II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION
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This Draft EIR has been prepared to address the environmental impacts of both the West Los Angeles Transportation Facility and the Sunset Avenue projects. This decision between Metro and the City of Los Angeles has been made because proposed development of each site is related to the other site. Specifically, while approval decisions regarding the two projects are not necessarily tied together, both projects are related to a relocation of the existing Division 6 transportation facility currently located at the Sunset Avenue site. Upon completion of the West Los Angeles Transportation Facility, a new, larger, state-of-the-art facility for CNG buses proposed along Jefferson Boulevard, Metro has committed to relocate all service lines, employees, and administrative functions performed out of the antiquated Division 6 property in Venice. Completion of the West Los Angeles Transportation Facility and removal of the existing Division 6 facilities would then result in the reasonably foreseeable development of the Sunset Avenue property. Thus, this Draft EIR analyzes both the potential individual and combined impacts of the West Los Angeles Transportation Facility and the Sunset Avenue projects.

A. LOCATION AND BOUNDARIES

West Los Angeles Transportation Facility. The project site is located at 3475 South La Cienega Boulevard within an industrial area of the West Adams-Baldwin Hills-Leimert Community of the City of Los Angeles. Although the address reflects a previous access from La Cienega Boulevard, the project site is adjacent to and has primary access from Jefferson Boulevard along the site’s western boundary. Jefferson Boulevard is accessible from Rodeo Road to the south and National Boulevard to the north. Please refer to Figure II-1 on page 61 for a site Vicinity Map. As described in more detail below, the project site is presently vacant and was previously used for light industrial purposes from which a few deteriorated structures remain.

The 4.66-acre property is located approximately 120 feet east of the Ballona Creek Flood Control Channel that flows through this area. Within the project area, Ballona Creek is also the general boundary between the City of Culver City on the west side of the channel and the City of Los Angeles on the east side of the channel. The project site is also surrounded by light industrial and commercial land uses to the north, south, and east. Light industrial uses are also present on the west side of Ballona Creek in the City of Culver City. The topography of the
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project area is relatively level with the Baldwin Hills rising to 511 feet above sea level approximately 0.5 mile to the south.\textsuperscript{14} Residential uses are located around the periphery of this industrial area, with the closest residences situated 800 feet south in the Cameo Woods development in the City of Los Angeles. Other nearby residential uses in the City of Culver City include the Blair Hills, McManus/East Culver City, and the Lucerne/Higuera/Rancho Higuera/Hayden Tract Neighborhoods, located approximately 2,500 feet southwest, 1,050 feet northwest, and 1,500 feet west of the site, respectively. Similarly, within the City of Los Angeles, the West Adams Neighborhood is located approximately 1,000 to 1,200 feet east and northeast of the site, while the Baldwin Hills Neighborhood is located approximately 1,800 feet to the southeast of the site.

\textbf{Sunset Avenue Project.} Located at 100 East Sunset Avenue, the project site is in a predominately residential neighborhood within the Venice Community of the City of Los Angeles. Please see Figure II-1 on page 61. Located near the western edge of the City of Los Angeles, the site is situated 0.25 mile east of the Pacific Ocean and approximately 0.3 mile south of the boundary between the cities of Los Angeles and Santa Monica. The project site is bordered by Pacific Avenue to the west, Main Street to the east, Sunset Avenue to the north, and Thornton Place to the south. The 3.13-acre site comprises one full city block. Access to the site is gained from the northeast corner of Main Street and Sunset Avenue, where Main Street can be accessed from three primary arterials, Rose Avenue and Ocean Park Boulevard in the City of Santa Monica and Venice Boulevard in the City of Los Angeles.

Small-lot single-family and multi-family residential uses are located to the north, south, and west of the project site. To the east, across Main Street, is a commercial parking lot, a new multi-family development currently under construction, and a paved site recently entitled for multi-family development. The project site is variously 20 to 30 feet above sea level with predominantly level topography within the site and in the project area.\textsuperscript{15}

B. BACKGROUND AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

\textbf{West Los Angeles Transportation Facility.} The project site was formerly a portion of the Ballona Creek primary flood plain prior to its re-alignment and channelization by the United States Army Corps of Engineers and the Los Angeles County Flood Control District in 1940.\textsuperscript{16} In 1952, the project site was developed with three structures, totaling 9,000 square feet, for use

