

## IV. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

### A. AESTHETICS

This section addresses the potential impacts to aesthetics and views that could result from the proposed project, including development of the Add Area, which is comprised of four properties located immediately east of the project site. The analysis of aesthetics focuses on the visual relationship of the proposed project with existing land uses in the surrounding area, as well as its consistency with applicable design policies and guidelines. The analysis of views addresses the potential of the proposed project (presuming development of the Add Area) to obstruct visual access to existing aesthetic features and scenic resources.

#### EXISTING CONDITIONS

Aesthetics refers to visual resources and the quality of what can be seen or the overall visual perception of the environment. The analysis of aesthetics includes consideration of such elements as buildings, design character, landscaping, and open areas, as well as the relationships between these elements. Aesthetic features often consist of unique or prominent natural and/or man-made attributes or several small features that, when viewed together, create a whole that is visually distinctive, interesting and/or appealing. The degree of visual access to an aesthetic resource contributes to the value of aesthetic features.

Views refer to visual access and any obstruction of a focal point or panoramic view from an area. Existing views may be partially obstructed or entirely blocked by modifications to the environment. Conversely, modifications to the natural or man-made landscape of an area may create or enhance view opportunities. In general, views are closely tied to topography and distance from visual features and resources.

#### EXISTING SCENIC VISTAS AND RESOURCES

Scenic views or vistas are the panoramic public view access to natural features, including views of the ocean, striking or unusual natural terrain, or unique urban or historic features. The City of Los Angeles encompasses 467 square miles of land area, including approximately 214 square miles of hills and mountains.<sup>1</sup> Of these land forms, the local mountains including the Santa Monica Mountains, the Santa Susanna Mountains and the San Gabriel Mountains are prominent (on clear days) in many views in the City of Los Angeles. The Santa Monica Mountains are 60 miles long and stretch from Elysian and Griffith Parks near Downtown Los Angeles to Point Mugu State Park in Ventura County, are visible from many areas of the City, including the project area. They are located south of the site. On a clear day, there are limited views of the Santa Susana Mountains looking north from the project site and from parts of the surrounding neighborhoods. Limited views of the San Gabriel Mountains, located northeast of the site are also available. Views of these mountains are generally not available from the Add Area due to trees and other landscaping. Due to the high density of urban development and the site's location in a relatively flat portion of the Los Angeles basin, views within the neighborhood are generally limited to the immediate vicinity. There are no other scenic vistas in the project area.

---

<sup>1</sup> City of Los Angeles, City of Los Angeles Conservation Element, adopted September 2001 and State of California, Streets and Highways Code, Section 260-284 (see <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=shc&group=00001-01000&file=260-284>).

No officially designated State Scenic Highway is located within a 10-mile radius of the site and Add Area.<sup>2</sup> The Angeles Crest Highway is located approximately 10-15 miles to the east and a scenically designated portion of the US-101 Freeway is located approximately 15 miles to the west. The project site cannot be viewed from any State scenic highway. While there are a number of City of Los Angeles designated scenic highways on the north side of the Santa Monica Mountains and the north and west ends of the San Fernando Valley, the project area itself is flat and highly urbanized. There are no City of Los Angeles designated scenic highways in the immediate project area.

### EXISTING AESTHETIC ENVIRONMENT AND VIEWS

The project site and adjacent Add Area are relatively flat with minimal elevation change. The existing aesthetic and visual character of the project site and Add Area is dominated by the various commercial and retail uses located on the site and in the surrounding area along Victory Boulevard.

#### Project Site

The visual character of the site is dominated by typical shopping center uses. Specifically, the project site is currently developed with an approximately 152,000 square foot shopping center. As shown in **Figure IV.A-1**, the project site is developed with various retail uses and surface parking. This figure depicts both the larger tenants (drug store and market) and the miscellaneous smaller tenants that are currently in operation on the project site. With the exception of the portion of the project site noted below, the site is completely paved and contains minimal landscaping in the parking areas. **Figure IV.A-2** shows the eastern entrance (mid-site) to the project site along Victory Boulevard as well as the commercial and retail uses located opposite the site along Victory Boulevard. Similar to the project site, the visual character of Victory Boulevard opposite the site is dominated by retail and commercial buildings. **Figure IV.A-3** shows an aerial view of the Tujunga Wash between Victory Boulevard and Ethel Avenue and recent plantings in that area and the area that would be covered by the transit plaza and reconfigured Ethel Avenue.

#### Add Area

The Add Area, the property located east of the project site, is developed with self storage uses, institutional uses (church and schools) and miscellaneous retail and restaurant uses. All of these uses are low-rise (1-2 stories). **Figure IV.A-4** depicts the self storage use located east of the project site (13005 Victory Boulevard). **Figures IV.A-5 and 6** also show the existing uses and views of the Add Area. Similar to the project site, the Add Area is completely developed and contains no open space uses.

