

NORTH SAN FERNANDO VALLEY BUS RAPID TRANSIT NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT RACIAL EQUITY ANALYSIS

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
EBT	CalFresh Electronic Benefit Transfer
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
OPR	California Office of Planning and Research
PRC	California Public Resources Code
CSUN	California State University, Northridge
FTBMI	Fernandeño Tatavium Band of Mission Indians
Metro	Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
MATCH	Metro Affordable Transit Connected Housing
NSFV	North San Fernando Valley
Project	North San Fernando Valley Bus Rapid Transit Network Improvements Project
Q&A	question and answer
SFV	San Fernando Valley
SB	Senate Bill
TSP	transit signal priority

1.1 Introduction

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) serves as transportation planner and coordinator, designer, builder, and operator for one of the country’s largest, most populous counties. Over the coming decades, Metro intends to greatly expand the fixed guideway rail and bus network throughout Los Angeles County consistent with the core values identified in Measure M, which was approved by the voters in November 2016. The North San Fernando Valley (NSFV) Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Improvements is a Measure M project with a projected opening date between Fiscal Year 2023 and Fiscal Year 2025 and \$180 million in Measure M funding.

Since Measure M, Metro advanced the analysis of the NSFV BRT Improvements, and ongoing coordination with the NextGen Bus Plan led to the identification of a new project alternative, the NSFV BRT Network Improvements (Project), focused on network improvements in the San Fernando Valley (SFV). The Project is an enhanced bus network proposed by Metro that would increase connectivity and provide high-quality bus service and transit infrastructure in communities of NSFV from Northridge to the west and North Hollywood to the east. Metro is seeking a Statutory Exemption under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) through Senate Bill (SB) 288 codified as California Public Resources Code (PRC) 21080.19 (added January 1, 2021). As required under the PRC § 21080.25 SB 288 Exemption, Additional Requirements for Sustainable Transportation Projects Exceeding \$100,000,000 (C), this Racial Equity Analysis will substantiate the case for the applicability of the Statutory Exemption to the Project in the following ways:

- Identifying the racial equity impacts of the Project
- Identifying who will benefit from and be burdened by the Project
- Suggesting strategies, designs, or actions to mitigate impacts where significant or disproportionate impacts exist

Per guidance from the California Office of Planning and Research (OPR), the use of Racial Equity Analyses is relatively new in the United States (OPR 2021). However, a Racial Equity Analysis should be conducted prior to the decision-making process or implementation of an action because it is meant to be used to inform decisions, similar to an Environmental Assessment under CEQA.

1.2 Methodology

The Project’s Racial Equity Analysis follows OPR guidance, with recommendations from the organization Race Forward (OPR 2021). Race Forward describes a Racial Equity Analysis as “a systematic examination of how different racial and ethnic groups will likely be affected by a proposed action or decision.” Race Forward recommends using the following 10 sample questions to anticipate, assess, and prevent potential adverse consequences of proposed actions on different racial groups:

- **Identifying Stakeholders.** Which racial/ethnic groups may be most affected by and concerned with the issues related to this proposal?

- **Engaging Stakeholders.** Have stakeholders from different racial/ethnic groups—especially those most adversely affected—been informed, meaningfully involved, and authentically represented in the development of this proposal? Who is missing and how can they be engaged?
- **Identifying and Documenting Racial Inequities.** Which racial/ethnic groups are currently most advantaged and most disadvantaged by the issues this proposal seeks to address? How are they affected differently? What quantitative and qualitative evidence of inequality exists? What evidence is missing or needed?
- **Examining the Causes.** What factors may be producing and perpetuating racial inequities associated with this issue? How did the inequities arise? Are they expanding or narrowing? Does the proposal address root causes? If not, how could it?
- **Clarifying the Purpose.** What does the proposal seek to accomplish? Will it reduce disparities or discrimination?
- **Considering Adverse Impacts.** What adverse impacts or unintended consequences could result from this policy? Which racial/ethnic groups could be negatively affected? How could adverse impacts be prevented or minimized?
- **Advancing Equitable Impacts.** What positive impacts on equality and inclusion, if any, could result from this proposal? Which racial/ethnic groups could benefit? Are there further ways to maximize equitable opportunities and impacts?
- **Examining Alternatives or Improvements.** Are there better ways to reduce racial disparities and advance racial equity? What provisions could be changed or added to ensure positive impacts on racial equity and inclusion?
- **Ensuring Viability and Sustainability.** Is the proposal realistic and adequately funded, with mechanisms to ensure successful implementation and enforcement? Are there provisions to ensure ongoing data collection, public reporting, stakeholder participation, and public accountability?
- **Identifying Success Indicators.** What are the success indicators and progress benchmarks? How will impacts be documented and evaluated? How will the level, diversity, and quality of ongoing stakeholder engagement be assessed?

This Racial Equity Analysis will respond to each of the above questions in ten separate sections (see Chapter 2, Racial Equality Analysis).

1.3 Project Location

The SFV is a region north of the Los Angeles Basin bounded by four mountain ranges. The NSFV communities include Burbank, North Hollywood, Valley Glen, Pacoima, Arleta, Panorama City, Lake View Terrace, San Fernando, Mission Hills, Van Nuys, North Hills, Lake Balboa, Reseda, Northridge, Woodland Hills, Winnetka, and Chatsworth. The existing NSFV bus network runs from the neighborhoods of Northridge in the west to North Hollywood in the east. It serves the communities of Chatsworth, Canoga Park, Winnetka, Northridge, Reseda, North Hills, Lake Balboa, Granada Hills, Mission Hills, North Hills, Panorama City, Arleta, and Sun Valley. The primary streets for the Project, which include the network improvements described in Section 1.6, Project Description, would include Roscoe Boulevard, Lankershim Boulevard, and Nordhoff Street, with additional improvements planned for services operating along and bus stops located along Reseda Boulevard,

Sherman Way, Vanowen Street, and Victory Boulevard. In addition, bus stop improvements would be made at the California State University, Northridge (CSUN) campus. See Figure 1, *Regional Map*, and Figure 2, *Local Vicinity*.

1.4 Project Background

In March 2017, the Metro Board of Directors gave approval to initiate a technical study preceding environmental review for this project, which was completed in September 2017 with the publication of the NSFV BRT Improvements Environmental Framework Report (Appendix A). This study established a study area and identified three preliminary single-line BRT concepts.

In May 2018, the Metro Board of Directors authorized the NSFV BRT Corridor Project, including an Alternatives Analysis and Environmental Clearance Process. Per Measure M, the project is expected to open between Fiscal Years 2023 and 2025. The Alternatives Analysis process began in July 2018 with early study activities focused on field reviews, planning assessments, stakeholder engagement, and an operational study to reassess the initial BRT concepts. From July 2018 to June 2019, an Alternatives Analysis was performed to assess the project goal of providing a high-capacity premium east-west transit service that will connect key activity centers and the regional transit system in the NSFV. The Alternatives Analysis process refined the previously identified alignments in the 2017 Framework Study to enable Metro and City stakeholders to evaluate a range of alternatives for a BRT service in the project study area.

In October 2019, the Metro Board received the results of the Alternatives Analysis and the community outreach performed during summer 2019 on the Project to be evaluated in the environmental review phase. The Board authorized Metro staff to continue studying the Project while considering community input and the NextGen Bus Study.

As a result of additional technical analysis and public outreach and input, Metro introduced a new option for the NSFV Transit Corridor project, the BRT Network Improvements, which differs from the single-line BRT option originally proposed and studied during the Alternatives Analysis phase. This is known as the BRT Network Improvements Alternative and is the alternative analyzed in this Racial Equity Analysis.

