union Station can take up to 20 minutes, and the platforms are approximately a four-minute walk apart. The transfer between the Metro Red or Purple Lines and the Metro Blue Line at 7th Street/Metro Center can also take up to 20 minutes.

The combination of these combined travel delays is a disincentive to riders wishing to travel in an east-west direction. As the number of transfers required increases, the number of people who will attempt a particular transit trip declines (Table 5-3).

Train or Bus	All Lines
1 Train	53%
2 Trains	38%
3 Trains	7%
4 Trains	2%
1 Bus/Train	22%
2 Bus/Train	34%
3 Bus/Train	25%
4+ Bus/Train	19%

Source: 2004 Metro Rail Onboard Survey

Metro’s 2004 Metro Rail Onboard Survey indicates that relatively few Metro Gold Line riders currently continue beyond 7th Street/Metro Center Station toward Long Beach on the Metro Blue Line. The current bus ridership indicates that this is likely due to too many transfers

being needed. With the opening of the Metro Expo and Metro Gold Line to East Los Angeles it is likely that double transfers will increase due to the east-west travel demands.

5.6 Land Use Plans and Policies

Local land use plans and policies support increased transit alternatives, linking the regional system through downtown, and transit and pedestrian friendly design in downtown communities.

5.6.1 Regional Plans

In May of 2008, SCAG released its Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) entitled "Making the Connections". This document provides a basic policy and program framework to improve the transportation system and integrate it with the population growth patterns for the region through 2035.

5.6.2 Studies

Mobility issues throughout the region and the identified need to join the unconnected segments of the light rail system have been documented in several past studies, including the *Pasadena—Los Angeles Light Rail Transit Project Environmental Impact Report* (1993), the *Blue Line Connection Preliminary Planning Study* (1993), and the *Regional Light Rail Connector Study* (2004).

The *Pasadena - Los Angeles Light Rail Transit Project Environmental Impact Report* identified a need to connect the 7th Street/Metro Center Station with Union Station in 1993. However, this segment was not constructed with the development of the Metro Gold Line due to funding constraints.

Also in 1993, the *Blue Line Connection Preliminary Planning Study* identified a potential capacity problem for the Metro Red Line, as it was the sole rail connection between Union Station and the 7th Street/Metro Center Station.

5.6.3 Policies and Guidelines

Local land use plans and policies support the development of additional transit service within the project area. The City's General Plan establishes a number of goals and corresponding policies that support the development of public transit.

5.6.3.1 County of Los Angeles General Plan

The County's General Plan establishes a number of goals and corresponding policies that support the development of public transit.

- Goal C-1: An accessible circulation system that ensures the mobility of people and goods throughout the County.
 - Policy C1.1: Expand the availability of transportation options throughout the County
 - Policy C1.2: Encourage a range of transportation services at both the regional and local levels, especially for transit dependent populations.
 - Policy C1.3: Secure an affordable countywide transportation system for all users.
 - Policy C1.4: Maintain transportation right-of-way corridors for future transportation.
- Goal C-2: An efficient circulation system that effectively utilizes and expands multi-modal transportation options.
 - Policy C2.1: Support the linking of regional transportation systems.
 - Policy C2.2: Expand transportation options throughout the County.

5.6.3.2 Downtown Design Guidelines

The Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles (CRA) has drafted design guidelines for all new developments within downtown Los Angeles. These guidelines provide incentives for residential development by modifying code requirements such as density limits for projects that meet a number of criteria including providing accessible transportation with emphasis on walking, biking, and transit other than autos.

With the overall goal of creating a livable downtown, guidelines focus on providing the following:

- A broad range of housing types;
- Accessible transportation with emphasis on walking, biking, and transit other than autos;
- Shops and services within walking distance to housing;
- Safe, visually-pleasing and walkable streets;
- Parks and other gathering places near to shops and services; and
- Public recreational open space within walking distance to home.

