

2024 173196



FILED

Aug 15 2024

Dean C. Logan, Registrar - Recorder/County Clerk

Electronically signed by LILIA NIURGUA

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
BUREAU OF ENGINEERING
1149 S. BROADWAY, 7th FLOOR
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90015
CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT
NOTICE OF EXEMPTION
(Articles II and III – City CEQA Guidelines)

COUNTY CLERK USE

THIS NOTICE WAS POSTED

ON August 16 2024

UNTIL September 16 2024

REGISTRAR – RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

Submission of this form is optional. The form shall be filed with the County Clerk, 12400 E. Imperial Highway, Norwalk, California, 90650 and with the State Clearinghouse in the Office of Planning and Research, if filed with the County Clerk, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21152(b). Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21167(d), the filing of this notice starts a 35-day statute of limitations on court challenges to the approval of the project.

LEAD CITY AGENCY AND ADDRESS: City of Los Angeles c/o Bureau of Engineering 1149 S. Broadway, 6 th Floor, MS 939 Los Angeles, CA 90015	COUNCIL DISTRICT 6
PROJECT TITLE: North Sepulveda Pedestrian Island (W.O. S04WNSEP / CIP No. 2021MR101)	LOG REFERENCE

PROJECT LOCATION: On a pedestrian island along Sepulveda Boulevard between Lemay Street and Hayward Street in the Van Nuys – North Sherman Oaks Community Plan Areas of the City of Los Angeles. (See Photo 1, Figure 1: Project Location, and Figure 2: Project Location). T.G. Page 531, Grid H6

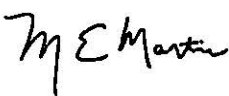
DESCRIPTION OF NATURE, PURPOSE, AND BENEFICIARIES OF PROJECT: The North Sepulveda Pedestrian Island project (project) consists of the rehabilitation of a landscaped pedestrian median island on Sepulveda Boulevard between Haynes Street and Lemay Street. The rehabilitation would include construction of a five-foot-wide concrete sidewalk, seven-foot-wide irrigated planting area, including 26 new stormwater parkway swales and 27 new street trees, an improved bus stop with new site furniture, and street improvements including four new curb ramps, three upgraded curb ramps and five new continental crosswalks. The project would benefit the public by providing safer conditions for pedestrians and the surrounding community. Please see the Project Description continuation in the narrative for more details. On July 3, 2024, the Bureau of Engineering (BOE) approved the project design plans.

CONTACT PERSON Gabriela Aguilar	CONTACT INFORMATION gabriela.aguilar@lacity.org
EXEMPT STATUS: (Check One) CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION*	<u>CITY CEQA GUIDELINES</u> Art. III, Sec. 1 Class 1 Cat. 3, 4 & 20 Art. III, Sec. 1 Class 3 Cat. 5 Art. III, Sec. 1 Class 4 Cat. 3 & 12 <u>STATE CEQA GUIDELINES</u> Sec. 15301(c) & (d) Sec. 15303(d) Sec. 15304(b) & (f)

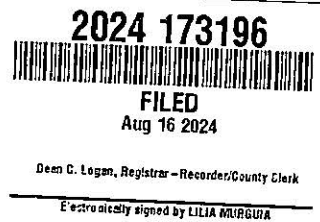
* See Public Resources Code Sec. 21080 and set forth state and city guidelines provisions.

JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT EXEMPTION: This project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Article 19, Section 15301, Class 1 (c) and (d), Section 15303, Class 3 (d), and Section 15304, Class 4 (b) and (f). Additionally, the project is exempt pursuant to *Los Angeles CEQA Guidelines* Article III, Section 1, Class 1, Existing Facilities Categories 3, 4, & 20, Class 3, New Construction of Small Structures Categories 5, and Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land Categories 3 and 12. *None of the limitations set forth in State CEQA Guidelines 15300.2 apply (see attached narrative).*

IF FILED BY APPLICANT, ATTACH CERTIFIED DOCUMENT OF EXEMPTION FINDING

SIGNATURE: Maria Martin		TITLE: Environmental Affairs Officer Environmental Management Group	DATE: 08/13/2024
FEE: \$75.00	RECEIPT NO.	REC'D BY	DATE

DISTRIBUTION: (1) COUNTY CLERK; (2) AGENCY RECORD



CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION NARRATIVE

I. DESCRIPTION OF NATURE, PURPOSE, AND BENEFICIARIES OF PROJECT, CONTINUED

This project is proposed to rehabilitate of an existing landscaped pedestrian median island along Sepulveda Boulevard between Haynes Street and Lemay Street for the installation of greenway for stormwater capture and reuse, disabled access features, and a community-friendly environment. This project would provide safety, accessibility, and connectivity for pedestrians.

The North Sepulveda Pedestrian Island project would enhance an existing pedestrian island into an urban green passageway providing needed public access and connectivity along the urban dense corridor of Sepulveda Boulevard. Additionally, the project would create an aesthetic landscape buffer to shield pedestrians from on-coming traffic during usage. A new 5-foot-wide concrete sidewalk path would run the length of the median intersecting a newly constructed seating area and shade covering at the existing Metro bus stop to provide a safe passage and urban respite for local commuters, including the installation of new American with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant access ramps. Dense hedge-like plants and low-growth trees would line the path along the corridor replacing the existing weeds and provide a noise and aesthetic buffer to the adjacent residential neighborhood along this highly urbanized City corridor.

This multi-benefit project would provide urban runoff treatment, green space, and improve access to public transit by:

1. Constructing four new ADA-compliant ramps and upgrading three existing curb ramps.
2. Providing five new continental crosswalks.
3. Planting 27 new street trees.
4. Constructing a new five-foot-wide sidewalk.
5. Rehabilitating a bus stop waiting area with new site furniture.
6. Planting vegetated landscaping in a seven-foot-wide planting area to include an active irrigation system.
7. Installing 26 new stormwater parkway swales to improve stormwater management.

A walkable, urban green design provides direct public benefits to the community, such as alleviating traffic congestion, reducing air pollution, restoring native habitat, and facilitating healthy lifestyles. The proposed path and seating area would provide necessary safe passage, access, and lighting to reduce inherent safety risks and promote public transportation use. Additionally, the native, drought tolerant landscaping would sequester and store carbon providing lifetime health benefits to a neighborhood bordering a major transportation corridor while enhancing habitat. This project would benefit the surrounding community in various ways by providing a more walkable neighborhood. Some of the benefits this project may provide include recreational health benefits, socioeconomic equity, water quality improvements, increased pedestrian connectivity, and aesthetic community enhancement.

The estimated work period for the proposed improvements would be approximately 13 months and is anticipated to begin January 6, 2025, and last until January 30, 2026, and post-construction period to last until August 31, 2026. It is not anticipated that rerouting of traffic would occur during project construction. The project may slightly increase vehicular trips or traffic congestion in the project area during construction; however, any impacts would be temporary and minimal due to construction occurring between 7:00am to 4:00pm, Monday through Friday. Traffic impacts would be managed the same as other Public Works Street repair projects of this nature. Construction is only expected to last

approximately 13 months and all temporary traffic control would be done in accordance with the latest version of the Work Area Traffic Control Handbook (WATCH manual).