The BRT Network Improvements Project builds off the NextGen Bus Plan Project and better aligns with community input as well as ongoing developments with other Metro projects and programs. Notably, for Measure M funding eligibility purposes, the Network Approach alternative, which is the subject of this analysis, is consistent with the project identified in the Measure M ordinance. Additionally, the BRT Network Improvements Alternative, which provides improvements on multiple corridors and spreads the benefit of the Measure M funds more widely throughout the North SFV, performs well at achieving project goals and serving transit equity areas.

1.5 Project Description

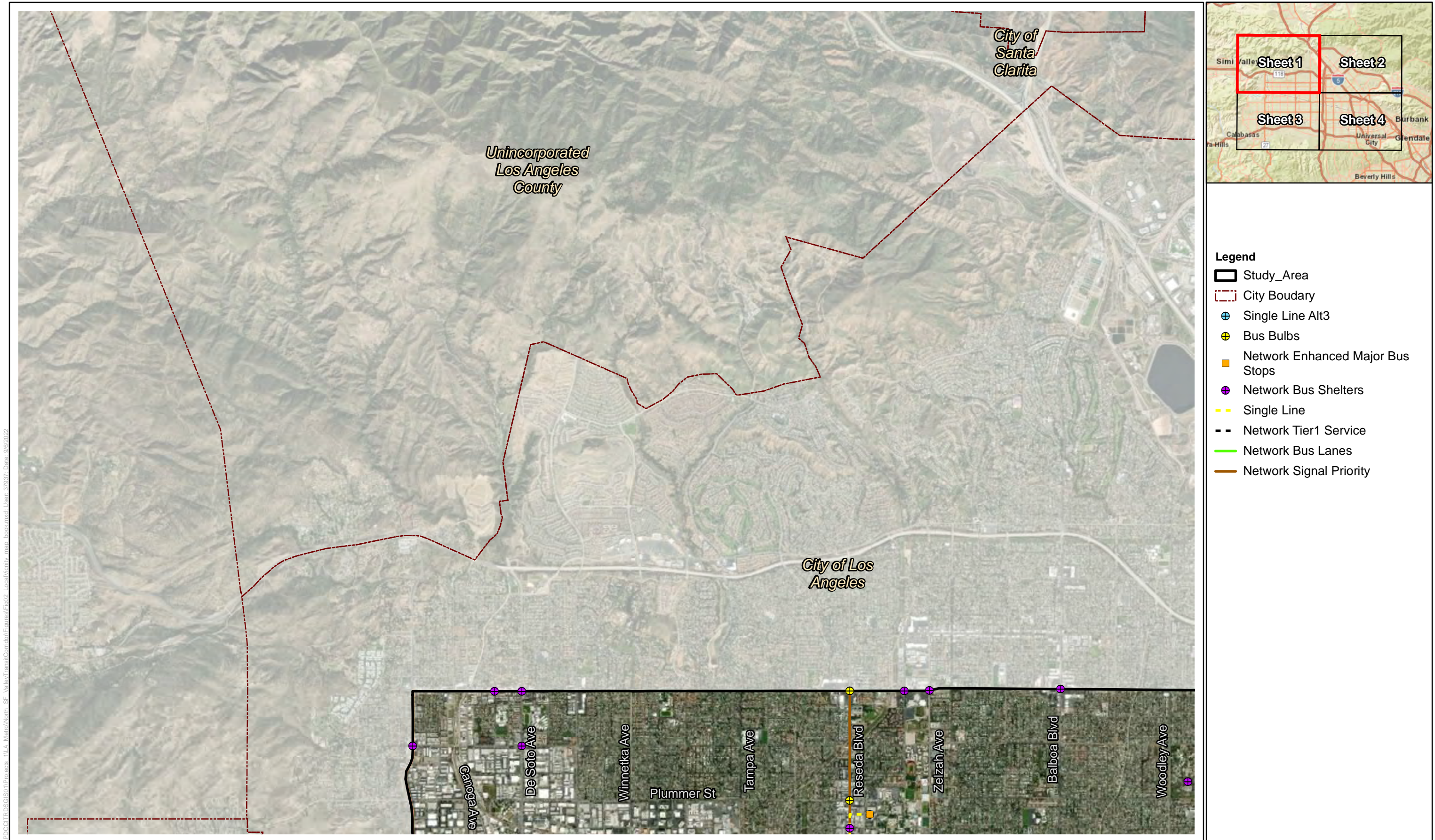
The Project consists of the following project elements: more frequent bus service, transit signal priority (TSP), enhanced stops with new shelters, new zero emission electric buses, all-door boarding, peak-hour bus lanes, and bus bulbs. Each project element is discussed in more detail below.

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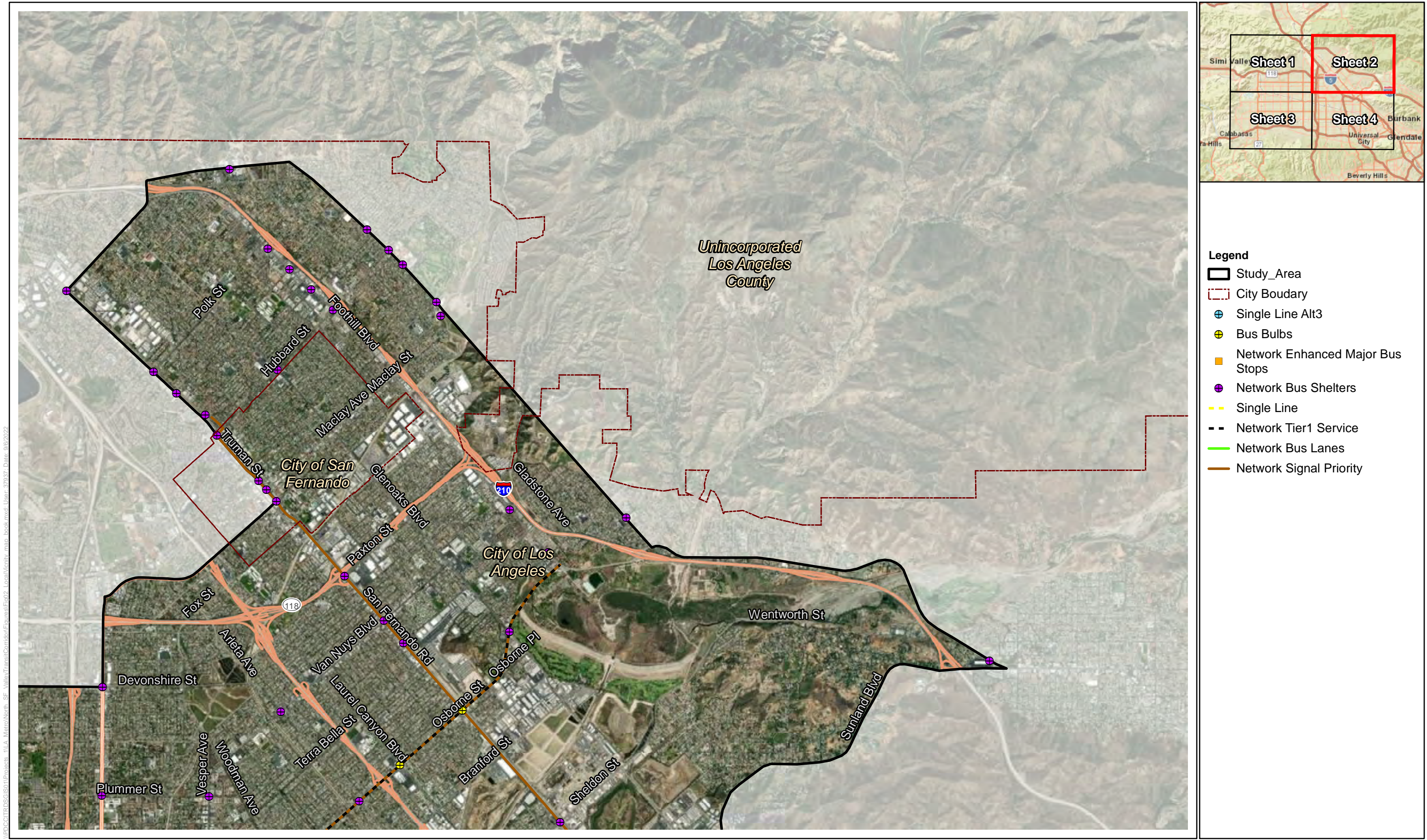
Figure 1
Regional Map