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{14} \textit{United States Geologic Survey – Hollywood Quadrangle, 1966 (photorevised 1981).}
  \item \textsuperscript{15} \textit{United States Geologic Survey – Venice Quadrangle, 1964 (photorevised 1981).}
  \item \textsuperscript{16} \textit{United States Army Corps of Engineers, www.usace.mil, 2004.}
\end{itemize}
by Carnation Creamery. Ownership of the property transferred to the Sparkletts Drinking Water Company (now McKesson Water Products) in 1972. McKesson used the site as a distribution center for its water, food, and coffee products until 2001. From approximately October of 2001 to present, the project site has remained vacant. Presently, three vacant and deteriorated structures are located on the site. The first structure, located in the northeast corner of the site, is a small one-story building that was a former office and administrative building. The second structure, located on the southern limit of the site, has five bay doors and a hydraulic lift, which was used as maintenance bays for distribution vehicles. The third structure is located near the center of the site and was previously an ice house and storage building. Additionally, a portion of the Los Angeles North Outfall Sewer runs underneath the project site, entering from the northern project limit and extending through the southern limit, at a depth of 43 to 46 feet below ground surface.

The existing 4.66-acre site is located within the West Adams-Baldwin Hills-Leimert Community Plan area of the City of Los Angeles. The site is zoned Restricted Industrial (MR1) by the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) and the Community Plan Generalized Land Use map designates the site for limited manufacturing use.

**Sunset Avenue Project.** The Sunset Avenue project site has been improved and occupied as a transportation facility since 1901. Originally owned by the Los Angeles Pacific Electric (LAP), the site was the location of a powerhouse constructed on the corner of what is now Main Street and Sunset Avenue in the spring of 1901. Electricity produced by the powerhouse was provided for the movement of the Trolleyway that LAP ran along Pacific Avenue. The site also included a car house and a series of connected tracks on which to turn the trailer trains. LAP operated the site, then known as the Ocean Park Carhouse, as a railyard until 1950. On September 17, 1950, rail service was discontinued at the site and the carhouse was demolished as part of the site’s conversion to a motor coach operation. Completed in 1951, the new Ocean Park motor coach facility was opened for service with 120 coaches, 180 bus operators, and 70 employees. LAP sold the passenger service to Metropolitan Coach Lines (MCL) in 1953 and demolished the original 1901 powerhouse in 1954. After four years of operation, MCL sold the site and the passenger line to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) in 1958 and the site was renamed Division 6-Venice. Presently, 78 diesel buses and approximately 144 employees operate out of the Division 6 bus yard. An L-shaped structure, the largest on-site, contains two-story administrative offices and seven maintenance bays. A

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17 *Phase II Site Assessment Report prepared by Environmental Support Technologies, Inc., 2003.*

18 *Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Addendum prepared by Environmental Support Technologies, Inc., 2003.*

19 *Advanced Geotechnical Services, Inc., Geotechnical Engineering Study for 3475 La Cienega Boulevard, 2003.*

20 *Personal telephone conversation with Bruce Buck, Division 6 Manager, March 10, 2004.*
fueling station, pump room, and bus washer are also on-site along with 54 bus stalls and 65 employee parking spaces. Existing buildings on-site total approximately 15,300 square feet of floor area. Division 6 operates five days a week, Monday through Friday, from 4:45 A.M. to 11:00 P.M., and is closed during the weekend.

The 3.13-acre site is located in the Venice Community Plan area of the City of Los Angeles. Development of the site is also directed by the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan. The site is zoned Limited Industrial (M1) under the LAMC and the land use is designated by the General Plan for limited manufacturing use. The Specific Plan land use map illustrates the site with a Commercial Manufacturing (CM) zoning designation which indicates the City’s intent to ultimately rezone the site’s designation from M1 to CM.

C. STATEMENT OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Section 15124(b) of the State of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines states that the Project Description shall contain “a statement of the objectives sought by the proposed project.” Section 15124(b) of the CEQA Guidelines further states that “the statement of objectives should include the underlying purpose of the project.” Consistent with the Guidelines, this section of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) provides the list of objectives that the Applicant seeks to achieve.

The underlying purpose of the proposed projects is to provide two projects that would allow each of the project sites to be put to improved uses in a coordinated manner that would facilitate the success of both projects. Towards this end, the Transportation Facility site would be developed with transportation facilities that would improve public transit service to the region. The relocation and improvement of these transit facilities creates an opportunity for the Sunset Avenue site to be developed with mixed residential and commercial development. Specific objectives have been developed for each of the sites. These objectives fall under the following primary categories: (1) Transit Objectives for the Transit Facility site, or Development Objectives for the Sunset Avenue site; (2) Design Objectives; and (3) Economic Objectives.