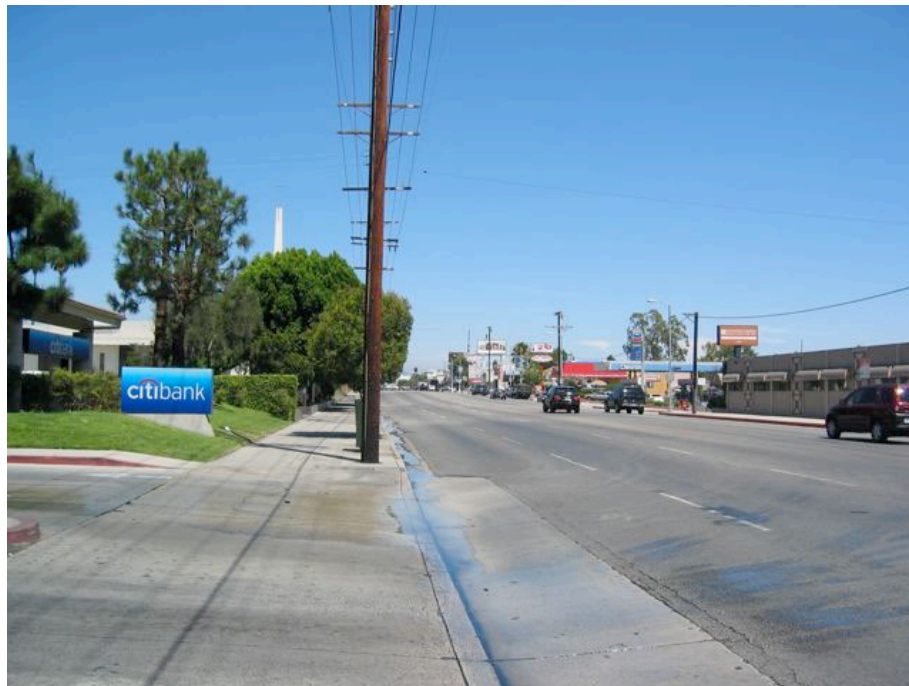
#### Surrounding Area

The aesthetic character of the surrounding area is defined in part by the mix of land uses that surround the site. Land uses immediately surrounding the project site consist of mostly residential uses located in the north, west and southeast, and commercial retail uses located immediately south along Victory Boulevard, a commercial corridor in the area. The Tujunga Wash borders the project site to the west as shown in **Figure IV.A-7**. The Tujunga Wash is

<sup>2</sup> [http://cityplanning.lacity.org/cwd/gnlpln/transelt/TEMaps/E\\_Scnc.gif](http://cityplanning.lacity.org/cwd/gnlpln/transelt/TEMaps/E_Scnc.gif) Accessed February 12, 2008.



**Figure IV.A-1:**  
View northeast of existing shopping center  
from southwest portion of Project Site.



**Figure IV.A-2:**  
View of Project Site entrance (mid-site) from Victory Blvd.  
and surrounding commercial/retail uses



**Figure IV.A-3:**  
Aerial view showing area to be covered by Proposed Transit Plaza



**Figure IV.A-4:**  
View of self storage use and entrance on right.



**Figure IV.A-5:**  
View of Church located on Add Area looking northeast  
from Victory Boulevard



**Figure IV.A-6:**  
View of Parking and School Uses located on  
Add Area looking north from Victory Boulevard



**Figure IV.A-7:**  
View north along Tujunga Wash along Site's Western Boundary  
Showing Bike/Pedestrian Path and Greenway.



**Figure IV.A-8:**  
View west along northern boundary of site  
(single family residences located on right side of photograph).

fenced and includes a bikeway, which is visible in the photo. Similar to portions of the site, partial views of the Santa Susana Mountains are available from this area looking north. Single-family residential neighborhoods are located west of the Tujunga Wash. The western portion of the site is occupied with parking.

Single-family residences are also located north of the site as depicted in **Figure IV.A-8**. This figure shows the back of the existing shopping center and wall that separates the adjacent residential uses. The residences contain landscaping in the back yards that serve to buffer the on-site uses. This portion of the site also contains surface parking uses.

Aside from the partially obstructed views of the mountains, no other distinctive views are available in the project area, particularly along the east-west streets. Views along Victory Boulevard are typical of urban areas, consisting of a mix of commercial, institutional, and retail uses.

### *SHADOWS*

Shadows are cast in a clockwise direction from west-northwest to east-northeast from approximately 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or later depending on the season of the year: Summer Solstice (June 21), Spring/Fall Equinox (March 21 and September 21), and Winter Solstice (December 21). Generally, the shortest shadows are cast during the Summer Solstice and grow increasingly longer until the Winter Solstice. During the Winter Solstice, the sun is lower in the sky and shadows are at their maximum coverage lengths.

Shadow impacts may be considered to be significant when they cover shadow-sensitive uses for a substantial amount of time (two consecutive hours or more). Shadow-sensitive uses generally include routinely useable outdoor spaces associated with residential, recreational, or institutional land uses; commercial uses, such as pedestrian-oriented outdoor spaces or restaurants with outdoor eating areas; nurseries; and existing solar collectors/panels.