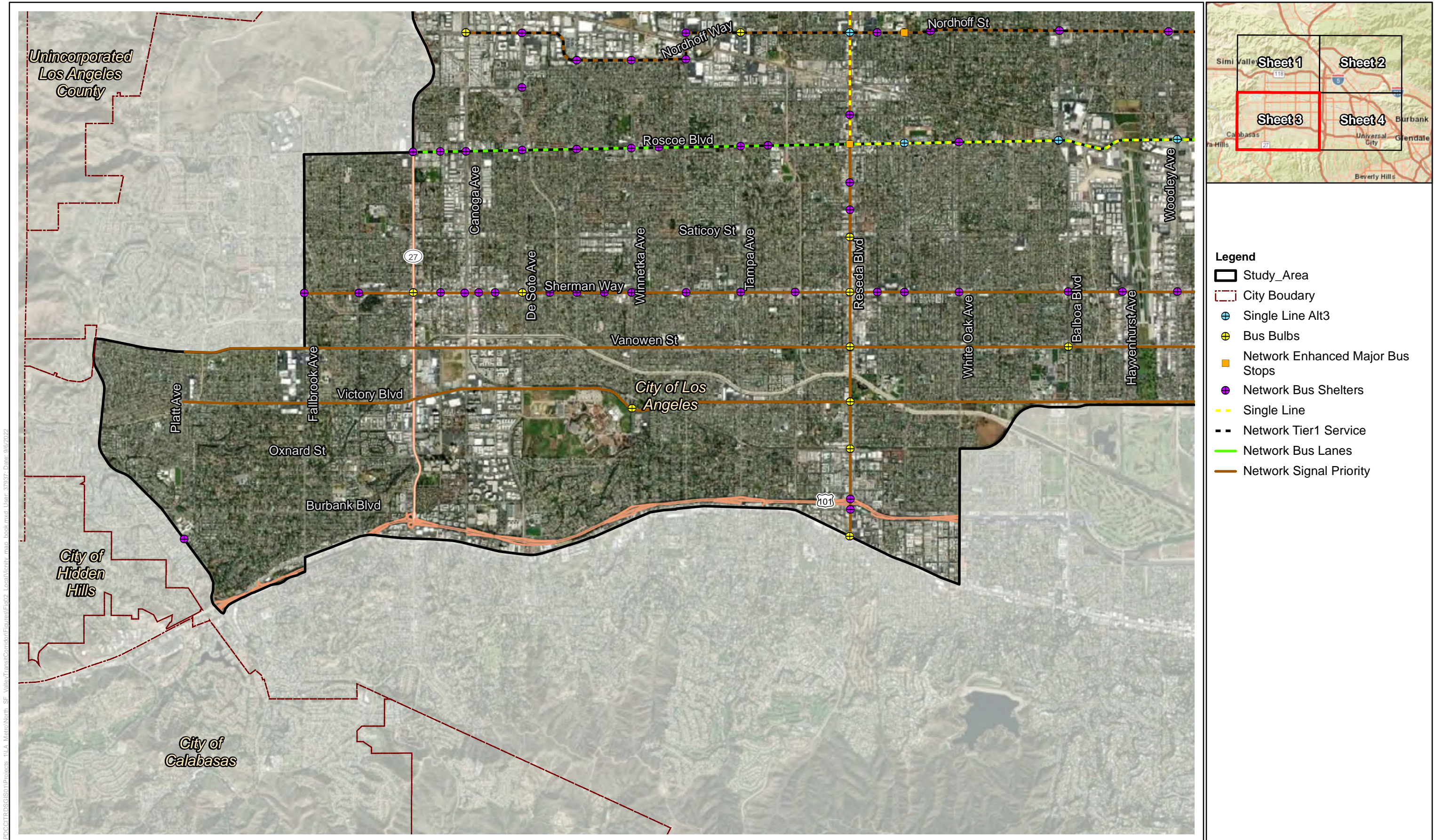
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**Figure 2, Sheet 1 of 4
Local Vicinity**



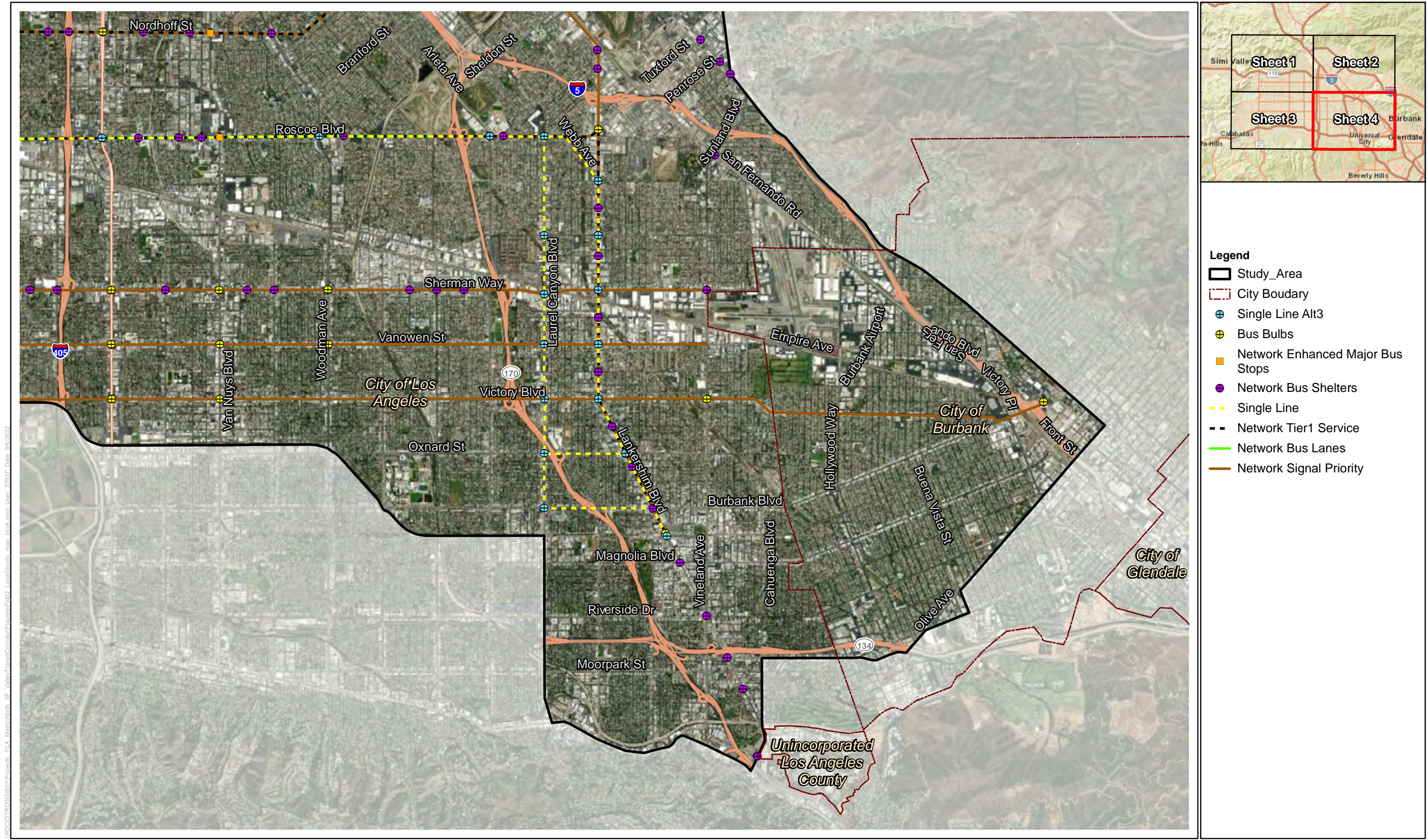
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**Figure 2, Sheet 2 of 4
Local Vicinity**



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**Figure 2, Sheet 3 of 4
Local Vicinity**



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**Figure 2, Sheet 4 of 4
Local Vicinity**

1.5.1 More Frequent Bus Service

The Project would improve the bus service frequency during the daytime on weekdays for the Roscoe Line 152 and Nordhoff Line 166 from every 15 minutes to every 10 minutes. This would reduce average wait times at bus stops for riders.