The guidelines set forth specific standards for design and construction, including use of sustainable materials and practices, preserving historically- and culturally-significant buildings, and supporting environmental and aesthetic resources. The guidelines ultimately call for developers to consider pedestrians and not cars in their design process. The objective is to create a cohesive transition along blocks while creating inviting and open spaces that encourage pedestrian traffic. As outlined above, increasing public transit options is one way to meet this objective.

5.6.3.3 Little Tokyo Planning & Design Guidelines

The Little Tokyo Community Planning and Design Guidelines also promote pedestrian- and transit-friendly designs which support cohesiveness through the corridor while maintaining cultural integrity.

As a result of recent resurgence and popularity in the Little Tokyo district of downtown, a set of design guidelines was created with the intent of encouraging individual expression and continuity of the surrounding environment through building and street design, while enhancing elements and aesthetics that are significant to the Japanese-American Community. In addition to the preservation of existing physical and cultural spaces, the guidelines identify specific standards for new developments and streetscapes in order to maintain continuity throughout. Street dedication requirements, such as those in place for new development east of Alameda Street between Temple Street and 1st Street, promote pedestrian- and transit-friendly designs which support cohesiveness through the corridor while maintaining cultural integrity. This, in turn, will enhance pedestrian activity and increase the attractiveness of walking and transit use in the area.

5.6.3.4 CommuteSmart®

Metro provides services through CommuteSmart® to help people find alternatives to a single-person car commute such as carpooling, vanpooling, park-and-ride, and public transit. CommuteSmart® also assists employers to set up rideshare programs, create incentives for commuting, and perform ongoing assessments and training. Improvement of public transit options while promoting the use of public transit would increase ridership more than either done alone.

6.0 POTENTIAL TRANSIT MARKETS

Potential transit markets are two-fold for the Regional Connector:

- The activity centers and major destinations that include public and private uses, density of population and employment, and major travel patterns that traverse the project area;
- Travel patterns through the project area, since the Regional Connector would link over 50 miles of Metro LRT service from Pasadena to Long Beach, and from Culver City to the Eastside and everywhere in between.

This Draft EIS/EIR will result in projections of ridership generated by people moving within the project area and through the project area to get to and from homes, jobs, services, and entertainment.

Key advantages for the Regional Connector presented by the project area are the easy bus connections provided by the dense transit network, convenient regional and intercity rail interface, and the location of activities and services within walking and biking distance of each other.

6.1 Activity Centers and Destinations

Several activity centers exist within the project area. These include Educational, Recreational, Business/Industrial and Commercial centers.

Downtown has long been considered a major destination for employment and services; it is experiencing a resurgence as a center for entertainment and the arts, and increasingly, residential living.

6.1.1 Bunker Hill

The Bunker Hill District is located generally between First Street on the north, Hill Street on the east, Third Street on the south, and Figueroa Street on the west. Major downtown destinations located within Bunker Hill include the Walt Disney Concert Hall, Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) and several high-rise office towers, senior and market-rate housing, hotels and commercial/retail centers. Bunker Hill offers over 3,200 residential units mainly in mid- and high-rise buildings.

Large development projects planned for this area include Civic Park and the Grand Avenue Development Project, which will transform this area into a regional arts, entertainment, and residential destination. The Grand Avenue Development is a \$3 billion project that includes

3.6 million square feet of development with 449,000 square feet of retail. It is currently planned for 2,600 housing units, almost doubling the existing number of units in the area.

6.1.2 Civic Center

Bordering Bunker Hill to the northeast is the Civic Center, which serves as a hub for City, County, State, and Federal government with the second-largest concentration of civic buildings in the country. The Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, the Ahmanson Theater, Mark Taper Forum, and the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion are other major destinations in this district.

Civic Center is undergoing active redevelopment. The new headquarters for the state Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 7 has recently been completed, development of the new Los Angeles Police Department Headquarters is underway, and construction of a U.S. Federal Courthouse is soon to begin.