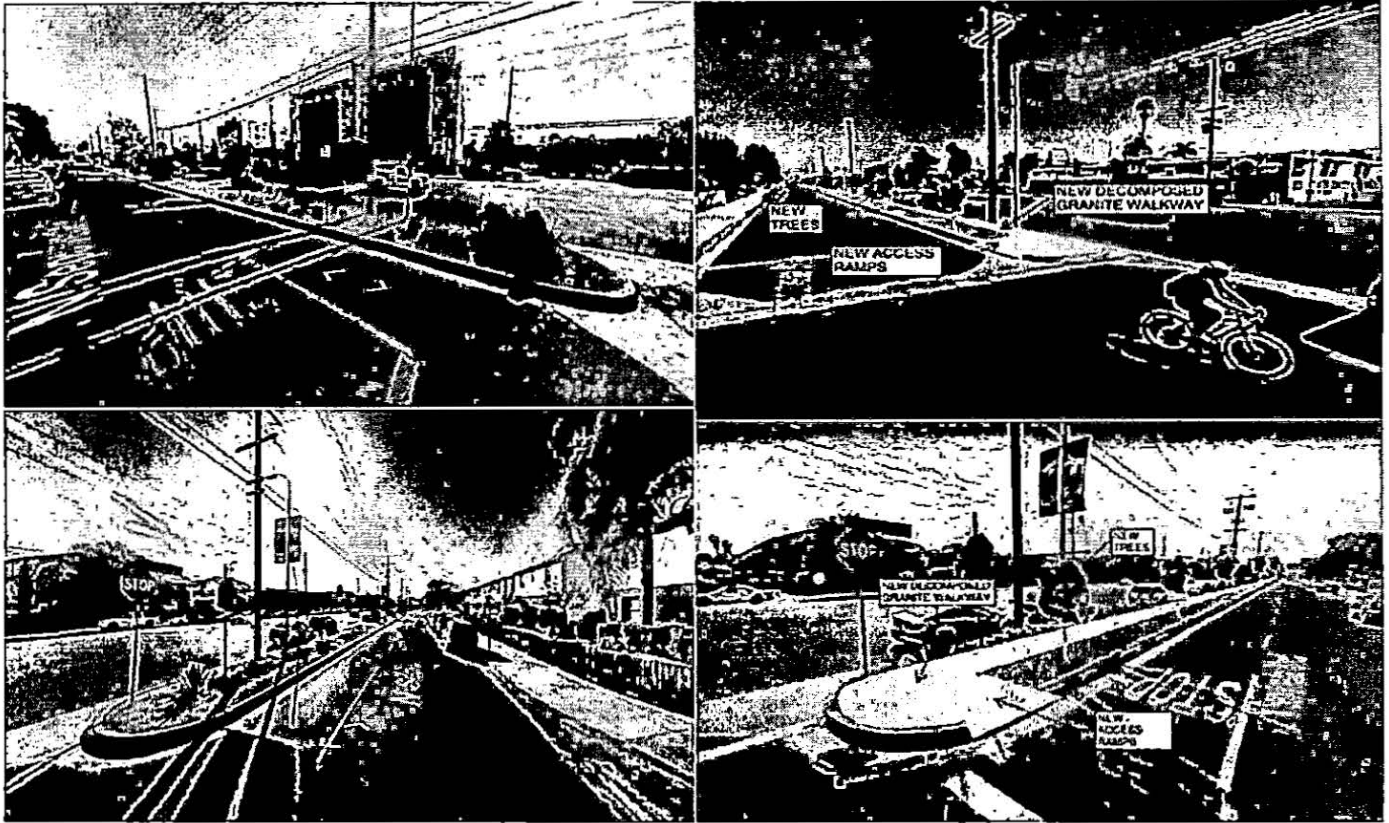


Photo Montage 1: Current conditions (left side) and project design (right side) along the north and south facing project area

The project includes project design features (PDFs) that have been incorporated into the Project as best management practices (BMPs) to meet regulatory requirements or applicable standard specifications for Public Works Construction. PDFs included in the Project design include the following:

PDF-CUL-1: If unanticipated historical artifacts were encountered during construction, Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction, Section 6-6.2, (Greenbook, 2021) states: "If discovery is made of items of archaeological or paleontological interest, the Contractor shall immediately cease excavation in the area of discovery and shall not continue until ordered by the Engineer." Therefore, during activities in which there would be ground disturbances (i.e., digging, drilling, etc.) if any evidence of archaeological, cultural, or paleontological resources are found, all work within the vicinity of the find shall stop until a qualified archaeologist can assess the finds and make recommendations. No excavation of any finds should be attempted by project personnel unless directed by a qualified archaeologist. Construction activities may continue in other areas. If the discovery proves significant under CEQA (Section 15064.5f; Public Resources Code or PRC 21082), additional work such as testing, or data recovery may be warranted.