1.5.2 Transit Signal Priority (TSP)

The Project would add TSP for up to seven bus lines, including 152 (Roscoe Boulevard), 162 (Sherman Way), 164 (Victory Boulevard), 165 (Vanowen Street), 166 (Nordhoff Street), 224 (Lankershim Boulevard), and 240 (Reseda Boulevard/Ventura Boulevard). TSP allows buses to stop without having to pull in and out of traffic. TSP uses existing vehicle location and wireless communications to advance or extend the green cycle of a traffic signal to allow a bus to continue through an intersection when the bus is running behind schedule—helping to reduce travel times by up to 15 percent and improve reliability.

1.5.3 Enhanced Stops

New bus shelters are proposed at nearly 400 locations. At key bus stops at five busy locations, enhanced amenities would include larger shelters, more seating, new real-time and wayfinding information, new landscaping features, and better lighting.

1.5.4 Electric Buses with All-Door Boarding

New zero emission electric buses are proposed for Lines 152 (Roscoe Boulevard), 162 (Sherman Way), 166 (Nordhoff Street), and 240 (Reseda Boulevard /Ventura Boulevard). All-door boarding would also be added to all bus lines in the San Fernando Valley. All-door boarding allows customers to board a bus at any door with their TAP cards and allows for faster boarding and shorter stops, reducing travel times and increasing reliability for riders.

1.5.5 Peak-Hour Bus Lanes

The Project would add new peak-hour-only bus lanes on Roscoe Boulevard between State Route 170 and Topanga Canyon Boulevard. Bus priority lanes convert one lane in each direction into a bus priority and right-turn-only lane on weekdays during peak hours from 7 to 10 a.m. and 3 to 7 p.m. These lanes would improve bus speeds by 15 percent or more, increasing service frequency and reliability, as well as enhancing mobility by moving more people without adding more infrastructure. These lanes are proposed where parking is restricted in peak periods.

1.5.6 Bus Bulbs

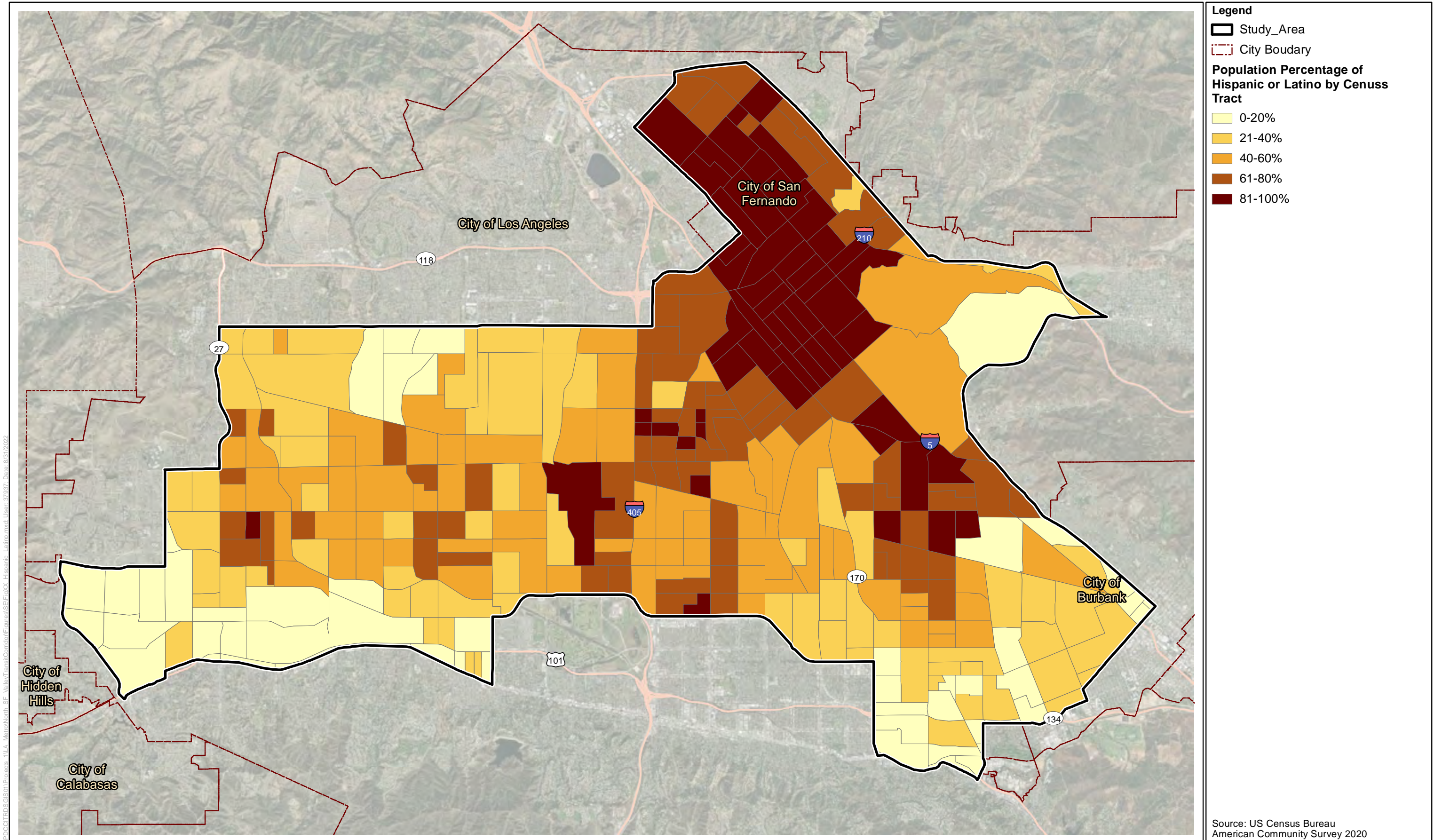
Bus bulbs are proposed at up to 82 locations, including the busiest bus stops on Reseda Boulevard, Nordhoff Street, and Lankershim Boulevard. Bus bulbs extend the sidewalk at bus stops across the first road lane, which improves accessibility, makes boarding easier for passengers, and reduces delays for buses and passengers.

1.6 Project Area Demographics

The NSFV BRT lines run through the most densely populated neighborhoods in the SFV. Most of these neighborhoods have relatively high concentrations of racial minorities, with people of color making up 80 percent or more of residents in some Census tracts (U.S. Census 2020). Surrounding suburbs—including Sherman Oaks, Calabasas, and Thousand Oaks—are largely composed of residential tracts with 60.0 to 79.9 percent White people, with several of these cities having 80 percent or more.