6.1.3 Little Tokyo

East of Civic Center is Little Tokyo, which serves as the center of the largest Japanese-American community in the continental United States. The Japanese American National Museum and The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA are located here, along with a lively shopping district.

The popularity of Little Tokyo is evidenced by the active residential development underway, with recently completed and current projects adding more than 2,000 residential units. Significant developments in the early planning stages include a 4.5-acre site adjacent to the Little Tokyo Arts District Station of the Metro Gold Line. Early concepts from developers identified high-density combination of office and housing with strong connections to the adjacent Metro Gold Line Eastside Expansion.

6.1.4 Toy District

The Toy District is a 12-block shopping area with over 500 retail businesses located south of Little Tokyo and north of Central City East. Development here is centered on mixed-use. The proposed Medallion building, one of several projects currently under construction, will provide 192 residential lofts and over 200,000 square feet of retail space.

6.1.5 Financial Core

The Financial Core District is located south of Bunker Hill and is dominated by high-rise office buildings. The Central Library, built in 1926, destroyed by fire in 1986, and rebuilt, expanded, and re-opened in 1993 is located here. Other landmarks in this district include the Millennium Biltmore Hotel (built in 1923) and Pershing Square (dating back as far as 1866 as a park).

The proposed 2.7-million square-foot, four-phase Metropolis mixed-use development will be located in the southwestern end of the Financial District. Phase I of this project, which began construction in 2008, will provide 360 residential units. Park Fifth is another major planned 76-story high-rise development across from Pershing Square and will include over 700 condos and a 200-room hotel.

6.1.6 Historic Core

To the east of the Financial Core is the Historic Core District, containing a large concentration of historic and architecturally-significant buildings, including the Bradbury Building (built in 1893). The Grand Central Market (dating back to 1917 as an open-air market) and the Broadway Historic Theater District (with theaters dating back to the early 1900s) are destinations in this district.

Development here is focused on conversion of old neglected buildings into lofts and apartments. The Historic Core experiences high volume retail sales on Broadway Street, which is a largely sidewalk-oriented retail district. Due to the shortage of parking in the area, the retail district is reliant on public transit to bring patrons to the neighborhood.

6.1.7 Jewelry District

The largest jewelry district in the U.S. and second largest in the world is located southwest of the Historic Core, where 5,000 businesses generate billions of dollars in revenue.

Development in this area includes the proposed construction of 875 condominium units at 8th Street and Grand Avenue. Like the Historic Core, parking is in short supply and the district attracts a high volume of retail sales.

6.1.8 Central City East

The Central City East District is located south of the Toy District and consists primarily of commercial uses, including wholesale buildings and warehouses. The Flower Market, produce, fish and food processing industries as well as import/export businesses employ nearly 20,000 people in this area. Housing in this district consists mainly of the 6,500 single-room occupancy hotel units. This area is also important in providing social services, including alcohol treatment, mental health services, and job training.

6.1.9 Outside of the Project Area

Other important downtown development projects outside of the project area include the recently-opened LA Live, a 4-million square foot complex of retail, restaurants, office, theater, hotel, parking, and residential space adjacent to the Staples Center.

6.1.10 Regional Activity Centers and Destinations

Due to the improved linkages provided by the Regional Connector, LRT will be enhanced throughout the region thereby attracting new ridership on existing lines.

Key regional activity centers that will attract riders to ride seamlessly through the project area to get destinations that, today, require more than one transfer, include:

- University of Southern California via Metro Expo Line
- Los Angeles Trade Technical College via Metro Blue Line
- Downtown Long Beach via Metro Blue Line
- Downtown Culver City via Metro Expo Line
- Crenshaw District via Metro Expo Line
- Downtown Pasadena via Metro Gold Line
- Old Town Pasadena via Metro Gold Line
- South Pasadena via Metro Gold Line
- Chinatown via Metro Gold Line
- City of Compton via Metro Blue Line
- Highland Park via Metro Gold Line
- Boyle Heights via Metro Gold Line
- Arts District via Metro Gold Line
- East Los Angeles Civic Center via Metro Gold Line
- East Los Angeles College via Metro Gold Line
- Los Angeles Coliseum via Metro Expo Line
- Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History via Metro Expo Line
- Watts via Metro Blue Line

