

Notice of Preparation



Date: November 16, 2023

To: Public Agencies and Other Interested Parties

From: City of Burbank
Community Development Department
Planning Division
150 North Third Street
Burbank, California 91502

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report

Project Title: Downtown Burbank Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Specific Plan

The City of Burbank will be the Lead Agency and prepare a Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Burbank Downtown Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Specific Plan (Project), pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The City will prepare a comprehensive programmatic EIR addressing all topics required by CEQA. Thus, no Initial Study has been prepared.

This is a recirculation of the previous NOP, which stated that the EIR will analyze the development potential of up to 5,656 new residential units, 4,042,139 square feet of commercial and industrial development, and 871 hotel rooms. The recirculation is intended to account for a revised Project that will establish objective development standards to facilitate the development of up to 9,944 new residential units, 6,083,657 square feet of commercial and industrial development, 981 hotel rooms, introduces the utilities infrastructure upgrades needed to support the proposed development, introduces improvements to the pedestrian network, and provides transit-supportive objective design standards within the 965-acre Specific Plan Area (Plan Area) in the City of Burbank, California.

In addition to the Project, the Program EIR will also analyze two alternatives: 1) an Increased Growth Alternative that assumes the development potential noted in the Project plus of the development of additional parcels and the provision of a 50% State density bonus on select sites, and 2) a No-Project Alternative that assumes the Specific Plan is not adopted and that the housing opportunity sites identified by the 2021-2029 Housing Element are developed as described in the Housing Element.

The City requests input from affected public agencies and interested members of the public as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the Project. The Project description and location are described below and in the attached materials. Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible time but not later than thirty (30) days after receipt of this notice, and no later than **5:00 P.M. on December 15, 2023**. Please send your response to:

**City of Burbank, Community Development Department, Planning Division
Attn: Principal Planner Leonard Bechet
150 North Third Street, P.O. Box 6459, Burbank, California 91510**

You may also email your response to lbechet@burbankca.gov. Please provide the name of a contact person at your agency.

A joint Community Workshop and EIR Public Scoping Meeting will be held virtually on **November 30, 2023 from 6:00 P.M. to 7:30 P.M.** during the public comment period. The purpose of this meeting is to provide an update on the Proposed Project, an overview of the CEQA process, the timeline for environmental review, and to solicit input from interested parties on the proposed content of the Draft EIR. The meeting will be conducted online via zoom and will be recorded. Please visit the project website at www.DowntownBurbankTOD.com to click the link from the home page and join the virtual meeting.

Date: November 16, 2023

Signature: 

Leonard Bechet
Title: Principal Planner
Telephone: (818) 238-5250
E-mail: lbechet@burbankca.gov

Downtown Burbank TOD Specific Plan Description

The Downtown Burbank TOD Specific Plan provides a framework for introducing new housing at all levels of affordability, outlines a strategy for improving the bicycle and pedestrian networks, and provides objective standards for future development in Downtown Burbank. Approximately 6,083,657 square feet of commercial and industrial development, 981 hotel rooms, and up to 9,944 new dwelling units are anticipated to be accommodated in the Specific Plan in support of the City Council goal to facilitate the development of 12,000 new units citywide by 2035 and help the City meet its required Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation number of accommodating 8,772 new units at various levels of affordability by the end of 2029.

The approximately 965-acre Plan Area is generally bounded by Lake Street, Victory Boulevard, and Mariposa Street to the west, San Fernando Boulevard and Andover Drive to the north, Glenoaks Boulevard and Fifth Street to the east, and Tujunga Avenue and the City boundary to the south (see Figure 1). The area is split by Interstate 5 and the Southern Pacific Railroad right-of-way.

The City identified groupings of underutilized sites within the Plan Area as opportunities for infill, intensification, and adaptive reuse and are inclusive of Housing Element Opportunity and Specific Plan Redevelopment sites as shown in Figure 1. These sites would also assist in meeting the City of Burbank's goals of introducing new affordable housing; promoting infill development; catalyzing economic development; introducing development within walking and biking distance of the Downtown Metrolink Station; and providing new open space opportunities for Plan Area residents, shoppers, workers, and visitors.

