III. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

A. OVERVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

REGIONAL CONTEXT

The project site and adjacent Add Area are located in Los Angeles County, within the City of Los Angeles, approximately 15 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles. Specifically, the project site and Add Area are located in the North Hollywood-Valley Village Community Plan area within the City; the proposed transit plaza and reconfigured Ethel Avenue span the Tujunga Wash; the Tujunga Wash (and therefore a portion of the transit plaza location) is located in the Van Nuys-North Sherman Oaks Community Plan Area. The North Hollywood-Valley Village Plan area is generally bounded by the City of Burbank to the east, the Sherman Oaks-Toluca-Lake-Studio City Community Plan area to the south, Sun Valley-La Tuna Community Plan area to the north, and Van Nuys-North Sherman Oaks Community Plan area to the west. The Plan area encompasses approximately 11 miles of the central eastern portion of the City.

According to the General Plan Land Use Map, approximately 52% of the total community plan area includes residential uses. Commercial uses account for 8% of the total uses while industrial uses account for approximately 6% of the total uses. Open space uses in the plan area account for 10% while the remaining 24% includes streets and parking.

The community plan area is divided into several sub areas, including Valley Village, North Hollywood Community Redevelopment Area, and the Valley-Laurel Plaza regional shopping area.

The project site and Add Area are located in the Valley Village sub-area, which is bounded by the Hollywood Freeway to the east, Ventura Freeway to the south, Burbank Boulevard to the north, and the Tujunga Wash on the west. This sub area is located in the northwestern portion of the Community Plan Area. Similar to the entire area located west of the Hollywood Freeway, this sub-area consists of mostly residential uses with pockets of open space and public facilities uses. Single-family residences are located along interior streets while multiple family residential developments act as buffers from main arterials. In this area, commercial development is located mainly along Laurel Canyon Boulevard, with local commercial centers developed along main arterials.

The project transit plaza would span the Tujunga Wash covering the concrete lined channel and recently planted area (that is currently inaccessible to the public). The Tujunga Wash falls within the Van Nuys-North Sherman Oaks Community Plan area. Approximately 53% of the land uses within this community plan area are residential, 7% are commercial, 7% are industrial, and 10% include open space uses.² Remaining uses are parking and street uses.

The area surrounding the project site and Add Area mostly (but not exclusively) consists of single-family residential neighborhoods and multi-family residential uses located along major

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City of Los Angeles Planning Department, North Hollywood Valley Village Community Plan, Adopted May 14, 1996.

² City of Los Angeles Planning Department, Van Nuys-North Sherman Oaks Community Plan, Adopted September 9,1998.

corridors. The site is not located within any Specific Plan or in any Redevelopment Program area.

LOCAL SETTING

Project Site

The 12.53-acre project site encompasses multiple lots from 13003 to 13075 (excluding 13005) W. Victory Boulevard in a developed area that includes mostly single-family residential uses. The site is an irregularly shaped property with a narrow frontage on W. Victory Boulevard on the south. Victory Boulevard is designated as a Class II Major Highway in the project area. The site is bounded by the Tujunga Wash channel on the west and single-family residential development along Morse Avenue and Kittridge Street on the north and east.

Add Area

In addition to the project site, impacts from potential development of approximately 9.23 acres located directly east of the project site are also included for analysis purposes (See Section II, Project Description for further discussion). Four individual properties comprise the total Add Area evaluated in this EIR. This Add Area is bounded by Victory Boulevard to the south, the project site to the west, Hamlin Street to the north and Coldwater Canyon Avenue to the east. The Add Area is generally surrounded by single-family residential uses to the north and commercial and retail uses to the west (the project site), south and east along Victory Boulevard and Coldwater Canyon Avenue. Below is a brief description of each of the four Add Area properties:

13005 Victory Boulevard

This property is located immediately east of the project site along the southwest side of Morse Avenue, but is not physically located along Victory Boulevard. The property is currently occupied by an 18,414 square foot self-storage facility.