West Los Angeles Transportation Facility

Transit Objectives

• Expand service from a more centralized location in response to growing Westside and Central ridership, in order to respond more efficiently to service requests in the service area regarding routing, scheduling, refueling, etc.
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- Improve transit service in all Central and Westside communities by increasing operating capacity system-wide through the addition of maintenance and operation capacity for up to 175 buses at an operating base within the service area, and by relieving overcrowding at other Metro divisions serving the Central and Westside areas. Reduce pressure at other already overburdened facilities and reduce the inefficient operation of Central and Westside routes from other sectors.

- Provide a new state-of-the-art facility that optimizes Metro’s delivery of bus transit services throughout the Central and Western Los Angeles area.

- Support Metro’s conversion to a 100 percent CNG fleet (new clean-fuel buses replacing older diesel buses) by approximately 2013. Provide facilities where utility infrastructure exists to support a CNG fueling station.

- Provide a modern maintenance and operation facility with state-of-the-art equipment that efficiently delivers maintenance, fueling, cleaning and operation on a 24-hour/seven-day-a-week basis to support Metro’s bus cleanliness and maintenance program and ensure Metro delivers clean and reliable transit service throughout the Central and Western Los Angeles areas.

Design Objectives

- Accommodate and support the Transit Objectives, with sufficient facilities to accommodate expected demand, inclusive of bus and employee parking, maintenance bays, tire shop, CNG fueling, coach/chassis wash bay, fare retrieval vault houses, and other ancillary uses.

- Optimize utilization of the project site, subject to recognized site constraints.

- Enhance the general character of the project locale through conversion of a vacant, abandoned site into an efficient, well-designed bus operations and maintenance facility, consistent with current standards for “light-industrial” design.

- Provide landscape along the Jefferson edge and in other locations on the site, as appropriate, in order to visually enhance the Jefferson streetscape.

Economic Objectives

- Reduce the cost of bus transportation service delivery with state-of-the-art facilities that reduce operating costs.
- Promote cost savings by improving the efficiency of transportation service delivery with a facility located in the geographic center of its service area, placing buses closer to their routes, thereby reducing operating costs, non-revenue miles, and bus maintenance down time.

**Sunset Avenue Project**

**Development Objectives**

- Generate the land use and economic justification for the relocation of the existing Division 6 bus operations and maintenance facility and the reuse of the Sunset Avenue site in accordance with the City’s General Plan Circulation Element and the community objectives as expressed in the Venice Community Plan and Venice Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan.

- Develop a market-rate and affordable housing mixed residential and commercial project per site priorities listed in Policy I.C.7 of the Venice Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan to address the need for high quality market-rate and affordable housing in the Venice Community.

- Develop a commercial presence, and pedestrian façade, on Main Street in order to continue the revitalization of Main Street as an active retail corridor in accordance with the City’s Framework Element designation of a Community Center in the vicinity of Abbot Kinney Boulevard.

- Transform the historically outdated use of this property to maximize the provision of market-rate housing and provide Mello Act sponsored affordable housing in response to projected population growth rates and demand for such housing as identified in the Venice Community Plan.

- Support an existing, revitalizing residential neighborhood through the replacement of an obsolete, incongruously located transportation infrastructure facility with stabilizing residential and complimentary neighborhood serving commercial uses.

- Maximize parking opportunities in compliance with Beach Impact Zone parking policies, and offer fee parking to surrounding residents to the extent that is permitted by the existing City plans, codes, and zoning requirements.
Design Objectives

- Provide a design that creates a comfortable, aesthetic environment for living; that brings needed services to the neighborhood; and that adds to the overall character of the community through architecture and landscape design.

- Provide a design that serves the eclectic, sophisticated and functional preferences of the Venice Community’s residential and commercial marketplace.

- Design interiors and exteriors that promote quality individual and family living spaces and effectively connect with the surrounding urban and coastal environments.

- Design commercial venues that successfully reflect neighborhood and market values.

- Design landscape features that provide a green and textured urban environment, that assist in defining the private space of individual residents and that add to the overall aesthetics of the project.