Metro identifies Equity Focus Communities as Census tract areas in which at least 40 percent of residents are low-income (earning \$35,000 or less per year), 80 percent of residents are people of color, or 10 percent of the households do not have a car. Metro Lines 152 and 166 (which are part of the Project) primarily serve Equity Focus Communities along Nordhoff Street and Roscoe Boulevard, including Panorama City, Canoga Park, Reseda, and Van Nuys. Based on the 2019 On-Board survey results, 80 percent of surveyed riders identify as Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (See Appendix B). Seventy-five percent of surveyed riders do not have access to high speed internet; 25 percent of rider households earn less than \$5,000 annually; and over 50 percent live below the poverty line. Nearly 50 percent of riders on these lines live or work in the area.

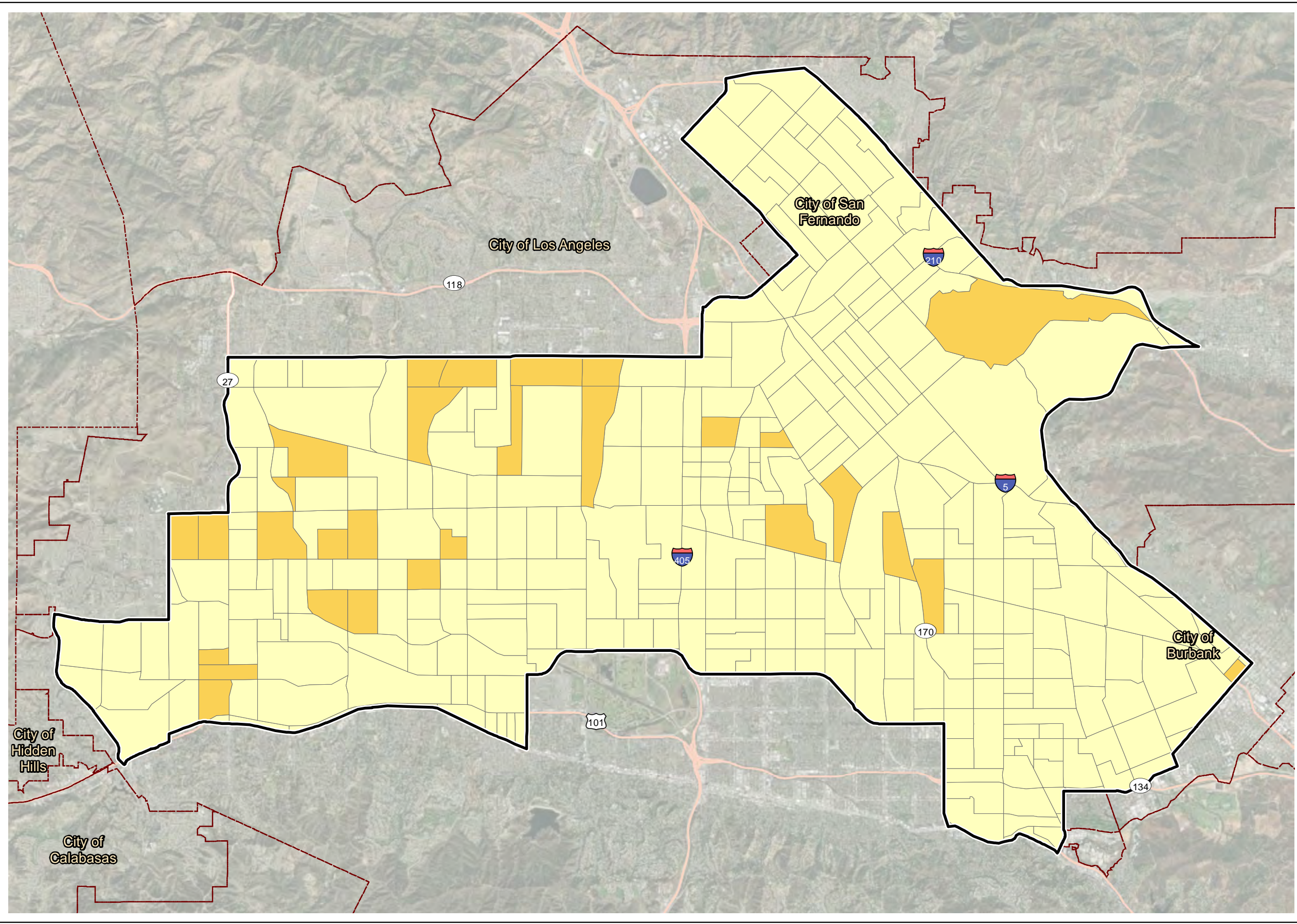
The Project will also focus on improving service for CSUN students. 75 percent of CSUN students identify as Black, Indigenous, and people of color; 71 percent of students are first-generation college students; and 83 percent of students receive grants, scholarships, and/or work-study aid.



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Figure 3
Percentage Hispanic or Latino by Census Tract

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Legend

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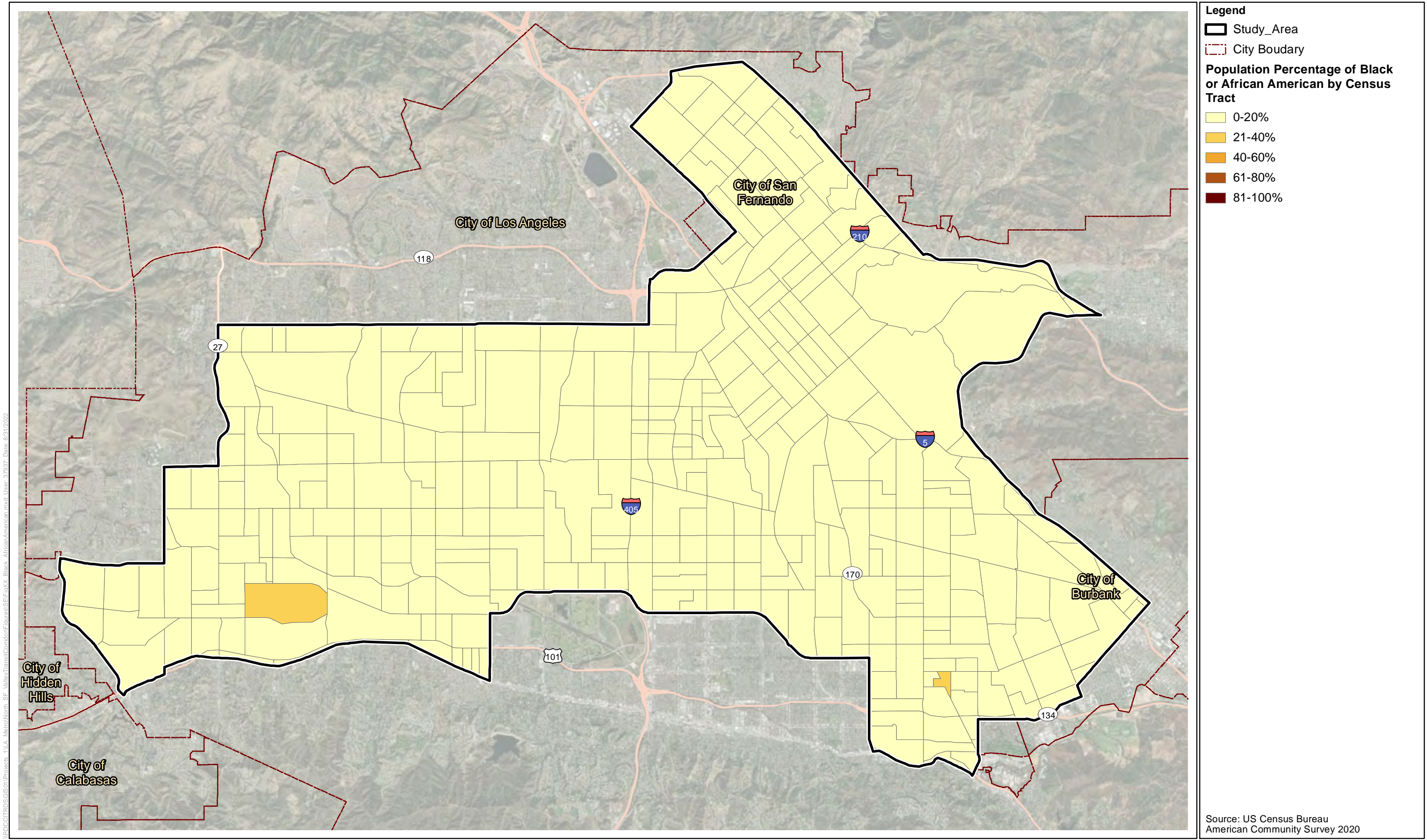
Population Percentage of Asian Descent by Census Tract