Due to the dense arrangement and presence of existing structures in the immediate vicinity of the project site, shadow effects already exist in the project vicinity. Shadows are cast by the existing shopping center located on the site towards the west-northwest (which includes the Tujunga Wash and residential neighborhoods) earlier in the day and towards the Add Area later in the day. Shadows from the existing shopping center are mostly cast on the existing storage uses located on the western boundary of the Add Area.

### *LIGHTING AND ILLUMINATION*

The project site and Add Area are located in a densely urban area with very high levels of ambient lighting and glare associated with site/security lighting, automobile/vehicle lighting, and street lighting. The majority of existing structures are comprised of non-reflective materials, such as concrete and stucco.

During the daytime, moving and parked vehicles on-site produce a large source of glare from sunlight being reflected off windshields and other surfaces. The effect is particularly noticeable in surface parking lots and car lots with multiple stationary vehicles, such as those found on the southern portion of the project site. Existing night lighting on-site includes City of Los Angeles street lights along the perimeter of the project site and Add Area. The parking lots located on both the project site and the Add Area contain poled lighting creating higher than average

nighttime illumination levels given the area of surface parking and height of multiple poles throughout the parking lot.

The residential neighborhoods to the north and west of the project site and Add Area generally have low levels of nighttime illumination. However, the large surface parking areas and associated nighttime retail activity, as well as street lighting along Victory Boulevard, are primary sources of nighttime lighting to the area.

### **REGULATORY SETTING**

Various plans, policies, standards, and guidelines apply to the aesthetics and visual aspects of development on the project site. These include the City of Los Angeles General Plan and the Los Angeles Municipal Code. A brief summary of these documents is presented below.

#### **City of Los Angeles General Plan**

The project site and Add Area are located within the North Hollywood Valley Village Community Plan area. The North Hollywood-Valley Village Community Plan is one of 35 components of the City's General Plan Land Use Element, which is collectively comprised of the City's 35 community plans. However, there are no known applicable design guidelines or criteria or Community Design Overlay presented in the North Hollywood-Valley Village Community Plan. Consequently, there are no corresponding design guidelines to specifically address the project neighborhood.

However, the General Plan Framework Element includes citywide goals, objectives, and policies related to urban form and neighborhood design. The General Plan Framework Element defines "urban form" as (1) the general pattern of building height and development intensity and (2) the "structural elements" that define the City physically, such as natural features, transportation corridors, open space, public facilities, as well as activity centers and focal elements. Similarly, the General Plan Framework Element defines "neighborhood design" as the physical character of neighborhoods and communities within the City.<sup>3</sup> Some of the policies in the General Plan Framework Element encourage development of mixed-use projects or development of housing near commercial centers, corridors, and transit. Additionally, as stated in II. Project Description, the Framework Element of the General Plan identifies the area around and generally west of the intersection of Victory Boulevard and Coldwater Canyon as Community Center.

In addition to the General Plan Framework, the Conservation Element of the City's General Plan also identifies objectives, policies, and programs to address the landforms and scenic vistas, particularly the loss of visual or physical accessibility to visual corridors and scenic features and areas.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Los Angeles Municipal Code**

The Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) codifies the regulatory and penal ordinances of the City for the preservation of the public peace, health, and safety. There are several regulations in the LAMC pertaining to aesthetics, visual resources, and lighting that are applicable to the

<sup>3</sup> City of Los Angeles, *The Citywide General Plan Framework -- An Element of the City of Los Angeles General Plan*, re-adopted August 8, 2001.

<sup>4</sup> City of Los Angeles, *City of Los Angeles Conservation Element*, adopted September 2001.



proposed project. These applicable regulations set the standards for nighttime lighting, building heights and setbacks, landscaping, and signage.

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

### *THRESHOLD OF SIGNIFICANCE*

The CEQA Guidelines (as amended through January 1, 2008) provide direction for evaluating whether the aesthetic impact of a project could be considered significant. Specifically, Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines calls out four criteria for determining whether the aesthetic impact of a project has potential significance and should be further evaluated in an EIR. These criteria include whether the proposed project would result in the following:

- Have a substantial impact on a scenic vista;
- Substantially degrade scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings and historic buildings within a state scenic highway;
- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings; or
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

The *Draft L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide* provides more specific guidance to determine, not just the potential for significance, but to establish thresholds by which a potential aesthetic impact can be measured. By way of background, the *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide* observes that aesthetic impact assessment generally deals with the issue of visual contrast occurring among the components of form, line, color and texture, or the degree to which elements of the environment differ visually. The *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide* further notes that adverse visual effects can include the loss of natural features or areas, the removal of urban features with aesthetic value, or the introduction of contrasting urban features into natural areas or urban settings.

The following is noted in the *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide*:<sup>5</sup>

“There is an extraordinary range of aesthetic characteristics and contrasts with the City of Los Angeles, including suburban neighborhoods, dense urban areas, and hillside residential areas. Given the size and diversity of the city, there are no aesthetic standards that apply to all areas... General aesthetic requirements that apply to individual zoning districts or types of land uses are provided in the Municipal Code [and in applicable community and specific plans]...While certain screening and significance thresholds can be identified for this issue, a degree of discretionary judgment may be required to determine the ‘value’ of the aesthetic resource or potential project impacts.”