13001 Victory Boulevard/12930 Hamlin Street

This property is also located immediately east of the project site along the north side of Victory Boulevard to Hamlin Street. The site is occupied with St. Jane Frances de Chantal Catholic Church (18,356 square feet) and K-6 Parish School (20,255 square feet).

6455 Coldwater Canyon Boulevard

This property is located on the southwest corner of Coldwater Canyon Boulevard and Hamlin Street immediately east of the project site and is occupied by a 43,026 square foot private school (Summit View, grades 4-12).

12901-12929 Victory Boulevard

This property is located on the northwest corner of Coldwater Canyon Boulevard and Victory Boulevard east of the project site. The site is occupied by a small community shopping center that includes a 4,792 square foot McDonald's fast-food restaurant and 5,766 square feet of miscellaneous retail uses.

The location and context of the project site and the Add Area can be seen in Figures II-1 Project Location and III-1, Aerial Photograph of the Project Site.

Regional and Local Access

Several major freeways are located in the project vicinity and would provide regional access to the site and Add Area. The freeway closest to the project site is the Hollywood Freeway (US-101), located approximately 1.0 mile east of the project site. The Ventura Freeway (SR-134) is located approximately 2.0 miles south of the site and the San Diego Freeway (I-405) is located approximately 3.3 miles to the west. The Golden State Freeway (I-5) is located approximately 3.3 miles to the north, and the Foothill Freeway (I-210) and the Ronald Reagan Freeway (SR-118) are both located within approximately 9 miles of the site to the north.

Local access to the project site, Add Area and surrounding area is provided by several major streets. Victory Boulevard, designated a Class II Major Highway, and Burbank Boulevard are major east-west streets that would provide local access to the project site. Major north-south streets that provide access include Van Nuys Boulevard, Woodman Avenue and Coldwater Canyon Avenue (which also is designated a Class II Major Highway).

In addition to the above-mentioned streets, the site and immediate area are also accessed by local public transportation provided by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Orange Line Busway and the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation Dash service.

Access to existing site uses is provided south of the project site, off of Victory Boulevard at Ethel Avenue. As stated earlier, a portion of the project site is located within the Greenway of the concrete-lined Tujunga Wash. The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's restoration project includes a walkway/bicycle path and planted native trees and shrubs in the Greenway immediately adjacent to the western boundary of the site. The path ends about 100 to 150 feet north of Ethel Avenue; pedestrians/bicyclists must cross Ethel Avenue and Victory Boulevard using narrow existing sidewalks that are not part of the Greenway. The area between Ethel Avenue and Victory Boulevard is currently inaccessible to the public. Access to existing uses located in the Add Area is provided from Victory Boulevard, Coldwater Canyon Boulevard and Hamlin Street.

Site Characteristics

Project Site

The 12.53 acre project site is located in an urban setting and is completely developed as a shopping center that includes various retail and commercial uses, totaling approximately 151,806 square feet. Uses include a health club, market, drug store, sit-down restaurant, bank among other retail/commercial uses. These uses range in size from 780 to 41,141 square feet. The site is also occupied with about 350,000 square feet of surface parking throughout the site. **Table III-1** includes the existing uses and respective areas located on the site.

Figure III-1 Aerial Photograph

TABLE III-1 EXISTING USES ON THE PROJECT SITE		
Use	Area (Sq. Ft.)	
MAJOR TENANTS		
Health Club	41,141	
Market	32,000	
Drug Store	31,117	
Subtotal Major Tenants	104,258	
OTHER TENANTS/USES		
Sit-down Restaurant	4,524	
Bank	3,324	
Other ²	39,700	
Subtotal Other Tenants/Uses	47,548	
USES TOTAL	151,806	

Various commercial and retail uses ranging in size from 780 to 4,524 square feet.

In its current condition, the site includes mostly surface parking uses in the central portion of the site and along most of its western boundary along the Tujunga Wash. As previously stated, of the project's transit plaza and reconfigured Ethel Avenue would span the Tujunga Wash between Victory Boulevard and Ethel Avenue and would cover the concrete channel and new plantings currently located there (see Figure IV.A-3 in the Aesthetics section of this document). As part of their Greenway restoration project, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy recently planted this area as well as the area north of the transit plaza. The restoration project includes a bike/pedestrian path as well as native trees and shrubs along portions of the Tujunga Wash including adjacent to the western boundary of the site.