- 0-20%
- 21-40%
- 40-60%
- 61-80%
- 81-100%

Source: US Census Bureau
American Community Survey 2020

0 1 2 Miles
1 in = 2 miles

Figure 4
Percentage Asian by Census Tract



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Figure 5
Percentage Black or African American by Census Tract

2.1 Identifying Stakeholders

The Project is in a racially diverse area of the NSFV in Los Angeles County, Southern California. Table 1 summarizes the racial groups that reside in the project area.¹

Table 1. Population within the Project Area by Race

Race	Total Population	Population Percentage	LA County Population Percentage	California State Population Percentage
American Indian and Alaskan Native	1,905	0.1	1.5	1.7
Asian	139,720	10.3	15.6	15.9
Black or African American	56,574	4.2	9.0	6.5
Hispanic or Latino	692,037	51	49.1	40.2
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	1,550	0.1	0.4	.5
Two or More Races	33,241	2.5	-	-
Some Other Race Alone	6256	0.4	-	-
White	425,989	31.4	25.3	35.2
Project Area Population	1,357,272	100	100	100

Source: American Communities Survey 2017; U.S. Census Bureau 2021a, 2021b.

According to the data above, the communities within the project area are predominantly Hispanic or Latino (51 percent) (see Figure 3, *Percentage Hispanic or Latino by Census Tract*), and 10 percent of the population is Asian (see Figure 4, *Percentage Asian by Census Tract*). Only 31 percent of the population is considered White alone, and 4.2 percent of the population is Black or African American (see Figure 5, *Percentage Black or African American by Census Tract*), indicating that the majority of communities within the vicinity of the Project are communities of color. As discussed in Section 1.4, Project Location, communities of color comprise the majority of transit riders in the project area and are therefore important stakeholders in the outcomes for racial equity for the Project.

¹ The project area is defined by the project limits, including construction and operation (see Figure 2, *Local Vicinity*).

Additionally, the Project is located on land known to be within the historic tribal boundaries of the Fernandeano Tatabium Band of Mission Indians (FTBMI) (FTBMI 2022).² The Tribe was present in the area (current-day northern Los Angeles County) prior to settler colonization and the 1797 establishment of Mission San Fernando. The Project is neither within land officially designated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs as Land Areas of Federally Recognized Tribes, nor designated as a California State Reservation (Bureau of Indian Affairs 2022; Native American Heritage Commission 2022). However, FTBMI members are considered stakeholders within the project area and should be consulted in the case of construction to ensure that tribal cultural resources are not disturbed.

2.2 Engaging Stakeholders

Metro's project team has established a robust community outreach plan for the BRT Network Improvements Alternative, which is referred to as the Project in this analysis. Since the project area predominantly consists of communities of color, a broad variety of community-based groups, businesses, faith communities, and more can be brought into the process of engaging stakeholders. The community outreach team has attended several one-on-one meetings with key stakeholders to provide an overview of the Project, the project timeline, outreach and engagement, and next steps in the process, as well as gather their feedback. Metro has engaged in the community outreach process with the following groups that have been identified as project stakeholders:

- Neighborhood councils
- Community-based organizations
- Businesses and business groups
- CSUN groups and organizations
- Mobility advocacy groups

Community meetings and communications have been targeted to communities along the project corridor, many of which rely on the existing bus lines proposed to be improved by the Project. Non-digital communications have been provided via mailers and a dial-in hotline to ensure those with limited internet availability can be involved. Community meetings have also provided in-person opportunities to participate and were held during a variety of times outside business hours to accommodate those with alternative work hours. All meetings included Spanish and Armenian interpretation, and meeting materials were available in Spanish and Armenian. Outreach materials such as the online StoryMap, flyers, and direct mailers were also available in all three languages. Leading up to the community meetings, 96,000 flyers were distributed along the project corridors. An additional 37,366 mailers were sent to residential and commercial properties in Equity Focused Communities within the project area. Among the three community meetings, 106 comments were received.

Outreach efforts to existing transit riders were conducted to help ensure that those taking transit within the project area were aware of the revised Project, which focuses on network improvements, and had opportunities to provide feedback. In order to accomplish this, transit rider intercept interviews were conducted at key bus stops with high ridership along Roscoe Boulevard, Nordhoff

² The tribal boundary established by the FTBMI is based on the villages from which registered FTBMI tribal citizens descend. Due to the complex kinship and social exchange networks of their ancestors, the tribal boundary does not include all the abundant locations associated with the FTBMI peoples.

Street, Reseda Boulevard, and the North Hollywood B Line (Red)/G Line (Orange) station. Respondents were generally supportive of the Project.

Additionally, a questionnaire was sent out to transit riders within the project area via the Transit App. The questionnaire was designed to better understand the characteristics of transit riders in the project area and which elements of the Project they deemed most important. One questionnaire in both English and Spanish was made available on the Transit App. The questionnaire was targeted to the geographic area within the NSFV and was sent to approximately 12,011 unique devices. The questionnaire was available from June 1, 2022 to June 14, 2022.

An ongoing, equitable community engagement process will ensure opportunities for communities of color to stay involved. The final project design will be based on and reflective of community feedback garnered through equity-oriented outreach.

2.3 Identifying and Documenting Racial Inequities

According to the Metro Fall 2019 Customer Survey Result for Bus Lines 152, 224, and 240, 84 percent of those surveyed do not own a car, and 66 percent ride Metro 5 days per week, indicating that they are frequent riders who rely on bus service. Eighty percent of respondents identify as Black, Indigenous, and people of color (including 58 percent of the respondents identifying as Latinx). Those using Metro's service due to its affordability, which include many people of color, have identified that the service is not meeting the needs of those riders who rely on the service most to make essential trips.³ The Project would make public transportation more accessible to communities of color in the NSFV region by making bus service safer, more frequent, faster, and more reliable. Additional data regarding factors that prevent communities of color in the region from using the NSFV network, the geographic distribution of homes without cars, and bus routes used or needed by communities of color to go to work, school, grocery stores, and other essential locations would be beneficial to ensure the network can continue to properly address equity gaps in the NSFV region.

2.4 Examining the Causes

The SFV has a long history of displacement, from the colonization of native land by the Spanish to the homesteading carried out by European Americans in the 1800s. Railroads brought Black, Mexican, Japanese, and Filipino laborers and farmers to the area in the late 1800s, though redlining and restrictive housing policies ultimately created segregation and allowed for White communities to benefit from residential and industrial development. Changes in national immigration laws in the 1960s resulted in large populations of Asian and Latino immigrants settling in the SFV. Activism by Black communities also resulted in more integration of suburbs across the SFV. As the SFV became a more diverse region, White communities that had supported segregation and other racist policies left for newer suburbs (DeGuzman 2011).

³ Data from Metro demonstrates that 34,430 of the 44,363 people that live within one-quarter mile of a NextGen Tier 1 bus stop in the NSFV are considered minorities, and 22,634 people are considered low-income. The intersection of poverty and race in the project area demonstrates the importance of investment in the NSFV, as communities of color have been systematically excluded from financial, professional, educational, and social opportunities that are associated with accruing and maintaining wealth and financial stability.