The *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide* recognizes the subjectivity brought to such an analysis and states that a determination of significance is to be made on a case-by-case basis based on the following considerations:<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> City of Los Angeles, *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide*, May 1998.

- The amount of relative proportion of existing features or elements that substantially contribute to the valued visual character or image of a neighborhood, community, or localized area, which would be removed, altered, or demolished;
- The degree of contrast between proposed features and existing features that represent the area's valued aesthetic image;
- The degree to which a proposed zone change would result in buildings that would detract from the existing style or image of the area due to density, height, bulk, setbacks, signage, or other physical elements;
- The degree to which the project would contribute to the area's aesthetic value;
- The nature and quality of recognized or valued views (such as natural topography, settings, man-made or natural features of visual interest and resources);
- The extent of obstruction (e.g. total blockage, partial interruption, or minor diminishment);
- If shadow-sensitive uses would be shaded by project-related structures for more than two consecutive hours;
- The change in ambient illumination levels as a result of project sources; and
- The extent to which project lighting would spill off the project site and effect adjacent light-sensitive areas.

These considerations are incorporated into this EIR to establish the level of significance of aesthetic impacts created by the proposed project, including proposed development of the Add Area.

The *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide* indicates the following with respect to shade and shadow:

A project impact would normally be considered significant if shadow-sensitive uses would be shaded by project-related structures for more than three hours between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time (between late October and early April), or for more than four hours between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time (between early April and late October). To be conservative, this EIR considers impacts to be significant if shading occurs for more than two hours between the sensitive hours. Facilities and operations that are sensitive to the effects of shading generally include, but are not limited to, routinely useable outdoor spaces associated with residential, recreational or institutional land uses; commercial uses such as pedestrian-oriented outdoor spaces or restaurants with outdoor eating areas; nurseries; and existing solar collectors.

---

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

## PROJECT IMPACTS

### Aesthetic Impacts

Based on the above thresholds and guidelines, the aesthetic impact of the proposed project is determined based on (1) the contrast between existing and proposed features of the project area's aesthetic character; (2) the degree to which the proposed project would detract from the existing aesthetic character of the project area as a result of the change in density, height, bulk, setbacks, and signage; and (3) the degree to which the proposed project is able to contribute to the aesthetic value of the project area.

#### *Proposed Project*

The proposed project would involve the demolition of existing buildings, the removal of existing uses on-site, and the development of 150 multi-family residential units, a 230 room hotel, approximately 550,000 square feet of office space, a 2,700 seat theater complex, 140,000 square feet of retail space, 100,000 square feet of restaurant space, a 45,000 square foot market and a 45,000 square foot gym. Proposed development would range from a minimum of one story and a maximum of seven stories in order to spread density around the site and maintain lower density around site edges adjacent to residential uses to the north and east.

The proposed project would include low-rise rooftop spaces for pedestrian plazas, amenities and circulation and a trolley that runs through the middle of the project. A transit park would also be developed on the southeastern portion of the site with the intention of connecting to an extension of an existing DASH route and the existing Orange Line Busway.

Office uses would be spread throughout the site in six- and seven-story buildings to be mixed with pedestrian oriented ground floor and second level uses. Retail, restaurant, theater, market, and gym uses would occupy most of the first and second floors of these buildings, with the majority of office space provided in the third through seventh floors. As office space is the highest density use within the project, the six- and seven-story buildings (with a maximum building height of 125 feet) are located away from the edges of the site, and more towards the site's interior.

The proposed project would include the development of 150 condominium units. The four-story residential uses would be located in attached units along the northeastern edges of the site that back upon existing single-family homes along Morse Avenue, Kittridge Street, and Ethel Avenue. Specifically, these residential uses would be developed along portions of the northern and eastern property edges. Additionally, residential uses would be located in the fourth through seventh stories of multi-use buildings along the western edge of the site. Two-story residential uses would also be integrated into the outer facing sides of the theater and gym component. The two-story theater would be oriented towards the interior of the project framing a central courtyard and pedestrian plaza. The four-story residential uses, which would reflect a lower density/lower profile edge (maximum height of 45 feet) would be located closest to the neighborhoods to the north. Higher density (seven-story, maximum height of 125 feet) residential uses would be located in two buildings at, and north of, the primary project entrance.

A 230-room hotel would occupy the northwestern corner of the site. The hotel would be built to five stories (maximum height of 69 feet), with four stories set back from the northern edge (further from existing residential uses on Kittridge Street) atop a single-story podium.

Landscaping would be included to screen the proposed hotel from the adjacent existing residential uses.

Retail and restaurant uses would be developed throughout the interior of the site for ground floor and second level spaces. Subterranean parking of 3,312 spaces would be provided for the entire proposed project.