Economic Objectives

- Maximize the value of the property through the replacement of an obsolete transportation infrastructure facility with a level of housing and community serving commercial development that is appropriate for the local market. Create value through quality design and amenities offered to project residents, commercial tenants and patrons.

- Invest in the future of the Venice community by developing needed housing and community commercial uses on an underutilized parcel.

- Provide opportunity for people of varying socio-economic backgrounds to own quality housing in a dynamic, vibrant mixed-use community.

D. PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

**West Los Angeles Transportation Facility.** The proposed project consists of a state of the art transportation facility from which to operate a fleet of up to 175 CNG powered buses and to provide improved public transit service in the central and western areas of Los Angeles County including large portions of the City of Los Angeles (including the communities of West Adams, Mid-City and South L.A., etc.) and the incorporated cities of Beverly Hills, Culver City, Malibu, Santa Monica and West Hollywood. Relocation of existing operations at Division 6 in
Venice to this location would allow Metro to expand service from a more centralized location in response to growing ridership. Development of the transportation facility on the 4.66-acre site would provide Metro with expanded maintenance and administrative facilities, CNG fueling facilities, and bus and employee parking. Figure II-2 and Figure II-3 on pages 69 and 70, respectively, present a plan view and a conceptual rendering of the proposed facility.

The project would be served by an Administration/Maintenance Building with administration and maintenance functions. This building would be located along the rear/eastern edge of the project site. It would include a combination of single story, high-bay space (approximately 24 feet in height), partial two story areas within the same 24 foot envelope, and a partial three story element that would be approximately 40 feet high. All of the bus parking would be provided at grade and all of the employee/visitor parking would be located on a second floor deck approximately 20 feet above grade. The central portion of the site would be dedicated to surface parking for up to 175 buses. A majority of the bus parking area would be covered by the above-grade employee/visitor parking area that would provide parking for up to 240 vehicles. The Administration Building would be tied to a continuous solid wall with a minimum height of eight feet that would enclose the project site. The project edge along Jefferson Boulevard would have a decorative wall behind a landscaped buffer between the wall and Jefferson Boulevard.

The total area of the Administration/Maintenance Building would be approximately 53,120 square feet. The primary first floor functions include up to 14 High-Bays (for bus maintenance, repair and inspection), parts storage, tire shop, welding shop, and limited offices. The second floor would include maintenance support functions such as a training room, locker rooms, break room, supporting offices and storage. The third floor would include administrative offices, and bus-driver support functions such as dispatch, lockers, break room, supporting offices and storage.

In addition, the project site would include several auxiliary facilities. These facilities include a bus washing and fueling area (approximately 10,400 square feet), inspection bay (approximately 4,900 square feet), chassis wash area (approximately 1,700 square feet), facilities maintenance area (approximately 700 square feet) and trash/recycling area (approximately 1,100 square feet).
Design decisions and project features (e.g., use of recycled building materials, water efficient landscaping) to be incorporated into the Transportation Facility would enable the facility to pursue a certification under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System, which is under the direction of the United States Green Building Council. LEED certification distinguishes building projects that have demonstrated a commitment to sustainability by meeting the highest performance standards. Further, LEED certification would comply with a motion set forth by the Mayor of the City of Los Angeles, and Metro Board Director, James K. Hahn, on December 4, 2003. (Refer to Appendix H-2 of this document for a copy of the full motion.)

Operation of the facility would be 24 hours a day, seven days a week. On-site activity would be higher between 4:00 A.M. and 6:00 A.M. when the greatest number of bus operators can be expected to arrive at the facility to begin their shifts and pull buses out of the facility to go into service well before rush hour. Activity would peak again between 7:30 P.M. and 9:00 P.M., after rush hour, when buses return to the facility to be cleaned, fueled, and readied for service the next day. Activity would be least during morning and evening rush hour times when the vast majority of buses are away from the facility providing transit service throughout the westside and central section of Los Angeles. Employees would work in shifts out of this facility with approximately 414 total employees assigned to the site. These include bus operators, mechanics, service attendants, supervisors, and management personnel.

Ingress and egress to the site would be from Jefferson Boulevard. Employees and visitors would access the grade-separated parking structure via this main driveway that would lead to a ramp up to the parking deck to be located in the northeastern part of the site. Buses would ingress and egress from the same driveway through an automated security gate. Although employees may utilize varied routes to and from the facility, buses would follow a set circulation pattern to begin and end their respective transit routes.

Construction of the new West Los Angeles Transportation Facility is anticipated to begin in March of 2005 and to be completed by June 2006.