PDF2-CUL-2: The discovery of human remains is always a possibility during ground disturbances; State of California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that no further disturbance shall occur until the Los Angeles County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to PRC Section 5097.98. The Los Angeles County Coroner must be find immediately. If the human remains are determined to be prehistoric, the

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coroner would notify the Native American Heritage Commission, which would determine and notify a Most Likely Descendent (MLD). The MLD shall complete the inspection of the site within 48 hours of notification and may recommend scientific removal and nondestructive analysis of human remains and items associated with Native American burials.

Unless otherwise stated, the proposed project would be designed, constructed, and operated following all applicable laws, regulations, ordinances and formally adopted City standards including but not limited to:

- Los Angeles Municipal Code
- Bureau of Engineering Standard Plans
- Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction "Greenbook"
- Work Area Traffic Control Handbook
- Additions and Amendments to the Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction "Brown Book"

II. PROJECT HISTORY

The existing median island that runs parallel to Sepulveda Boulevard is approximately 1,300 feet in length and 13 feet in width with dry vegetation, overgrown bushes, palm trees, and utility poles making it inaccessible for pedestrian travel. This median island currently does not have an irrigation system or disabled access and has become a community blemish due to lack of attention. This project would improve the conditions along this urban dense corridor and existing median island between Haynes Street and Lemay Street.

The project is located in a drainage area of Segment D of the Los Angeles River included in the Upper Los Angeles River Enhanced Watershed Management Program that has been identified as a contributor of elevated bacteria concentrations. Implementation of this project would aid in lessening the bacteria to the Los Angeles River.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Basis for Categorical Exemption

The proposed project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Article 19, Section 15301, Class 1 (c) and (d) *Existing Facilities* for the minor alteration of an 'existing streets, sidewalks, bicycle and pedestrian trails' with 'no expansion of existing or former use' due to an existing, damaged pedestrian island being altered by the installation of a new walkway, ADA-access ramps, concrete bus stop waiting area, and landscaping to provide safety to pedestrians and transit users, Section 15303, Class 3 (d), *New Construction of Small Structures* for the construction and installation of 'street improvements' and 'accessory structures' due to the addition of new access ramps, active irrigation, landscaping, and a bus stop, and Section 15304, Class 4 (b) and (f) *Minor Alterations to Land* for the addition of new landscaping and minor excavation and backfill.

Additionally, this project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to the *Los Angeles CEQA Guidelines* Article III, Section 1, Class 1 (3) (4) and (20) *Existing Facilities* for the minor alteration of an existing pedestrian island without expansion of existing use with restoration of an existing, damaged structure, and modernization of a pedestrian island due to the construction of a walkway, ADA-access ramps, bus stop, and landscaping to an existing island to provide safety to pedestrians and the community, Class 3 (d), *New Construction of Small Structures* for new construction of accessory structures including top, and active irrigation for an existing deteriorating pedestrian island, and Class

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4 (3) and (12) *Minor Alterations to Land* for the new landscaping and minor trenching and backfilling where the surface is restored for the installation of new shrubs and trees.

Consideration of Potential Exceptions to use of a Categorical Exemption

The State CEQA Guidelines (CCR Sec 15300.2) limit the use of categorical exemptions in the following circumstances:

1. Location. Exemption Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may be significant in a particularly sensitive environment. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.

This project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Article 19, Section 15301, Classes 1 (c) and (d), Section 15303, Class 3 (d) and (e), and Section 15304, Class 4 (b) and (f). Although the project is exempt pursuant to Class 3 and 4, the project site consists of the modification of an existing pedestrian island pedestrian safety and provide access to public transportation with no environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies, therefore, this exemption does not apply.