6.2 Local Redevelopment Plans and Transit Improvements

Many of the communities in the project area are focusing on redevelopment projects to meet increasing residential and commercial demands. Several large commercial centers or mixed-use developments have been identified within the project area. These centers are typically ideal locations for public transit services due to the large number of patrons and opportunity to alleviate inbound and outbound traffic congestion.

Following are some of the current CRA projects in the project area:

- Downtown Streetcar – This transportation infrastructure project creates a 3 mile (approx) circulator using modern streetcar technology to connect the Broadway Corridor to LA Live and the Grand Avenue Project.
- Bunker Hill Design for Development – This project would amend the 1971 Design for Development (DFD) and increase the maximum floor area ratio in the Bunker Hill Redevelopment Area from 5.0 to 6.0. This would in turn allow 20 percent more square footage than the current DFD. The project is currently in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) phase.
- Park Fifth – An EIR is currently being prepared for a new high-rise residential building on 5th Street between Hill and Olive Streets, proposed as the tallest U.S. residential structure west of Chicago. The project will contain market-rate condominium units, a five-star hotel, and ground floor commercial space.
- 8th & Grand – This is a condominium project with ground floor restaurants and retail located on 8th Street between Grand Avenue and Olive Street. The project was approved by the CRA Board and the City Council in 2006.
- Medallion Phase I – Located at 334 S Main St this first of two phase project will create a mixed use development including apartments, commercial space, public parking and a mid-block paseo and central courtyard.
- Little Tokyo Business Incentive Program – This program provides financial assistance to business owners/tenants in the Little Tokyo area. It includes a façade improvement program and as well as a business loan program.
- Metropolis Project – Located on the southwest corner of 8th and Francisco Streets, this recently-approved development will add 2.8 million square feet of new condominium, office, hotel, and retail space.
- Grand Avenue Project – This project consists of a full-scale redesign of Grand Avenue as well as the addition of a 16-acre park in the Civic Center.

- Angelus Plaza Project – This project involves renovation of all units in the Angelus Plaza senior housing project. It will renovate over 1,000 affordable housing units on the site.
- Central Avenue Art Park - Development of a community park on City-owned surface parking lots, adjacent to the First Street Historic District, Geffen Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Japanese American National Museum (JANM), and the Go For Broke Foundation.
- New Genesis Apartments - This affordable housing project includes efficiency residential units as well as ground-floor commercial retail space and supportive services offices, replacing the existing Genesis Hotel with new construction.
- Los Angeles Sports and Entertainment District/L.A. Live! – Large portions of this project are open as of this writing, but some are still under development. This project creates a major sports and entertainment destination just south of the Financial District, surrounding the existing Los Angeles Convention Center and Staples Center. Additional auditoriums and theaters, as well as retail and office space, have recently been added. Condominium and rental apartment buildings are presently under construction. This redevelopment project is located one block south of the project area, within one-quarter mile of the Pico Avenue on the Metro Blue and Expo Lines. The Regional Connector LRT alternatives directly connect the Metro Gold Line and Eastside Expansion lines to the complex.
- Downtown Women’s Center Relocation/Expansion – This project will remove the existing Downtown Women’s Center on San Pedro Street between 4th and 5th Streets in order to make way for The Medallion. The City will renovate its Renaissance Building as the new Women’s Center, and will provide an additional 75 permanent housing units and eight day rest beds for homeless women. CRA is currently reviewing development plans for the relocation/expansion project.
- Residential Hotels Rehabilitation Program – Under this plan, CRA will acquire approximately 30 single-room occupancy hotels, lease them to non-profit housing operators, and preserve the units as low-income housing. CRA cites public ownership as a means of cleaning up crime-ridden slum hotel areas within the project area.