The Specific Plan also introduces a strategy to improve pedestrian and bicycle connections along routes connecting Downtown Burbank and the rest of the community to the Metrolink Station. Improvements include introduction of shade trees and streetscape elements; implementation of pedestrian, bus stop, bikeway and street improvements and green infrastructure treatments described in the City's Complete Our Streets Plan and Green Streets Policy; and introduction of plazas, parks, or parklets. Additional opportunities for increasing open space in the central portion of the Plan Area include transforming the alleys in the vicinity of San Fernando Boulevard into pedestrian-friendly paseos and expanding opportunities for outdoor space along San Fernando Boulevard by widening its sidewalks as discussed in the City's Complete Our Streets Plan.

Development of these opportunity sites and other underutilized parcels within the Plan Area, coupled with improved pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections between the various opportunity sites, the Metrolink Station, and various destinations within and in the vicinity of the Plan Area would result in a more efficient use of land area and natural resources; improved air quality; facilitation of new housing near employment and transit centers that create new opportunities for reduced vehicle miles traveled (VMT); increased transit ridership; improved economic development; increased attraction of private development investment near major transit and employment centers; increased sales tax and property tax revenue; reduced cost for City services; safer streets; and result in a stronger sense of place.

The traffic analysis undertaken for the Project will use VMT in compliance with Senate Bill 743. VMT analysis replaces the previously used Level of Service (LOS) method of traffic analysis.

Burbank 2035 General Plan Land Use Designation Adjustments

The Downtown Burbank TOD Specific Plan introduces new and adjusted Burbank2035 General Plan land use designations in order to 1) comply with State housing law by facilitating the rezoning of properties within the Plan Area to accommodate new housing consistent with the Housing Element Housing Plan in order to meet the City's 8,772 dwelling unit Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation; 2) preserve longstanding industrial areas located west of the Interstate 5 freeway that currently contain private commercial and industrial uses and important City utility sites, including the Burbank Water and Power's (BWP) Magnolia Power Plant and the Burbank Water Reclamation Plant; 2) prohibit residential uses within the aforementioned commercial and industrial areas in order to remove potential incompatibilities between future residential uses and these existing and needed commercial, industrial and utility uses; 3) ensure a no net loss of residential units, consistent with State law (CA Govt. Code Section 66300), due to the prohibition of residential development in the aforementioned commercial and industrial areas; and 4) better accommodate by-right residential uses and increase residential development potential in strategic areas of the Specific Plan east of the Interstate 5 freeway.

Key characteristics of these new and adjusted Burbank2035 General Plan land use designations include, but are not limited to:

- 1. West Downtown Commercial/Industrial.** The proposed West Downtown Commercial/Industrial designation prohibits residential uses and accommodates a non-residential floor area ratio (FAR) of 2.5. Existing land use designations that the proposed West Downtown Commercial/Industrial designation will replace include portions of the North Victory Commercial/Industrial (27 du/acre with CUP and 1.0 FAR) and Institutional (2.5 FAR) land use designations.
- 2. West Olive Commercial.** The proposed West Olive Commercial designation prohibits residential uses and accommodates a non-residential FAR of 3.0. Existing land use designations that the proposed West Olive Commercial designation will replace include portions of the Downtown Commercial (87 du/acre and 2.5 FAR), North Victory Commercial/Industrial (27 du/acre with CUP and 1.0 FAR) and Institutional (2.5 FAR) land use designations.
- 3. City Center Mixed-Use.** The proposed City Center Mixed-Use Designation raises the allowed residential density to 110 du/acre and accommodates a non-residential FAR of 2.5. Existing land use designations that the proposed City Center Mixed-Use designation will replace include portions of the Downtown Commercial (87 du/acre and 2.5 FAR) and Institutional (2.5 FAR).
- 4. San Fernando Mixed-Use.** The existing South San Fernando Commercial land use designation is renamed to San Fernando Mixed-Use and will continue to accommodate the existing residential density of 43 du/acre and non-residential FAR of 1.25.
- 5. Downtown/Media District Mixed-Use.** The existing Downtown Commercial land use designation is renamed to Downtown/Media District Mixed-Use and will continue to accommodate the existing residential density of 87 du/acre and a non-residential FAR of 2.5.

Figures 4 and 5 show the existing and proposed Burbank2035 Land Use Designations respectively. The total net residential units after the proposed General Plan Land Use adjustment are 1,096 units.