Impacts to aesthetics and visual character primarily involve the degree that the proposed project will contribute to the aesthetic character of the area and the perceived contrast between existing and proposed uses surrounding the project site. Existing uses on the site feature minimal landscaping and offer limited aesthetic value to the project area. The proposed project would result in the consolidation of the project site into an urban village design consisting of a new, modern, cohesive development that would improve the overall aesthetic value of the project site, Add Area, and surrounding area. The proposed buildings would be developed in the European Vernacular style. Additionally the proposed project would encourage pedestrian activity to create an active community feel, both within the project site and in adjacent areas. Landscaping would be included throughout the proposed project, including the perimeter of the site, which would serve to provide a softer site “edge” to help buffer proposed uses from adjacent ones.

The key factors influencing perceived contrast include height, scale, massing, open space, and setbacks. To illustrate the change in views that would result from the proposed project, visual simulations have been prepared. **Figure IV.A-9** includes a map showing the location of the visual simulations. The visual simulations are included as **Figures IV.A-10 through 13**.

The following is a description of the four visual simulations prepared for the proposed project:

1. View from Victory Boulevard and Morse Avenue
2. View from Victory Boulevard and Ethel Avenue
3. View from Neighboring Single Family Residences of Proposed Residential Uses
4. View from Neighboring Single Family Residences of Proposed Hotel

Development of the proposed project would result in increased density and massing on the project site as it would replace the existing mix of commercial and retail uses with an urban community that would provide employment, services, entertainment, lodging and housing, while integrating transit, and urban amenities into a single mixed-use development. The proposed project would include several structures varying from one to seven stories in height.

#### View 1

Currently, views from single-family residences located north of the project site consist of minimal views of the site. Limited views of the existing shopping center structure located on the site are visible from these homes. Views of an electrical pole currently exist from this area.

Implementation of the proposed project would replace this view with multi-story multi-family residential uses. The northern portions of the site more visible in this view would be developed with lower development than the interior of the site. The electrical pole would be removed under the proposed project. As shown in **Figure IV.A-10**, without landscaping, the view from the

**Figure IV.A-9**  
**Visual Simulation Location Map**

**Figure IV.A-10**  
**Photosimulation 1**

adjacent residential uses would be substantially altered. However, with landscaping, the proposed buildings would be partially screened thereby, reducing the visual effect of the proposed buildings.

### View 2

Currently, views of the site from this area (north of the project site looking south) are minimal, close to non-existent. A very small portion of the existing shopping center is visible behind a few of the existing single-family residences. As shown in the existing condition view, no other portion of the site is visible from this location.

Under implementation of the proposed project, this area of the site would be replaced with a five-story hotel and associated landscaping. This would substantially change views that currently exist from this area as shown in **Figure IV.A-11**. The addition of landscaping provides screening of the project site and the surrounding area.

As shown in the visual simulations, a contrast between existing and proposed features would occur with the proposed project. The proposed project would introduce larger, taller, and denser buildings onto the site. The proposed project would replace an existing retail commercial center with a mixed-use development providing similar (although more dense) uses in addition to providing additional (hotel, residential, transit center) uses.

As stated earlier, the existing uses offer limited aesthetic value to the area. However, the addition of the five-story hotel at this location introduces use at a height and scale that contrasts with the low-rise suburban setting directly to the north of the project site.

In its existing condition, the site features minimal landscaping. As shown in the visual simulations and described in the Project Description, the proposed project would provide landscaping throughout the site and along the northern perimeter. This would help to soften and reduce the contrasting aesthetic character of the project site as seen from the single family suburban setting adjacent to the north.

Consequently, given the contrast of the urban form of the proposed project to the existing visual conditions and the existing visual context, and addition of landscaping to soften the urban-suburban edge, impacts to aesthetics would be considered less than significant.

### View 3

Currently, views of single-story retail/bank uses, associated signage, and landscaping are visible traveling west along Victory Boulevard. The entrance to the existing shopping center is also visible from this view. Existing landscaping consists of grassy areas adjacent to existing bank uses in addition to perimeter landscaping. Electrical poles located along Victory Boulevard in front of the site are also visible in the existing condition view.

The proposed project would introduce a modern, mixed-use development that would create an urban village setting, providing pedestrian plazas, amenities and circulation and a trolley system. To achieve the urban village setting, the project would be designed with detailed building articulation and would include low-rise rooftop spaces. Proposed development would range from one to seven stories.

**Figure IV.A-11**  
**Photosimulation 2**



**Figure IV.A-12**  
**Photosimulation 3**

As shown in **Figure IV.A-12** the view from Victory Boulevard looking northwest would change with development of the proposed mixed-use project. Views of the proposed seven-story retail and office building would be prominent along Victory Boulevard. The proposed seven-story structure would replace single story structures. The bulk, scale, and height of structures would change as depicted in the visual simulation. Electrical poles that currently exist along Victory Boulevard would be removed under the proposed project.

The visual simulations show the proposed seven-story structure with proposed landscaping. As depicted in the visual simulation, proposed landscaping would consist of trees along the perimeter of the site along Victory Boulevard. The proposed landscaping would provide limited screening for the proposed uses from existing uses along Victory Boulevard.