The current state of infrastructure, including transportation infrastructure that is not meeting the needs of transit-dependent communities, reflects a nationwide history of disinvestment from and lacking investment in low-income communities of color caused by segregation and exclusion from political and civic processes at all levels of government. The disinvestment has excluded low-income communities of color from participating in jobs, education, and other opportunities that are critical to achieving financial stability.

2.5 Clarifying the Purpose

This Project would narrow the inequities by investing in a system that supports current users and reflects their needs, improving access, safety, and comfort for a broad base of transit users.

The purpose of the Project is to make it easier to get around Los Angeles with better transit across the NSFV. The Project would improve east-west transit service with better access to jobs, education, and essential services. With more frequent and enhanced stops, more bus shelters, improved connections to the regional transit network, better access to important destinations across the region, more transit to meet growing demand, and service improvements that are brought to riders sooner, the Project would be expected to reduce disparities in the quality of service that Metro provides in the NSFV when compared to other Metro service areas. High quality transit that is accessible to more of the population reduces the number of cases of transit-dependent individuals who cannot participate in opportunities outside of their homes or communities. The Project would improve service for existing Metro users and make it a more enticing option for those who do not ride transit currently.

2.6 Considering Adverse Impacts

While participants in the 2022 outreach meetings were generally supportive of the revised Project, which focuses on network improvements, participants expressed some concerns about how the Project could adversely affect the surrounding community as well as transit riders. Participant concerns focused on how the Project could adversely affect traffic. Participants expressed concerns about the traffic impact of bus-only lanes on Roscoe Boulevard. Other participants questioned how the bus bulbs on Nordhoff Street would affect vehicle and bicycle traffic.

Participants who use the transit system provided opinions about how the project design may result in unintended consequences that would detract from customers receiving the best possible service. Some expressed concerns that the Project would not be an adequate substitute for a single-line bus rapid transit system and shared concerns about safety on the buses and at bus stops. Participants also raised comments and questions about connections to destinations and other transit lines, including Metrolink, as well as future Metro projects, including Sepulveda Transit Corridor and the East San Fernando Valley Light Rail.

The Project may cause parking and traffic impacts on communities of color within the project area, particularly along Roscoe Boulevard where the Project proposes peak-hour bus lanes. Peak-hour bus lanes and bus boarding islands require repurposing of current travel lanes that are used by communities of color (residents and businesses) for their daily travel needs. These vulnerable communities may especially be affected by any peak-hour traffic congestion increases resulting from the proposed new bus lanes or impacts from parking loss for expanded hours of parking restrictions

associated with these bus lanes, particularly in areas where there are higher-density housing units with high parking demand.

Local businesses along Roscoe Boulevard may also be burdened by potential traffic and parking impacts. Customers who are driving may find more traffic congestion in travelling to reach a business, and employees may find it difficult to reach their place of work due to the removal of one general traffic lane on Roscoe Boulevard during peak hours. Across the entire project area, construction may also cause adverse parking, traffic, and noise impacts for both businesses and residents. While installation of new bus lanes and transit signal priority will have minimal impact on traffic, construction of bus bulbs may have some impact on traffic flows.

Lastly, high-quality public investments like the NSFV Transit Corridor Project must consider the possibility of gentrification and displacement. It is not anticipated that the Project will cause gentrification and displacement. The elements are quick build smaller scale improvements spread across the NSFV and do not include a new BRT line with significant new stations. Nevertheless, Metro has a suite of policies and programs that can mitigate gentrification and displacement impacts. The Metro Affordable Transit Connected Housing (MATCH) program uses funds from Metro, lenders, and foundations to protect and produce affordable housing in low-income communities near high-service transit stops. Metro's Joint Development Program is focused on using Metro-owned land to build as much quality and affordable housing near transit. Metro's Transit Oriented Communities Policy encourages partnerships with cities, community-based organizations, and affordable housing stakeholders to support stabilizing communities surrounding transit.

Other adverse impacts will be mitigated by an equitable community engagement process, which is discussed in Section 2.2, Engaging Stakeholders.

2.7 Advancing Equitable Impacts

This Project will include transit service improvements, including speed, service, and customer experience upgrades along multiple existing bus routes. Primarily, this Project will upgrade NextGen Tier 1 bus service and will provide enhanced bus stops along Metro Lines 152 and 166, which primarily serve Equity Focused Communities along Nordhoff Street and Roscoe Boulevard, including Panorama City, Canoga Park, Reseda, and Van Nuys. Based on the 2019 On-Board Survey results, four out of five riders identify as Black, Indigenous, or people of color. Three in four riders don't have access to high-speed internet. One in four households earns less than \$5,000 annually, and over 50 percent live below the poverty line.

Nearly 50 percent of riders on these lines live or work in the area. Engagement with employees of local businesses along the project area found that many of them identified themselves as transit riders. The Project will also focus on improving service for students of CSUN, where 75 percent identify as Black, Indigenous, or people of color; 71 percent are first generation college students; and 70 percent of students receive grants, scholarships and/or work-study aid. Increasing weekday bus service on Nordhoff Street to every 10 minutes will make it easier for students to attend class and access the extracurricular activities CSUN offers for a more enriching academic experience. Bus stop enhancements like bus bulbs makes transit more accessible to disabled populations by creating more space for them to safely navigate and board at bus stops.

The Project will benefit communities of color, which is the primary demographic of the project area, by providing faster, more reliable, convenient, and sustainable transportation options to those who

have been historically disenfranchised and underserved by public services, including transportation. The Project will also bring more electric buses and charging facilities to the region, which will improve public health by decreasing harmful emissions for all communities within the NSFV region.

2.8 Examining Alternatives and Improvements

2.8.1 Alternatives Analysis Outreach

In May 2018, the Metro Board authorized initiation of the NSFV BRT Corridor Planning and Environmental Study, and staff began work on the Alternatives Analysis in July 2018. As part of the study, community meetings, outreach events, and agency meetings were conducted in September 2018 through December 2018 to introduce the Project and solicit input on the proposed routes. All community meetings included simultaneous Spanish interpretation and handouts of outreach materials in Spanish. Meetings were held in venues that would be welcoming to diverse stakeholders, such as local churches, elementary and high schools, and recreation centers. Meetings were conducted in workshop formats to allow one-on-one dialogues with project staff and to receive comments directly on outreach materials and maps of the corridor. All meetings included children's activities and were advertised to promote a welcoming environment and to encourage attendance by families. Pop-up outreach events were selected to reach diverse populations and historically underserved and low-income communities, and they were attended by Spanish-speaking project team members. The Metro team successfully engaged with stakeholders at the Greater San Fernando Valley Chamber of Commerce's annual Latino Expo at Panorama Mall and the weekly Farmer's Market hosted by the Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in Panorama City, where all food vendors accept CalFresh Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards.

2.8.2 2019 Community Meetings

After the Alternatives Analysis Study was completed in June 2019, Metro released two project videos in July 2019—one in English and a slightly different version in Spanish. Prior outreach to Spanish stakeholders found that the lack of high-quality transit affected this community differently, and the Spanish version of the video was tailored to limited English proficiency individuals. Metro used social media advertising to promote both videos to increase awareness of the Project and attendance at the community meetings. The video was viewed over 29,000 times following targeted messaging to users in the study area.

2.8.3 Network Improvements Outreach

In May 2022, Metro began introducing to the community a new option for the Project, the BRT Network Improvements, which differs from the single line BRT option originally proposed and later studied during the Alternatives Analysis Study in 2019. The new option for the Project was developed in response to the over 4,500 comments received during the prior public engagement period from 2018 to 2020 and Metro Board direction in October 2019 to include a Roscoe Boulevard option, incorporate the NextGen Bus Plan, and conduct further outreach to diverse communities. In order to present the BRT Network Improvements to the community and solicit feedback, the project team conducted several briefings and presentations with elected officials representing the project area and CSUN administration officials, attended coordination meetings with Metro Board Deputies

and City staff, conducted key stakeholder meetings, and conducted virtual and in-person community meetings.