Key Projects and Plan Area Improvements

Key Specific Plan projects and improvements include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1. Infill Development.** Existing underutilized parcels containing surface parking lots or low-intensity buildings are redeveloped with multi-story pedestrian-oriented residential mixed-use buildings.
- 2. Burbank Town Center.** The Burbank Town Center is re-envisioned as an urban, mixed-use destination. Over time San Fernando Boulevard is extended through the site either as a pedestrian passage or a vehicular street, connecting the Downtown Core to the North San Fernando Corridor. An urban park or plaza or series of parks or plazas are introduced along San Fernando Boulevard, providing open space for residents, office workers, shoppers, and visitors. Mixed-use buildings with ground floor retail and upper floor residences face the parks or plazas; office uses are introduced at the intersection of First Street and Magnolia Boulevard and along the Interstate 5 Freeway. The existing parking structures are retained, providing parking for the office, retail, and residential uses. The proposed development potential for the Burbank Town Center is:

Project Description: 5,287 new residential units and 2,859,221 square feet of new commercial development, including 1,864,149 square feet of office, 702,248 square feet of retail, 139,984 square feet of entertainment, and 180 hotel rooms (152,840 square feet).

Increased Growth Alternative: 7,930 new residential units and 2,859,221 square feet of new commercial development, including 1,864,149 square feet of office, 702,248 square feet of retail, 139,984 square feet of entertainment, and 180 hotel rooms (152,840 square feet).

- 3. Downtown Civic Center.** The Civic Center is expanded to include a new central library, additional City office space, publicly accessible open spaces, and open City-owned properties to allow for the development of new housing units and commercial uses. Replacement parking is provided in the new Civic Center Parking Garage. Following the completion of the new Central Library, the existing Central Library can be adaptively reused or demolished to make way for new housing.

The proposed development potential for the Downtown Civic Center is:

Project Description: 1,353 new residential units and 1,012,160 square feet of new commercial development, including 344,744 square feet of office, 359,413 square feet of retail, and 308,003 square feet of civic.

Increased Growth Alternative: 2,030 new residential units and 1,012,160 square feet of new commercial development, including 344,744 square feet of office, 359,413 square feet of retail, and 308,003 square feet of civic.

- 4. San Fernando Boulevard.** Consistent with the *Citywide Complete Streets Plan*, San Fernando Boulevard between Magnolia Boulevard and Olive Avenue is converted in two phases to accommodate one-way vehicular flow in the northbound direction. Planning for the first phase is currently underway and includes modifications to roadway striping to accommodate one-way flow, installation of appropriate signage, and adjustments to existing angled parking spaces in response to the new one-way flow. The first phase improvements are expected to be completed in early 2024. The Specific Plan will assist with the implementation of the second phase, when permanent infrastructure is built, including reconstructing curb and gutter to enable expanded sidewalks, making one-way vehicular flow permanent, reducing vehicle travel lanes from two lanes to one

lane, streamlining and reorganizing sidewalk zones, and planting more street trees or providing shade structures. In addition, select parking spaces can be converted to parklets or to provide additional seating and outdoor dining area. Measures are also introduced to enable easy closure of the street for special events or during select times of the day/week. Finally, select alleys are repurposed to better accommodate pedestrians and outdoor dining and the development of parking management for San Fernando and the surrounding public parking facilities is introduced that will ultimately provide a template for parking throughout the Plan Area.

5. **Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements.** Consistent with the *Citywide Complete Streets Plan*, pedestrian and bicycle improvement projects are implemented to improve connections over and under the I-5 Freeway and to the Metrolink Station.
6. **Streetscape Improvements.** Missing street trees that provide needed shade and are appropriate to withstand climate change are planted, pedestrian-scaled streetlights are introduced, and where appropriate, street furniture is provided.
7. **Parking Improvements.** A Plan Area Parking Management Plan will be developed that will propose several parking design and parking management strategies that will promote a vibrant, walkable downtown and ensure that enough parking is available as Downtown grows over time. Chief among these is retaining on-street parking where it currently exists, introducing it where it is missing, and ensuring that off-street parking is not visible from the street.