Although the view would substantially change as compared to the existing view, given the historical commercial use of the project site and mix of low-/mid-rise uses located along Victory Boulevard, the proposed project would maintain contextual compatibility.

#### View 4

Currently, the view of the site from Victory Boulevard/Ethel Avenue consists of views of the existing shopping center and associated parking lot. The entrance to the shopping center is also visible from this area. The poled lighting and site landscaping is visible in this view.

As shown in **Figure IV.A-13**, with implementation of the proposed project, views of the transit plaza and three of the proposed structures would be visible from this location. The existing parking lot and mostly single-story shopping center would be replaced with larger, denser structures. The proposed structures would be a maximum of seven stories in height and would be located in the western portion of the site. A transit plaza would be located at the Ethel Avenue/Victory Boulevard intersection. The transit plaza would include an open space area containing landscaping. As shown in the visual simulation, landscaping in the form of trees would be included along the edges of the structures, providing some level of screening from the proposed buildings. As stated in the Project Description, the proposed project would provide amenities for the existing greenway including a ranger station, bike racks and bathrooms. North of the transit plaza the project applicant would work with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy to integrate the project with the greenway, developing pedestrian connections between the site and the greenway and enhancing vegetation as appropriate.

The transit plaza would integrate the landscaping of the project with the existing pedestrian/bicycle path along the Tujunga Wash. The 80,500 square foot transit plaza would cover approximately 45,500 square feet of greenway (landscaping and bicycle/pedestrian path). Of this approximately 13,500 square feet is located between Ethel Avenue and Victory Boulevard and is currently inaccessible to the public. The elimination of the open space along the Tujunga Wash would be offset by the functional but landscaped open area of the transit plaza that would be accessible to the public and would provide continuity with existing Greenway improvements. The project would in general integrate the urban project with the landscaped wash to provide an urban amenity. Therefore the project would not degrade the visual character of the site or area nor would it significantly impact the Tujunga Wash Greenway.

#### *Add Area*

As stated in II. Project Description, there are no specific development proposals for the “Add Area” at this time. Therefore, no visual simulations were prepared for the Add Area. Generally,

**Figure IV.A-13**  
**Photosimulation 4**

impacts to the aesthetic character of the Add Area would be similar to impacts anticipated under the proposed project. Current views from the Add Area are minimal. Sensitive uses located near the Add Area include residences located north of the Add Area along Morse Avenue.

Potential development of the Add Area would remove most of the existing uses on the site. These include self-storage, fast-food restaurant, school and miscellaneous retail uses. The existing St. Frances de Chantal Church and School are presumed to remain.

Existing uses are presumed to be replaced with multi-story mixed-use developments consisting of multi-family residential, retail and office uses. Proposed structures could vary between 4 and 5 stories in height.

Similar to the proposed project, a contrast between existing and proposed features would occur under development of the Add Area. Proposed development as described above would introduce larger, taller, and denser buildings onto the site.

As stated earlier, the existing uses offer limited aesthetic value to the area. Similar to the proposed project, proposed development of the Add Area would introduce modern, multi-story mixed-use development. Additionally, similar to the proposed project, proposed development is assumed to provide more landscaping throughout the Add Area and along the perimeter.

Consequently, given the improvements to the site compared to existing visual conditions and the existing visual context and the identification of these properties by the General Plan Framework for similar Community Center development, impacts to aesthetics would be considered less than significant.

## **Impacts on Views**

### *Proposed Project*

Based on the above thresholds and guidelines, the impact of the proposed project on views is determined based on (1) the nature and quality of the visual resource, and (2) the extent of the obstruction of the view.

As previously described, at times there are limited views of the Santa Susana Mountains from the project site and the surrounding area, including the bikeway located along Tujunga Wash. Views are obscured on smoggy days. Due to the high density of urban development and the site's location in a relatively flat section of Los Angeles, views within the project area are generally limited to the immediate vicinity. However, there are no scenic resources that are presently available in view lines through the project site.

The proposed project would consist of a mixed-use development ranging in one to seven stories in height. However, as there are no scenic resources that are presently available in view lines through the project site, and no scenic views or vistas would be obstructed. Views from the bike path would change from those of a one-to two story shopping center with surface parking to those of a five to seven story mixed use development. Impacts associated with the obstruction of views would be considered less than significant.

### *Add Area*

Due to existing landscaping located throughout the Add Area, there are limited views of the

Santa Susana Mountains from the Add Area. Views are obscured on smoggy days. Due to the high density of urban development and the Add Area's location in a relatively flat section of Los Angeles, views within the project area are generally limited to the immediate vicinity. However, there are no scenic resources that are presently available in view lines through the Add Area.

Presumed development of the Add Area would consist of a mixed-use development ranging in one to five stories in height. However, as there are no scenic resources that are presently available in view lines through the Add Area, and no scenic views or vistas would be obstructed. Impacts associated with the obstruction of views would be considered less than significant.

### **Shade and Shadow Impacts**

Based on the stated thresholds and guidelines, the shade/shadow impact of the proposed project is determined based on (1) the length of time shadow-sensitive uses would be shaded; (2) the type of impacted land use; and (3) the resulting functional effects (the extent and duration, combined with and measured against the use and design of the affected premises).