Add Area

Similar to the project site, the Add Area is completely paved and developed with structures and parking uses. Mature ornamental trees and associated landscaped areas are located throughout the Add Area. The following is a description of the structures that currently occupy the Add Area:

Parcel 1 -- 13005 Victory Boulevard

This property is currently occupied by an 18,414 square foot self-storage facility.

Parcel 2 -- 13001 Victory Boulevard/12930 Hamlin Street

The site is occupied with St. Jane Frances de Chantal Catholic Church (18,356 square feet) and K-6 Parish School (20,255 square feet).

Parcel 3 -- 6455 Coldwater Canyon Boulevard

This property is occupied by the Summit View School, a 43,026 square foot private school serving grades 4-12.

Parcel 4 -- 12901-12929 Victory Boulevard

This property is occupied by a small community shopping center that includes a 4,792 square foot McDonald's fast food restaurant and 5,766 square feet of miscellaneous retail uses.

Table III-2 includes the existing uses and respective areas (square footages) located in the Add Area.

TABLE III-2 EXISTING USES LOCATED IN THE ADD AREA			
Add Area Address	Use	Area (Sq. Ft.)	
Parcel 1 13005 Victory Blvd.	Self Storage Facility	18,414	
Parcel 2	Church	18,356	
13001 Victory Blvd./12930 Hamlin St.	School	20,255	
Parcel 3 6455 Coldwater Canyon Blvd.	Private School	43,026	
Parcel 4	Fast Food	4,792	
12901-12929 Victory Blvd.	Miscellaneous Retail	5,766	
USES TOTAL		110,609	
Source: City of Los Angeles and Dasher-Lawless, Inc. 2008			

General Environmental Conditions

The site is not located within any of the mapped Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zone and no fault trace of any known active or potentially active fault passes through the site. However, the site, as with all of the Southern California areas, is located within a seismically active region and will experience slight to very intense ground shaking as the result of movement along various active faults in the region. Two faults are located within 4 miles radius - the Verdugo Fault, located approximately 3 miles away and the Northridge Hills Fault, located approximately 4 miles away (see Section IV.E, Geology for further discussion on seismically related and other geological concerns).

The site includes ornamental trees and associated landscaping typical of commercial developments. According to a tree report prepared for the project site in August 2007, of the trees surveyed, one Western Sycamore was identified on the site.⁴ The City of Los Angeles protects Western Sycamore, native to southern California, that measure four inches or more in

³ CY Geotech Inc., Soil Engineering Investigation 13005 - 13609 Victory Boulevard, Van Nuys, California. August 31 2007

James, Dean A.S.L.A., ISA Landscape Architect Tree Inventory Report-Site 13005 Victory Boulevard August 25, 2007

cumulative diameter. The tree survey determined that the Western Sycamore found on the site measured 13 inches in diameter. However, the tree is not indigenous to the site as it was introduced as part of landscaping. The survey also determined that the tree had suffered severe pruning and therefore was not worthy of protection. The other trees found on the site were not considered to have value for any future development. See Section IV.A Aesthetics for further discussion. The area between Victory Boulevard and Ethel Avenue along the banks of the Tujunga Wash concrete-lined channel has recently been planted by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy with native plants.

Similar to the project site, the Add Area contains ornamental trees and minimal landscaping, typical of commercial developments and institutional uses in a highly urbanized area. Ornamental trees are interspersed throughout the properties and are mostly located in parking areas. See Section IV.A Aesthetics for further discussion of trees located in the Add Area.

Figures III-2 through III-6 show existing uses on the project site.

Regional and Local Land Uses

Adjacent Uses

The project site is located within an urban area that is highly developed with commercial/retail and residential land uses. Generally, the area surrounding the site is densely developed with buildings, and associated landscaping, and contains several thoroughfares. The surrounding area consists of mostly residential uses along with some commercial and retail uses located along major corridors such as Victory Boulevard.