Additionally, CRA is preparing development plans for the Central Industrial District, located in the southeast portion of the project area. The City does not have any Specific Plan areas within the project area; however there are three in the downtown area that border the project area:

- Alameda District (North of the project area) covers Union Station and the surrounding parcels.
- Los Angeles Sports and Entertainment District (South of the project area) includes the L.A. Live development, Staples Center, the Convention Center, and surrounding parcels slated for high-density development.
- Central City West (West of the project area) covers the area immediately west of the 110 freeway.

6.3 Air Quality and Environmental Sustainability

The City is one of the most congested metropolitan areas in the nation and has been designated as a federal non-attainment area for air quality. The growing concern over global climate change and poor air quality is a predominant concern for Southern California. The use of fossil fuels for transportation generates large amounts of carbon dioxide (a greenhouse gas) emissions, which continue to disrupt progress toward improved air quality. Vehicle-related emissions account for over one-third of all air pollutants in the County (SCAG 2006).

During the 1990s, the County saw a significant increase in transit use. In 2002, SCAG reported that the City ranked 7th in the nation in public transit usage (SCAG 2002). These changes are due in large part to investments in the regional public transportation system.

Investments in public transportation can contribute to alleviating the air quality challenges faced by the region and mitigating the negative effects suffered by Southern California residents. The Regional Connector will contribute to improved mobility by increasing the speed and convenience of the rail system, thereby providing a more viable alternative to the automobile. As a result, projected degradation of air quality will be reduced (at a minimum) or reversed (at a maximum) through reduced automobile-related greenhouse gas emissions in the region.

6.4 Travel Demand and Patterns

Historic growth patterns have resulted in a multi-centered region with multiple transportation corridors converging in the project area. The transportation network includes 9,000 lane-miles of freeway, more than 42,000 lane-miles of arterials, and several large public transit service providers (SCAG RTP 2004). Yet growth of the transportation system has not kept pace with population growth and increases in transportation demand. As the population in the region doubled from 1960 to 2000, highway miles increased by less than 30 percent (SCAG RTP 2004). The congestion caused by insufficient transportation lanes affects both personal travel and goods movement. The majority of the congestion is from travel on the highways and local arterial network regardless of transportation mode. If the current trend persists, travel delays are expected to rise to 5.4 million person hours by 2035, more than

double currently experienced delays, which will deeply affect highway productivity (SCAG PEIR 2004). Expanding the public transportation system will provide more choices for commuters and potentially reduce travel demand and patterns on major highway and arterial systems.

The project area is at the central core of activity for the County. The project area is ranked very high as a destination zone for people coming from outside of the project area. For instance, over 50,000 daily trips (approximately 25 percent of external trip destinations) are made for work from the greater Eastside, to Central Los Angeles. The Central Business District (CBD) is also one of the top attractors of trips from the Westside. In 2006, of the more than 53,000 daily person trips from the project area to other parts of Central Los Angeles, 11,000 were on public transit.

Among passengers riding on the Metro Gold Line from Pasadena to Union Station, nearly three-quarters transfer to the Metro Red Line for continued service into other parts of the City. Figures 1-36 and 1-37 illustrate travel patterns to and from the project area.

6.5 Summary of Public Transit Markets

The project area is located in the crossroads of the region's transportation system because of historic development and population growth patterns. It contains the highest concentration of jobs in the County. Improving access to and through the project area is a vital part of a larger strategy for meeting the economic, social, and environmental goals of the region.

Areas with large and growing populations represent a large public transit market because of high travel demands on already-congested public transit, roads, and freeways. As described in Section 1.8.4, the total population in the project area is projected to increase by almost 16 percent by 2035, increasing the population density. High population densities can increase potential ridership on public transit.

Increasing economic development and employment opportunities in the project area also increases the size of the public transit market. Employment is expected to increase by about 7 percent by 2035. This will increase demands for public transit from commuters wishing to avoid travel in private vehicles during peak traffic hours on roads and freeways.