Shadow impacts are directly attributable to the building height, massing and the location of the proposed project relative to sensitive off-site land uses. Shadows are of most concern when they are cast onto residential buildings from taller structures. Shadows affect solar and light access to interior spaces, yards, balconies, patios, or other exterior usable spaces. Shadows are typically cast in a westward to eastward direction as the day advances from morning to afternoon and evening.

#### *Proposed Project*

**Figures IV.A-14** through **IV.A-16** illustrate the shadows cast during three key solar periods of the year (e.g., summer solstice, spring/fall equinox, and winter solstice). The longest shadows are typically cast when the sun is lowest in the sky during the winter solstice.

As shown in **Figures IV.A-14**, during the spring/fall equinox, shadows from the proposed project would mostly be cast on the Tujunga Wash and adjacent bikeway, and the self-storage use located in the Add Area. Morning shadows would be cast on the Tujunga Wash and bike path. By noon, these shadows would be gone and minor shadows would be cast on residences that border the site to the north. Shadows would also be cast on a few residences located northeast of the project site and the self-storage and institutional uses in the Add Area in the late afternoon (5 PM). This would be considered a less than significant impact.

As shown in **Figure IV.A-15**, during the Summer Solstice, shadows would be cast on the Tujunga Wash and bikeway in the AM hours and on the Add Area (self-storage use and parking lot) in the late afternoon (5 PM). Minimal shadows would be cast on a few residences located east of the site in the late afternoon (5 PM). This would be considered a less than significant impact.

As shown in **Figure IV.A-16**, during the Winter Solstice, shadows would be cast on some of the residences located north of the site in the morning (8 AM), noon, and afternoon (5 PM) hours. This would exceed the threshold significance of two hours. Shadows would also be cast on residences located northeast of the site during the late afternoon (5 PM). During this time, shadows would extend beyond Morse Avenue. Shadows would also be cast on the self-storage use and associated parking lot located on the Add Area. Minor shadows would be cast on the

**Figure IV.A-14**  
**Spring/Fall Equinox (9:00AM, 12:00PM, 5PM)**

**Figure IV.A-15**  
**Summer Solstice (9:00AM, 12:00PM, 5PM)**

**Figure IV.A-16**  
**Winter Solstice (9:00AM, 12:00PM, 5PM)**



Tujunga Wash and bikeway during the AM hours (before 11:00 am). Shadows cast during the Winter Solstice would be considered a significant impact.

#### *Add Area*

Generally, shade and shadow impacts anticipated under presumed development of the Add Area would be similar to those expected under the proposed project. Sensitive uses located in close proximity to the Add Area include residential uses located directly north and northeast of the Add Area. Therefore, similar to the proposed project, Summer and Spring/Fall shadows are expected to be less than significant because these residences would not experience significant shading.

However, similar to the proposed project, during the Winter Solstice, shadows could be cast on some of the residences located north of the site in the morning and afternoon hours. This would exceed the threshold significance of two hours. Shadows would also be cast on residences located north and northeast of the site during the late afternoon. Therefore, shadows cast during the Winter Solstice would be considered a significant impact.

### **Lighting and Illumination Impacts**

Based on the above thresholds and guidelines, the lighting impact of the proposed project is determined based on (1) the change in the existing lighting/glare levels, and (2) the extent to which project lighting would spill over adjacent light-sensitive areas.

#### *Proposed Project*

Existing night lighting on-site includes streetlights along the perimeter of the project site. In its present condition, the site is occupied with an active retail center with surface parking. Poled lighting is located throughout the parking lots. Other sources of lighting include retail activity and associated signage in addition to light from automobile headlights.

Given the highly urbanized character of the area, the area surrounding the site is well lit. Victory Boulevard is occupied with a mix of land uses including multi-family residences and a variety of commercial-retail uses that all include night-time lighting. Night-time automobile traffic is also another sources of lighting. The residential neighborhoods to the north, west, and southwest of the project site generally have low levels of nighttime illumination.

The proposed project would illuminate the mixed-use development from within the residential, office, and commercial/retail uses and with security lighting and outdoor lighting of common areas. The proposed hotel, residential, commercial/retail, theatre, and gym uses would require nighttime lighting. The proposed transit center would also increase lighting on the site. Because development of the proposed project would result in increased density and massing on the project site, the proposed project would increase ambient lighting levels in the project area. Additionally, the proposed project would include rooftop development on the four-story building, resulting in additional night-time lighting. Rooftop development would consist of pedestrian plazas and various amenities. However, the proposed project would include subterranean parking, eliminating the existing poled lighting in parking lots. New uses and controlled lighting sources would replace broader and less direct sources of higher intensity pole lighting that currently occupy all of the surface parking areas within the site.

Project design would involve architectural features and façades that have low levels of reflectivity. Lighting would be shielded and focused on the project site, directed away from the neighboring residential uses. Although the proposed structures would include glass windows, the proposed project would be required to comply with the City's lighting regulations, which limit reflective surface areas and the reflectivity of architectural materials used to reduce any adverse impacts from window glass glare. In addition, unlike existing conditions, the proposed project would include subterranean parking level(s), eliminating the existing source of glare from windshields of parked cars.