The project site is bounded by the Tujunga Wash channel on the west; the site entrance from Ethel Avenue (the proposed location of the project's transit plaza and reconfigured Ethel Avenue) is located over the Wash. The banks of the wash were recently restored as part of the Santa Mountains Conservancy's *Tujunga Wash Greenway & Stream Restoration Project* to include a bike bath and native plantings as described above. The site is bounded by single-family residential uses to the north and east along Morse Avenue and Kittridge Street. Commercial development is located along Victory Boulevard, south and southwest of the site, immediately south of the residential neighborhoods. The Windsor Gardens Retirement Home is located south of the site along Victory Boulevard.

Single-family residential neighborhoods are located west of the Tujunga Wash. Many of the homes include ornamental trees in the front and rear yards serving as buffers to adjacent properties. Similarly, single-family residential development is located southwest of the Tujunga Wash.

The south side of Victory Boulevard in the site vicinity is developed with various low- and midrise commercial, retail and multi-family residential uses with associated surface parking. Office uses and a movie theatre are located along Victory Boulevard to the east, beyond the above-mentioned church and school.

The surrounding area contains land uses typical to urban areas in the Los Angeles area and to North Hollywood and the eastern San Fernando Valley. Various commercial, retail, recreational and institutional uses are located throughout the area. Erwin Park is located southwest of the site and Kittridge Street Park is located northwest of the site in the surrounding area. Three

schools, including Laurence School, Ulysses S. Grant Sr. High School and Jack London Continuation School are all located within the surrounding area.

Other notable uses in the project area include Los Angeles Valley College located approximately one mile to the south and Woodley Avenue Park located approximately four miles to the west.

Figures III-7 through III-11 show land uses in the surrounding area.

REGULATORY SETTING

Land use and future development of the project site are guided by a range of regional and local land use and building regulations, building and safety code regulations, planning and zoning code regulations, and regulatory land use plans and guidelines. These plans and regulations are described in detail in Section V.G, Land Use, of this Draft EIR. However, it should be noted the site is on the western border of the North Hollywood-Valley Village Community Plan area, and is bounded on the west (across the Tujunga Wash) and south (across Victory Boulevard) by the Van Nuys-North Sherman Oaks Community Plan area.

B. LIST OF RELATED PROJECTS

In accordance with Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines (as amended through January 1, 2008), and as needed to assess future baseline conditions, this Draft EIR analyzes the cumulative impacts that could occur with the proposed project. Cumulative impacts (e.g., two or more individual effects that, when considered together, compound or increase the environmental impact(s) of a proposed project) can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time. The Guidelines and the Statute require a discussion of cumulative impacts of a project "when the project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable" (e.g., when "the incremental effects of an individual project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.")⁵ The Guidelines also state that the discussion "need not provide as great detail as is provided for the effects attributable to the project alone" and "should be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness."

An adequate discussion of significant cumulative impacts can be accomplished by analyzing either (1) "a list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency" or (2) "a summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document, or in a prior environmental document which has been adopted or certified, which described or

⁵ CEQA Guidelines Section 15065(c).

⁶ CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b).



Figure III-2: View Northeast Across Site from Southwest near Ethel Avenue Entrance



Figure III-3:
View East Across Site from Southwest
Quadrant of Site near Ethel Avenue Entrance



Figure III-4:
View Southeast across Site from Southwest
Quadrant of site near Ethel Avenue Entrance



Figure III-5: View East along Northern Boundary of Site



Figure III-6: View South along Western Boundary of Site (Tujunga Wash on the right of the photo)



Figure III-7: View of Single-Family Residence on Northern Boundary of Site



Figure III-8:
View of Multi-Family Housing Southwest of
Site across Victory Boulevard, West of Ethel Avenue



Figure III-9: View of Church Use and Parking Lot East of Site Fronting on Victory Boulevard



Figure III-10:
View South along Tujunga Wash from Middle of
Western Boundary of Site (Ethel Avenue Bridge visible in center)



Figure III-11: View West from Ethel Avenue Entrance across Tujunga Wash

evaluated regional or area wide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact." For purposes of this project-specific EIR, the list-based approach was determined to be most the most accurate and realistic method to assess cumulative impacts.