**Sunset Avenue Project.** The proposed project would replace the vacated Division 6 operation with a mix of residential and commercial uses supported by two levels of subterranean parking. Residential uses would occupy several individual structures that would each contain a varying number of dwelling units. The project proposes to include an affordable housing component, pursuant to the Mello Act (Government Code Section 65590). The Mello Act

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22 Metro Board of Directors Regular Board Meeting, December 4, 2003.
entitles the project to a density bonus of 25 percent over the number of dwelling units permitted in the site’s zone, in this case 171 units of base density, for inclusion of an affordable component equal to between 10 and 20 percent of the base density, depending on the affordable household income level. Further, should the project pursue a second provision established by the City of Los Angeles (Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 12.22) that entitles an additional density bonus of 10 percent of the base density for development within the Coastal Zone and adjoining a designated transportation corridor, then an additional number of units could be developed. Thus, with both density bonus provisions, a total of 231 units could be developed on this site. However, the total number of residential units to be developed would be determined by final design, but in no case would the number exceed 225 dwelling units.

Open areas between the individual structures would allow for communal walkways, common space for recreation or garden areas, water features, and landscaping. A conceptual site plan and conceptual site renderings are presented as Figure II-4 through Figure II-8 on pages 73 through 77. In addition to open spaces and communal areas, a rooftop pool and deck would be provided for recreational purposes. A maximum of 225 units would be offered, with a total residential floor area of approximately 270,000 square feet. Residential structures that face Main Street and Pacific Avenue are proposed with building heights that would not exceed 35 feet, while structures in the center of the site and those facing Sunset Avenue and Thornton Place are proposed to be approximately 45 to 56 feet in height.

Commercial uses include approximately 10,000 square feet of floor area in a ground floor setting facing Main Street. Commercial and retail space would be occupied by café, retail, and health club uses. Open spaces between structures along Main Street and a portion of Thornton Place would be utilized for outdoor café seating. Parking for business patrons would also be located within the subterranean parking facility. Commercial/retail uses would operate between 10:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M., whereas the health club would operate between 10:00 A.M. to 10:00 P.M. The café would open at 7:00 A.M., closing at 10:00 P.M. Residential access to the site would be gained from Sunset Avenue, while business patrons and delivery vehicles would ingress and egress via Main Street.

The entire project would be constructed over a two-level subterranean parking facility with capacity to exceed Los Angeles Municipal Code and Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan parking requirements. The project would provide 676 parking spaces. Of these 561 spaces would meet project needs per City requirements for 225 dwelling units and the proposed commercial program; 71 spaces would be provided pursuant to Beach Impact Zone regulations and the remaining 44 spaces would be in excess of parking requirements, and could be used to provide fee parking for surrounding residents.
Excavation for the subterranean parking facility would require the removal of an estimated 125,000 cubic yards of fill. Construction is anticipated to begin in June 2006 and to be completed in June of 2008.

E. INTENDED USE OF THE EIR

This EIR is a Project EIR, as defined by Section 15161 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines and serves as an informational document providing analyses of the proposed West Los Angeles Transportation Facility and the Sunset Avenue projects. Its purpose is to assist the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Los Angeles Department of City Planning in making informed decisions regarding the environmental consequences of each of the discretionary actions that these agencies must make regarding the proposed West Los Angeles Transportation Facility and Sunset Avenue projects, respectively.

The West Los Angeles Transportation Facility would require permits or approvals for the following discretionary actions; the action’s approving authority is provided in parenthesis:

- Approval of the sale of the Transportation Facility to Metro (Metro Board);
- Approval of facility design (Metro) (City of Los Angeles);
- Additional discretionary actions as may be determined necessary.

Additionally, the Sunset Avenue project requests approval for the following discretionary actions:

- Approval of a Tentative Tract Map (City of Los Angeles Department of Planning);
- Zone change from Limited Industrial to Commercial Manufacturing (City of Los Angeles Department of Planning);
- Specific Plan Exception for height and Floor Area Ratio (FAR) (City of Los Angeles Department of Planning);
- Approval of a Coastal Development Permit (City of Los Angeles Department of Planning);
- Approval of a Specific Plan Project Permit (City of Los Angeles Department of Planning);
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- Adjustment for yard area (City of Los Angeles Department of Planning);

- Haul route(s) approval, as necessary (City of Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety); and

- Additional discretionary actions as may be determined necessary.