2. Cumulative Impact. This exception applies when, although a project may not have a significant impact, the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.

While other similar projects (projects that are repair/maintenance only in scope) are occurring elsewhere in the City, they have been determined to be happening in different neighborhood locations and at different times. Given the nature of the project, modernizations and modifications to an existing pedestrian island, this project is not anticipated to result in a cumulative impact when included with successive projects in the same place and over time.

3. Significant Effect. This exception applies when, although the project may otherwise be exempt, there is a reasonable possibility that the project would have a significant effect due to unusual circumstances.

Hazardous Waste

As of July 23, 2024, the State Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) (Envirostor at www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov) has one listed contaminated site in the vicinity of the project. The contaminated site is a Site Cleanup Program site and is currently under the oversight of the DTSC. The contaminant of concern is arsenic, and the potential media is soil. The certification date for this site was January 9, 2001 and is the current site of a school.

As of July 23, 2024, the California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) (Geotracker at <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>) has two closed Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) sites and two closed cleanup program sites within the vicinity of the project.

The two closed LUST sites located within the vicinity of the project location reported leaks that have been closed. The first leak to be reported at the UNOCAL Gas Station location was in January of 1995. In January of 1997. The former Chevron location reported a leak in January of

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1996. The case was closed in late September of 1996. The two cleanup program states are both closed. One of the two sites, the ARCO facility, reported a leak in June of 2005 and closed the case in December of 2012. The second site was opened in February of 2001 and the case was closed a few weeks after. The contaminants of concern at the four sites are gasoline, non-petroleum hydrocarbons, and none specified contaminants the with potential media of concern of groundwater or aquifers. Majority of the sites are approximately 500 feet or more away from the project location.

Los Angeles is a vast, urban area serviced by many fueling stations and is the location of vast industrial areas often affected by contamination from past or current uses. It is not uncommon to find sites with past or present releases, that have completed or are undergoing assessment and/or remediation throughout the region. The need for construction and installation of pedestrian islands in the public right-of-way often is within the vicinity of these sites, as such, this is not an unusual circumstance and there is no reasonable possibility that the project would have a significant effect due to unusual circumstances.

This project consists of the modification of an existing pedestrian island within the City's public right-of-way. The need for modernization is a common and routine occurrence. No unusual circumstances related to the construction or operation of the island in this area are known. For the reasons stated above, there is no reasonable possibility that the project would have a significant effect due to unusual circumstances.

Geology- Liquefaction

According to the Department of Conservation California Geological Survey Van Nuys 7.5-minute Quadrangle, the project sites are located within a Liquefaction zone. These are "areas where previous occurrence of landslide movement, or local topographic, geological, geotechnical and subsurface water conditions indicate a potential for permanent ground displacements such that mitigation as defined in Public Resources Code Section 2693(c) would be required." Portions of land in the City of Los Angeles, particularly within hillside areas, are designated to be within the Liquefaction zones. These areas are highly developed with streets, sidewalks, houses and commercial buildings and it is not uncommon to find the need for maintenance and construction in these areas, as such, this not an unusual circumstance. The project consists of modifications of an existing pedestrian island in the City and there is no reasonable possibility that the project would have a significant effect due to unusual circumstances.

The proposed project is composed of the modification of a pedestrian island with improvements to provide safe public transportation and access to the community. Modification projects are common in the city and throughout areas deemed to be within the seismic and liquefaction zones, as such these are not unusual circumstances. The project would not potentially result in or increase vulnerability to damage caused by landslides or earthquakes and there is no reasonable possibility that the project would have a significant effect due to unusual circumstances. Therefore, this exception has no application to this project.