This increase in illumination could spill over to adjacent sensitive uses located in the immediate area. Specifically, project lighting could spill over to residential uses located immediately north and northeast of the site. Although, project lighting is not anticipated to spill over to the residential neighborhoods located west of the site, the proposed project would increase the overall lighting and illumination of the area. This would be considered a potentially significant impact.

#### *Add Area*

Similar to the project site, existing night lighting on the Add Area consists poled lighting in parking areas and streetlights along the perimeter of the four properties. Another source of night time lighting includes the fast food/retail uses located on the Add Area as well as automobile headlights. As stated in the Project Description, there are no specific development proposals for the "Add Area" at this time. This EIR analyzes redevelopment of these properties consistent with the proposed Community Commercial designation at a development intensity similar to that proposed for the project site. Under the scenario of development presented in the Project Description for the Add Area, proposed development would increase night-time lighting. A 4-story condominium development could replace the existing self-storage facility. The existing school would presumably be replaced with up to 5 stories of retail, office and multi-family residential uses. Additionally the existing retail, fast food uses would presumably be replaced with up to 5 stories of retail and office uses. Therefore, similar to the proposed project, development of the Add Area would increase overall lighting and illumination of the surrounding area. Additionally, this increase could spill over to adjacent sensitive (residential) uses located north of the Add Area. This would be considered a potentially significant impact.

### **MITIGATION MEASURES**

The following mitigation measures would reduce lighting impacts for the proposed project and for presumed development of the Add Area:

- IV.A-1 All lighting along the perimeter of the site, particularly street lamps, shall be focused on the project site and oriented in a manner that will prevent spillage or glare into surrounding residential communities.
- IV.A-2 The proposed project shall comply with the City's lighting regulations, which limit reflective surface areas and the reflectivity of architectural materials used to reduce any adverse impacts from window glass glare.
- IV.A-3 Construction equipment staging areas shall use appropriate screening (i.e., temporary fencing with opaque material) to buffer views of construction equipment and material to the adjacent land uses. Any construction-related lighting shall include shielding in order to direct lighting down and away from adjacent residential areas.

IV.A-4 In order to ensure design compatibility with the adjacent community, the applicant shall consult with the Urban Design Studio of the Department of City Planning, prior to submittal of landscaping, lighting and building design plans for review and Plan Check. The applicant shall address specific recommendations to the satisfaction of the Planning Director, prior to issuance of any building permits.

## **LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION**

### *AESTHETICS AND VIEWS*

Project and Add Area impacts on aesthetics and views are anticipated to be less than significant without the implementation of mitigation measures. Therefore, no significant impact or significant unavoidable impact associated with these issues would result from the development of the proposed project.

### *SHADE AND SHADOW*

Since no feasible mitigation measures are available to reduce shadow impacts during the winter months to less-than-significant levels, impacts associated with this issue would be considered significant and unavoidable for both the proposed project and for the Add Area.

### *LIGHTING AND ILLUMINATION*

Project and Add Area impacts on lighting and illumination are anticipated to be less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures.

## **CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

This analysis is based on the Related Projects List provided in III. Environmental Setting. The listed projects include various mixed-use, office and residential projects located in the vicinity of the project site that are currently under construction, approved but not built, or proposed for development. This development would occur in an area that has already been impacted by urban development.

The Related Projects that would be located in closest proximity to the project site are Nos. 25, 26, and 28. Related Project No. 26 would be located west of the project site and the Tujunga Wash. It would include 90,000 square feet of office, 20,000 square feet of retail, 10,000 square feet of restaurant, and 110 multi-family residential units. Therefore, similar to the proposed project, Related Project No. 26 would include the development of a mixed-use project and would generally be expected to have comparable aesthetic impacts in scope, although to less of an extent given the size of this related project compared to the proposed project. Related Project Nos. 25 and 28 would be located southwest of the project site along Victory Boulevard. Both of these related projects would include condominium developments. Consequently, project-specific aesthetic impacts that could compound the effects of the proposed project and Add Area would not be considered cumulatively considerable, and significant cumulative impacts are not anticipated.

In general, implementation of the proposed project in combination with these and other related projects would result in further development of urban land uses in an already densely developed and populated part of the City. While many of the related projects and the proposed project

would be visible from public and private properties, the combination of the related projects and the proposed project would not greatly obstruct existing public scenic views; as identified above, the nearest officially designated State scenic highways are located approximately 10-15 miles northeast and 10-15 miles southwest of the project site.

With respect to quality of the overall project area, each of the related projects would be required to submit a landscape plan and signage plan (if proposed) to the Los Angeles Department of City Planning for review and approval prior to the issuance of grading permits. With respect to shade/shadow impacts, shadows cast by the proposed project on nearby sensitive uses would not be compounded by shadows cast by any of the nearby related projects. Consequently, significant cumulative impacts are not anticipated to occur.