Improving public transit connectivity in the project area offers opportunities to increase ridership through access to regional transit markets. Balanced local land use and transportation policies can reduce auto travel and support more pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use and transit-oriented developments throughout the region.

Public transit provides an alternative means of personal mobility, supports increases in demands to alternatives to private transportation, and contributes to improving the quality of life in metropolitan communities.

Transit facilities, services and centers are best when they are customer-friendly, community-oriented and well-designed. A network of transit-based centers and corridors, supported by in-fill development, maximizes the use of existing infrastructure, supports transit ridership, reduces automobile air pollution and preserves natural areas. These improvements will help improve the region's economic vitality, quality of life, and environment.

7.0 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Based on the project purpose, Metro developed evaluation criteria. Metro applied the following goals and objectives in evaluating potential alternatives for the Regional Connector Corridor Project. These goals and objectives reflect Metro's mission to meet public transportation and mobility needs for transit infrastructure while also being a responsible steward of the environment and being considerate of affected agencies and community members when planning a fiscally responsible project.

Transportation goal:

- Improve mobility and accessibility both locally and regionally – Develop an efficient and sustainable level of mobility within Los Angeles County to accommodate planned growth and a livable environment
- Improve regional system functionality by minimizing transfers, improving travel times, maximizing ridership, and increasing transit accessibility

Environmental goal:

- Support efforts to improve environmental quality – Develop a project that minimizes adverse environmental impacts while providing environmental benefits, including providing air quality benefits

Land use goal:

- Support community planning efforts – Support the progression of the regional center area as an integrated destination and a dynamic livable area accommodating project growth in a sustainable manner
- Support adopted land use and transportation plans

Implementation goal:

- Provide a safe and secure alternative transportation system – Develop a project that is safe for riders, pedestrians, and drivers while meeting region's need for security
- Support public involvement and community preservation – Incorporate the public in the planning process and balance the benefits and impacts while preserving communities in the area, such as Little Toyko, the Arts District, Bunker Hill, Civic Center, and the Historic District

Financial goal:

- Provide a cost effective transportation system – Develop a project that provides sufficient regional benefits to justify the investment

- Achieve a financially feasible project – Develop a project that maximizes opportunity for funding and financing that is financially sustainable

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this project is to improve the region's public transit service and mobility by connecting the light rail service of the Metro Gold Line to the Metro Blue Line and the Metro Expo Line. This link would serve communities across the region, allowing greater accessibility while serving population and employment growth in downtown Los Angeles.

In addition to mobility benefits, the location of the Regional Connector project has the potential to improve the livability of the entire Los Angeles County region. Improved mobility to and through downtown Los Angeles has the potential to boost economic development and improve social justice by providing better access to employment. Improved transit connectivity will increase transit ridership which will also generate environmental benefits through reduced vehicle trips and less roadway congestion. The Regional Connector project sits at an ideal location where the region could realize tremendous benefits.

Since the completion of studies on the Metro Blue Line to Pasadena performed in 1993 and 1994, the Metro Rail system has grown substantially, with rail lines in operation and under construction extending over 80 track-miles within Los Angeles County. Currently, the Metro Red and Metro Purple subway lines serve as an interim connection between the Metro Blue Line at 7th Street/Metro Center and the Metro Gold Line at Union Station, but the transfers involved are time-consuming, contribute to crowding on the subway platforms and trains, and may dissuade passengers from riding. This may become more noticeable as the newly opened Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension (2009) becomes more widely used as well as when the Metro Expo Line opens in 2011, as it will share the Blue Line tracks at 7th Street/Metro Center Station and add to existing crowds.

The Regional Connector will improve service for communities locally and across the region, allowing greater mobility and accessibility while supporting the revitalization of downtown. New stations will provide greater coverage of the downtown area, thus enhancing the convenience of the existing rail and bus system.

9.0 REFERENCES

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