Traffic and Transportation

The project proposes the modification of an existing pedestrian island to provide safer conditions for pedestrians by installing a walkway, ramp access, landscaping, and a bus stop. A formal traffic control plan would be submitted once the project is underway. Construction is anticipated to begin January 1, 2025, and last until January 30, 2026. A minor increase in vehicle trips or traffic congestion is anticipated during construction. The project may increase traffic impacts in the project area; however, if short duration and minimal due to construction occurring between 7:00am to

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4:00pm, Monday through Friday. Once construction is completed, no increase in vehicle trips or traffic congestion is anticipated.

The project would be constructed in accordance with the latest edition of the temporary traffic control provisions of the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control (CA MUTCD), the Work Area Traffic Control Handbook (WATCH), and any traffic control or detour plan requirements required by the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT). During construction, it is anticipated that the construction vehicles would be able to access these areas. It is anticipated that the project would not require rerouting of traffic during construction. As to the closure of any traffic lanes, the project shall comply with any previously referenced regulations and the Bureau of Engineering (Engineering) Master Specifications.

This project consists of the modification of an existing pedestrian island to provide safer conditions for the public and along Sepulveda Boulevard. Modifications like this project occur within the public right-of-way throughout the City of Los Angeles and as such, this is not an unusual circumstance. No reasonable possibility has been identified that the project would have a significant effect due to unusual circumstances. Therefore, this exception has no application to this project.

4. Scenic Highway. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway.

The proposed project is not within a state designated scenic highway or within sight of any state designated scenic highway. Therefore, this exception has no application to this project.

5. Hazardous Waste Site. This exception applies when a project is located on a site listed as a hazardous waste site under Government Code Section 65962.5.

As of July 23, 2024, the project site was not listed as a hazardous waste site. Therefore, this exception has no application to this project.

6. Historical Resources. This exception applies when a project may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

The proposed project is a modernization of an existing pedestrian island to enhance the surrounding aesthetic, provide safer pedestrian conditions, and access to public transportation. Since these modernizations would be done to an existing island, all landscaping and construction would be done to soils and areas previously altered. Excavation of the ground is anticipated for this project. The depth of excavation is not anticipated to exceed the depth of previously disturbed soil.

As indicated above, the project is not anticipated to result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. Therefore, no substantial adverse impact to cultural resources is anticipated, and as such this exception does not apply.

IV. REFERENCES

California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3 (State CEQA Guidelines), available from <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). *California State Scenic Highway System Map*. Retrieved July 23, 2024, from



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<https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca>

City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning Parcel Profile Report. Retrieved on July 18, 2024, from *NavigateLA* <http://boemaps.eng.ci.la.ca.us/navigate/la/>

City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works Bureau of Engineering. Retrieved on July 18, 2024, *NavigateLA*. <http://boemaps.eng.ci.la.ca.us/navigate/la/>

City of Los Angeles Environmental Quality Act Guidelines available from https://planning.lacity.org/EIR/CEQA_Guidelines/City_CEQA_Guidelines.pdf

Los Angeles Municipal Code

Public Resources Code, Div. 13, Sections 21000-21189 (CEQA), available from

<http://leginfo.ca.gov/>

State Department of Toxic Substances Control. *Envirostor*. Retrieved July 23, 2024, from www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov.

California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology. Official Map of Seismic Hazards. Retrieved July 23, 2024, from <http://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/informationwarehouse/>

California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology. Seismic Hazard Zones for the Van Nuys 7.5-Minute Quadrangle, Los Angeles County, California. (1999). Retrieved November 22, 2022, from https://filerequest.conservation.ca.gov/?q=SHZR_008_Van_Nuys.pdf

California Regional Water Quality Control Board. *Geotracker*. Retrieved July 23, 2024, from <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov>.

City of Los Angeles. *Environmental Quality Act Guidelines*.

Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5

Los Angeles Municipal Code.

Public Resources Code Section 21082

Public Resources Code Section 5097.98

Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction. Greenbook, 2021 edition.

State CEQA Guidelines.