The list of related projects, presented below, includes 91 projects at various stages of the planning or construction process. These projects include specific proposals for which applications have been submitted and encompass an area most relevant to the environmental impacts of the proposed project (traffic impact study area, utilities, etc.) that could potentially compound those individual project impacts addressed in this Draft EIR. The list of projects is considered to be representative of worst-case conditions as not all of the listed projects will ultimately be constructed, and those projects that are built, will be subject to mitigation measures and conditions of approval not known at this time. Additionally, not all of the identified projects will compound the specific impacts of the proposed project.

The identified related projects are individually listed in **Table III-3** and their locations are depicted in **Figure III-12**.

	TABLE III-3 RELATED PROJECTS ¹			
NO.	PROPOSED USE	SIZE	LOCATION OR ADDRESS	
1.	Condominiums	24 units	6906 N. Vesper Ave.	
2.	Condominiums	16 units	14803 W. Vanowen St.	
3.	Condominiums	16 units	14612 W. Gilmore St.	
4.	Condominiums	26 units	5632 N. Hazeltine Ave.	
5.	Condominiums/Retail	915 units, 32,500 sf retail	NoHo Artwalk	
6.	Condominiums Conv.	24 units	12626 W. Burbank Blvd.	
7.	Condominiums	19 units	11941 W. Burbank Blvd.	
8.	Student Addition	40 students	5229 N. Laurel Canyon Blvd.	
9.	12 Apt. destroyed; 10 classrooms	10 classrooms	13130 W. Burbank Blvd.	
10.	Charter School	6-8 grades	7137N Tyrone Ave.	
11.	Condominiums	15 units	14343 W. Burbank Blvd.	
12.	Condominiums	61 units	7346 N. Woodman Ave.	
13.	Condominiums	44 units	14322 W. Valerio St.	
14.	Condominiums	18 units	13850 Sherman Way	
15.	Condominiums	118 units	14117 W. Vanowen St.	
16.	Condominiums	4 units	14121 W. Erwin St.	
17.	Single-Family Residential	3 units	6244 N. Matilija Ave.	
18.	Educational	50 students	6047 N. Fulton Ave.	

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b)(1).

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TABLE III-3 RELATED PROJECTS ¹			
NO.	PROPOSED USE	SIZE	LOCATION OR ADDRESS
19.	Condominiums	10 units	5401 N. Morella Ave.
20.	Condominiums	37 units	13719 W. Oxnard St.
21.	Condominiums	21 units	5430 Bellingham Ave.
22.	Condominiums	54 units	12425 Victory Blvd.
23.	Condominiums	18 units	12132 W. Hart St.
24.	Condominiums	5 units	11828 W. Hamlin St.
25.	Condominiums	9 units	13148 Victory Blvd.
26.	Mixed Use	90,000 sf office, 20,000 sf retail, 10,000 sf restaurant,110 apartments	13115 Victory Blvd.
27.	Condominiums	18 units	6853 N. Hazeltine Ave.
28.	Condominiums	6 units	13224 W. Victory Blvd.
29.	Apartments	20 units	4915 N. Whitsett Ave.
30.	Apartments	6 units	5254 N. Wilkinson
31.	Single-Family Residential	3 units	12200 W. Hart St.
32.	Restaurant & Jazz Club	10 units	6909 N. Woodman
33.	Gas Station Upgrade	-	7214 Whitsett Ave.
34.	Retail	775,000 sf	Valley Plaza Shopping Center
35.	Condominiums	742 units	Laurel Plaza
36.	Condominiums	20 units	6250 N. Fulton Ave.
37.	Condominiums	16 units	14803 W. Vanowen St.
38.	Gas Station w/ Mini Mart	10 units	5258 N. Corteen Pl.
39.	Condominiums	940 units	11025 W. Weddington St.
40	Condominiums	31 units	11860 W. Chandler Blvd.
41.	Condominiums	31 units	10812 W. Magnolia Blvd.
42.	Condominiums	45 units	14412 W. Killion St.
43.	Condominiums/Retail	140 units, 16,000 sf retail	11709 W. Kittridge St.
44.	Condominiums	292 units	11135 W. Weddington St.
45.	Condominiums	12 units	12014 W. Magnolia Blvd.
46.	Condominiums	96 units	6818 N. Van Nuys Blvd.
47.	Condominiums	15 units	5325 N. Cartwright Ave.
48.	Condominiums	15 units	5226 N. Cartwright Ave.
49.	Condominiums	44 units	11936 W. Magnolia Blvd.