In June 2022, three community meetings were held (one virtually and two in-person) to provide an update on the Project and introduce the BRT Network Improvements. The first community meeting was held virtually on Wednesday, June 15, 2022, and presented background information on the Project and key details regarding the BRT Network Improvements. This meeting included a question and answer (Q&A) session, responding to questions and comments received during the meeting. The remaining two community meetings were held on Saturday, June 18, 2022 at the Panorama High School in Panorama City and Tuesday, June 21, 2022, at the Orchard Conference Center on the CSUN campus. These meetings were in an open house format that included meeting boards and formal presentation followed by a facilitated Q&A session, where project team members responded to questions and comments received. The intent of these meetings was not only to provide updates to the community on the Project and the BRT Network Improvements, but also to solicit public feedback and respond to any questions and/or concerns. All meeting dates were chosen to provide opportunities for the public to attend at different times of the day during the week and on the weekend to accommodate the community's various schedules. All meetings included Spanish and Armenian interpretation, and all materials were made available in Spanish and Armenian.

2.9 Ensuring Viability and Sustainability

2.9.1 Funding Source

The Measure M ordinance explicitly identified the proposed Project as “NSFV BRT Improvements,” a transit project that will receive funds from the revenue generated by the new 0.50-cent sales tax. \$180 million in voter-approved Measure M funds have been allocated to the Project, so it has a secure, reliable source of public funding.

2.9.2 Project Delivery

The Project includes a large range of transit network improvements in a variety of locations and neighborhoods throughout the NSFV. These improvements would be implemented over an approximately 2.5-year period. In summer and fall of 2023, network improvement priorities would include the addition of Roscoe Boulevard peak period bus priority lanes, improved service frequency to every 10 minutes on weekdays on Roscoe Boulevard (Line 152) and Nordhoff Street (Line 166), and beginning the new bus shelter installations. From winter 2023 to winter 2025, project activities would include installation of additional new bus shelters, construction of bus bulbs, and introduction of zero emission buses, all door boarding and Transit Signal Priority.

Metro would partner with private companies to deliver the proposed improvements. Per California Public Utilities Code §130051.23 and Ordinance #4-05 of Metro's Administrative Code, firms must be pre-qualified to do business with Metro. To begin the Project, Metro would likely send an Invitation for Bids or a Request for Proposals for consulting services (e.g., design, engineering, construction, permitting) to trusted, pre-qualified firms that have previously collaborated with Metro. A substantial amount of planning and collaboration among separate public and private entities would be required to implement the proposed improvements. However, Metro has decades of experience with development, implementation, operation, and maintenance of public

transportation projects in Los Angeles County and frequently partners with private firms to execute projects.

2.9.3 Public Accountability

Currently, public outreach activities are underway, as described in Section 2.2, Engaging Stakeholders, and Section 2.8, Examining Alternatives and Improvements. The outreach plan was specifically designed to hold meetings to gather feedback leading up to key milestones of the Project. Outreach efforts have engaged and informed stakeholders through traditional and non-traditional outreach approaches. Community feedback has been incorporated into the development of the Network Approach.

All project materials and community meetings provided translation services. Meetings also provided in-person opportunities to participate and were held during varied times of the day and week. In addition to formal community meetings, “pop-up” outreach events were conducted to broaden the team’s efforts to reach diverse populations, historically underserved and low-income communities. Presentations were provided to several different civic and community-based organizations who work with key geographies and members of the community.

As the Project continues throughout the various stages of development, implementation, and maintenance, Metro will continue to engage with stakeholders, including community-based organizations, neighborhood councils, and learning institutions, in order to ensure constituents remain informed about the Project. Metro will continue its partnership with the CSUN faculty, staff, and students, who are major stakeholders on this Project. Metro may continue to hold community pop-up events, transit rider intercept interviews, and community meetings to facilitate public engagement, participation, and understanding of the Project.

2.10 Identifying Success Indicators

Table 2 identifies goals, success indicators, and methods of evaluation for the Project.

Table 2. NSFV Network Improvements Success Indicators

Goal	Success Indicator	Method of Evaluation
Improve the speed, frequency, and reliability of bus service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in travel times between stops Increase in on-time arrivals 	Trip Observations
Improve connectivity to the regional transit network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in incidence of riders using the NSFV bus network to connect to other existing and planned Metro lines and Metrolink regional transit lines 	Rider Surveys
Link key activity centers across the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in incidence of riders using the NSFV bus network to ride between predefined community centers 	Rider Surveys

Goal	Success Indicator	Method of Evaluation
Meet the growing demand for transit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the amount of community members who do use the NSFV bus network, out of community members who need to, want to, or currently use public transit 	Community Surveys
Increase ridership by enhancing the customer experience at local bus stops.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in number of weekly NSFV bus network riders 	Review number of times TAP cards have been used to board the NSFV network buses

Source: Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority 2022.

Each method of evaluation would be conducted before and after the implementation of network improvements. Ride observations, surveys, and TAP card data review would need to occur several times on a pre-determined route segment, days of the week, and times of day, in order to control for variables not related to project implementation.

Metro will continue to implement public outreach strategies described in Section 2.2, Engaging Stakeholders, and Section 2.8, Examining Alternatives and Improvements, to ensure opportunities for engagement from communities of color and low-income communities along the corridor. Optional surveys provided during or after outreach activities will provide Metro with an understanding of the communities present and missing from the outreach process and will allow Metro to tailor their engagement approach accordingly.

Chapter 3

Conclusion

The purpose of this analysis was to identify the racial equity impacts of the Project, identify who will benefit from and be burdened by the Project, and suggest strategies, designs, or actions to mitigate impacts where significant or disproportionate impacts exist. The analysis identified that the Project would be implemented in an area that is predominantly Hispanic/Latino, with large Asian and Black communities as well.

Communities of color comprise the majority of the population in the NSFV. Communities of color and low-income communities are also the majority of transit riders, and transit-dependent riders, in the NSFV service area. Metro has identified the NSFV area as an equity-focus community. Therefore, these communities will benefit from and be affected by implementation of the Project. In past community engagement efforts, the Project has generally received support from these communities, who shared that the existing transit system in the NSFV is not meeting their needs, creating a burden for those who rely on bus service in particular.

Moving forward, Metro should continue to incorporate feedback from transit-dependent riders into the project design, and balance those recommendations against the impacts on traffic, parking, and other temporary or permanent impacts on the roadways. Metro plans to host noticed public meetings to generate community input on the Project prior to project approval and during construction and will continue to provide a diverse range of materials and other forms of engagement in multiple languages.

Overall, the Project is intended to:

- Address equity gaps to communities dependent on transit for day-to-day life
- Provide reliable high-quality bus services
- Provide improved connections to the NSFV service area

Chapter 4 References

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Appendix A

NSFV BRT Improvements Environmental Framework Report

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ezsgtxv7dqsknlf/AAAxWM5mmAb74ToP2Rj6rFe-a/Reports?dl=0&preview=north_sfv_brt_improvements_environmental_framework_report_2017-0919.pdf&subfolder_nav_tracking=1

Appendix B

BRT Network Improvements: Community Meeting Presentation

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ezsgtxv7dqsknlf/AADJ-tsnFBE8pjeE8zQXOYyfa/Presentations%20and%20Meeting%20Materials/June%202022%20Community%20Update%20Meetings/Presentations?dl=0&preview=NSFV_CommunityMeetingPresentation_English.pdf&subfolder_nav_tracking=1