FIGURE 1: PROJECT LOCATION

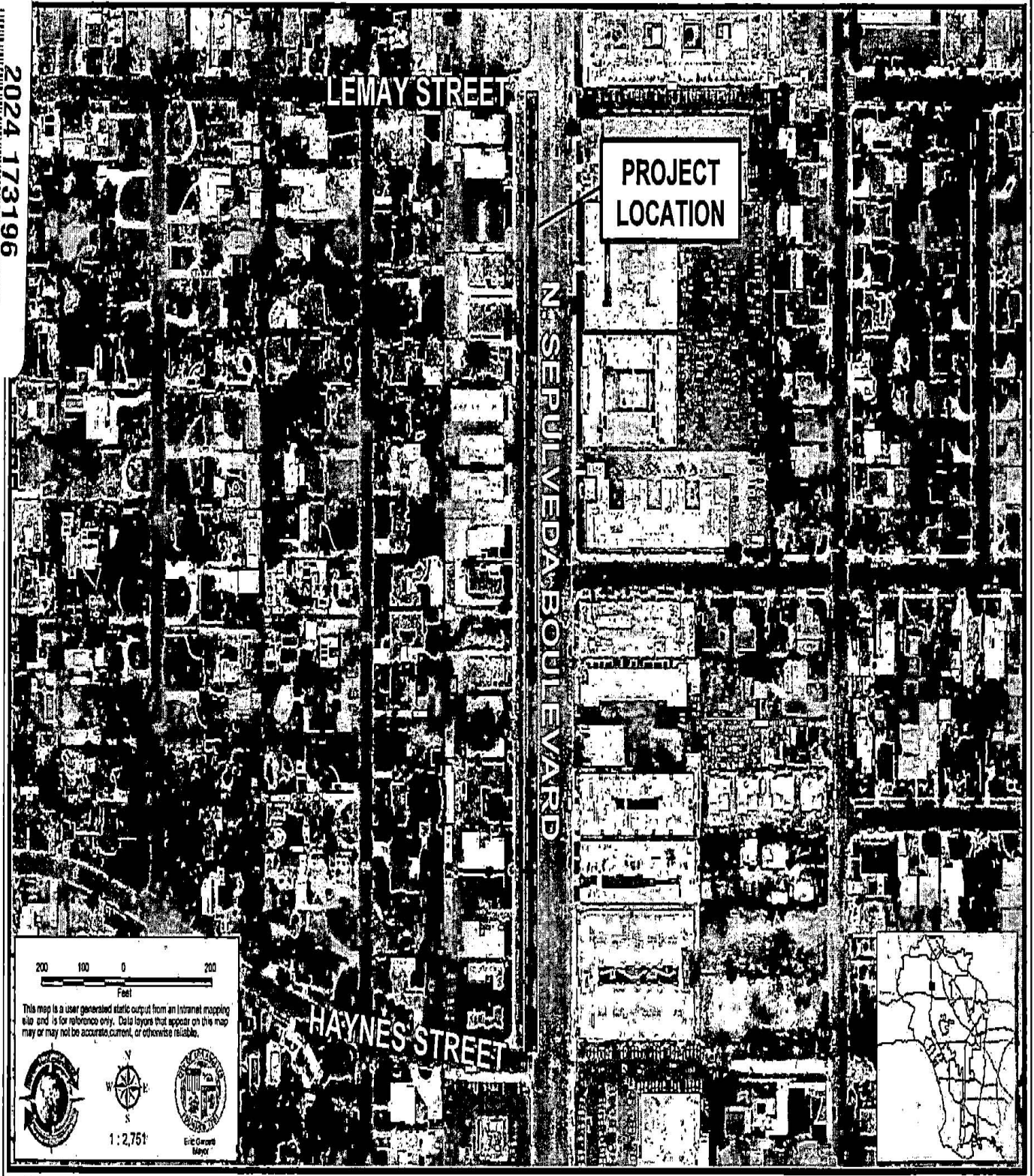


FIGURE 2: PROJECT VICINITY