TABLE III-3 RELATED PROJECTS ¹			
NO.	PROPOSED USE	SIZE	LOCATION OR ADDRESS
50.	Condominiums/Retail	56 units, 11,325 sf retail	10850 W. Riverside Dr.
51.	Condominiums	16 units	14604 W. Gault St.
52.	Condominiums	31 units	5053 N. Bakman Ave.
53.	Apartments, Condominiums	36 apt units, 97 condos	11945 W. Magnolia Blvd.
54.	Condominiums	60 units	11016 W. Hartsook St.
55.	Condominiums	14 units	11146 W. Huston Ave.
56	Condominiums	24 units	5051 N. Fair St.
57.	Condominiums	12 units	10826 W. Kling St.
58.	Condominiums	9 units	10800 W. Blix St.
59.	Retail/ Condominiums	13,327 sf retail/82 units	10601 W. Riverside Dr.
60.	Apartments	98 units	6940 N. Sepulveda Blvd.
61.	Apartments	25 units	14422 W. Haynes St.
62.	Apartments	308 units	5031 N. Fair Ave.
63.	Condominiums	121 units	11947 W. Albers St.
64.	Condominiums	78 units	11935 W. Magnolia Blvd.
65.	Condominiums	36 units	11925 W. Kling St.
66.	Condominiums	12 units	4545 N. Colfax Ave.
67.	Condominiums	17 units	5253 N. Ben Ave.
68.	Condominiums	164 units	15159 W. Saticoy St.
69.	Condominiums	26 units	5300 Sepulveda Blvd.
70.	Condominiums	13 units	10740 W. Kling St.
71.	Condominiums	18 units	13850 Sherman Way.
72.	Condominiums	48 units	11003 W. Otsego St.
73.	Condominiums	123 units	12005 W. Albers St.
74.	Condominiums	38 units	11433 W. Albers St.
75.	Condominiums	50 units	7847 N. Sepulveda Blvd.
76.	Condominiums	104 units	6736 N. Clybourn Ave.
77.	Student Day Care	30 students	14649 W. Saticoy St.
78.	Condominiums	58 units	4904 N. Vineland
80.	Condominiums	28 units	11957 W. Riverside Dr.
81.	Condominiums	12 units	11274 W. La Maida St.
82.	Condominiums	18 units	14637 W. Magnolia Blvd.

TABLE III-3 RELATED PROJECTS ¹			
NO.	PROPOSED USE	SIZE	LOCATION OR ADDRESS
83.	Condominiums	18 units	11935 W. Riverside Dr.
84.	Condominiums	12 units	5305 N. Bellingham Ave.
85.	Condominiums	12 units	5056 N. Laurel Canyon Blvd.
86.	Condominiums	10 units	10858 W. Peach Grove St.
87.	Hotel	64 rooms	11342 W. Burbank Blvd.
88.	Condominiums	24 units	5357 N. Denny Ave.
89.	Mixed Use	1,000,000 sf office, 157,000 sf retail, 200 apartments	NoHo Art Wave
90.	Theatre/Office	1,100 seat theatre, 100,000 sf office,	NoHo Commons

Source: Overland Traffic Consultants, Inc. *Traffic Impact Analysis for a Proposed Mixed Use Development –Victory Plaza at the Glen*, April, 2008.

Figure III-12 Related Projects