Potential Environmental Effects

As discussed above, a comprehensive programmatic EIR will be prepared that addresses all environmental topics required by CEQA. The potential environmental effects of the proposed project to be addressed in the Draft EIR will include, but may not be limited to, the following:

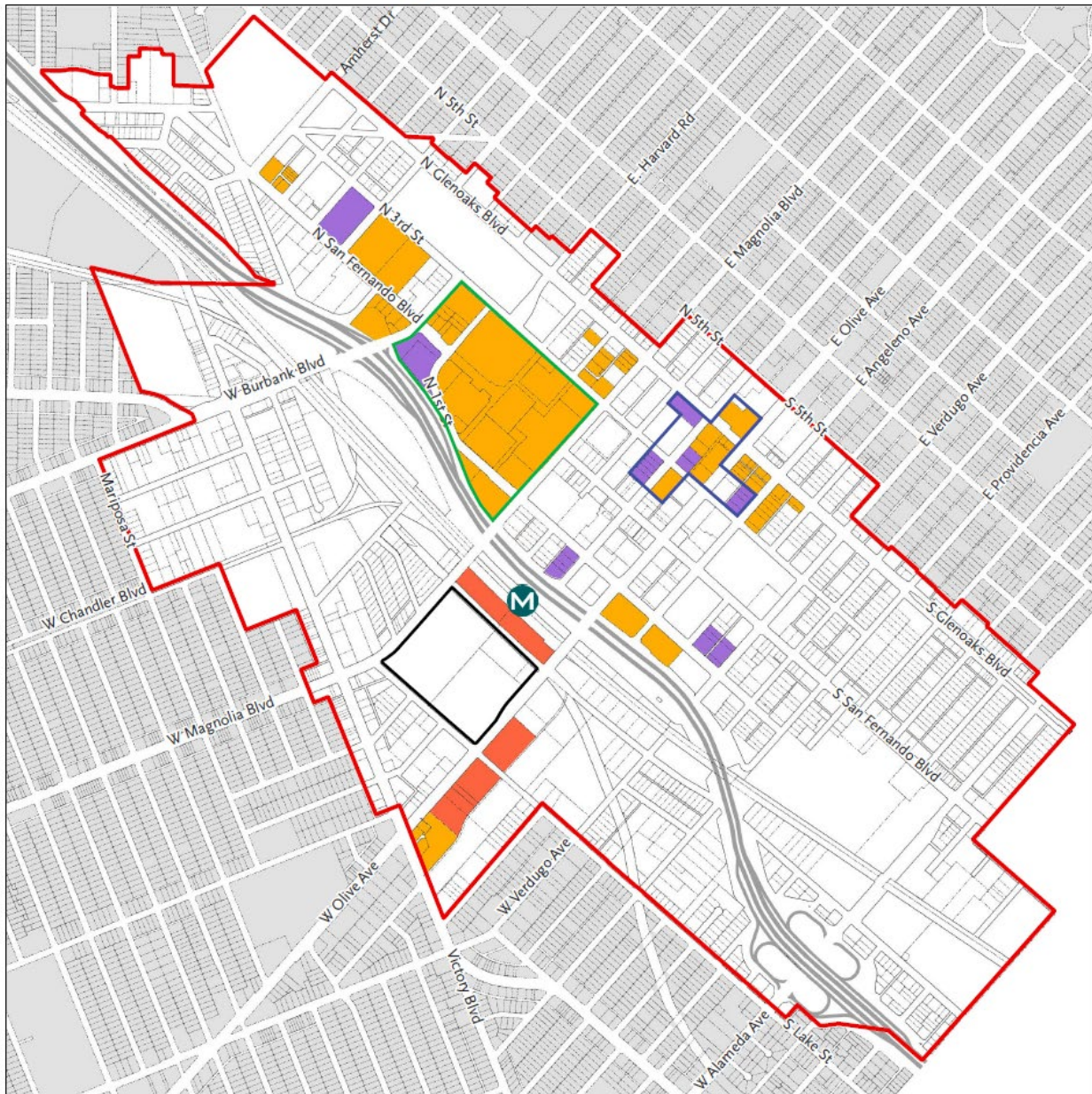
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Energy
- Wildfire
- Public Services
- Transportation
- Land Use and Planning
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Population and Housing
- Aesthetics/Visual
- Recreation
- Noise
- Air Quality
- Mineral Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Utilities and Service Systems

Potential Alternatives

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6, the EIR will include, but may not be limited to, an evaluation of the No Project Alternative, as well as an Increased Growth Alternative, as described below:

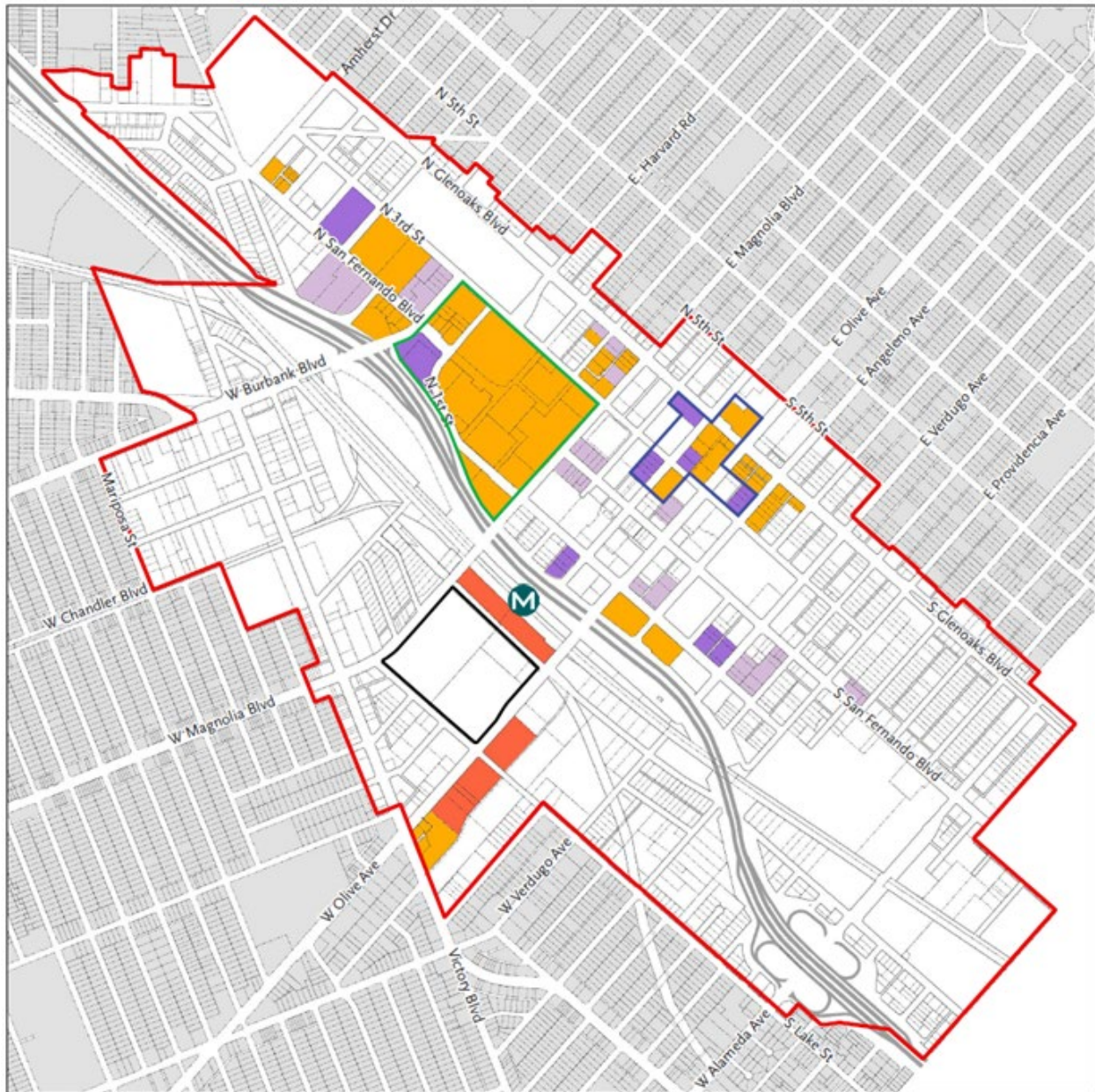
1. An **Increased Growth Alternative** that assumes the development of additional parcels, beyond the Housing Element Opportunity and Specific Plan Redevelopment sites, and the provision of a 50% State density bonus on select sites (see Figure 2). The Increased Growth Alternative assumes the development of up to 16,977 new residential units, 6,239,237 square feet of commercial and industrial development, and 981 hotel rooms. The primary purpose of the Increased Growth Alternative is to ensure that potential density increases resulting from a developer-initiated density bonus, under state law, is sufficiently analyzed to inform the public and decision makers of any potential significant adverse impacts to the City’s utility infrastructure (water, sewer, power).
2. A **No-Project Alternative** that assumes the Specific Plan is not adopted and that the housing opportunity sites identified by the 2021-2029 Housing Element (see Figure 3) develop with the residential development potential identified in the Housing Element. Non-residential development is also assumed to develop as allowed by the existing Burbank2035 General Plan land use potential.

Figure 1 Plan Area and Growth Sites per Project Description



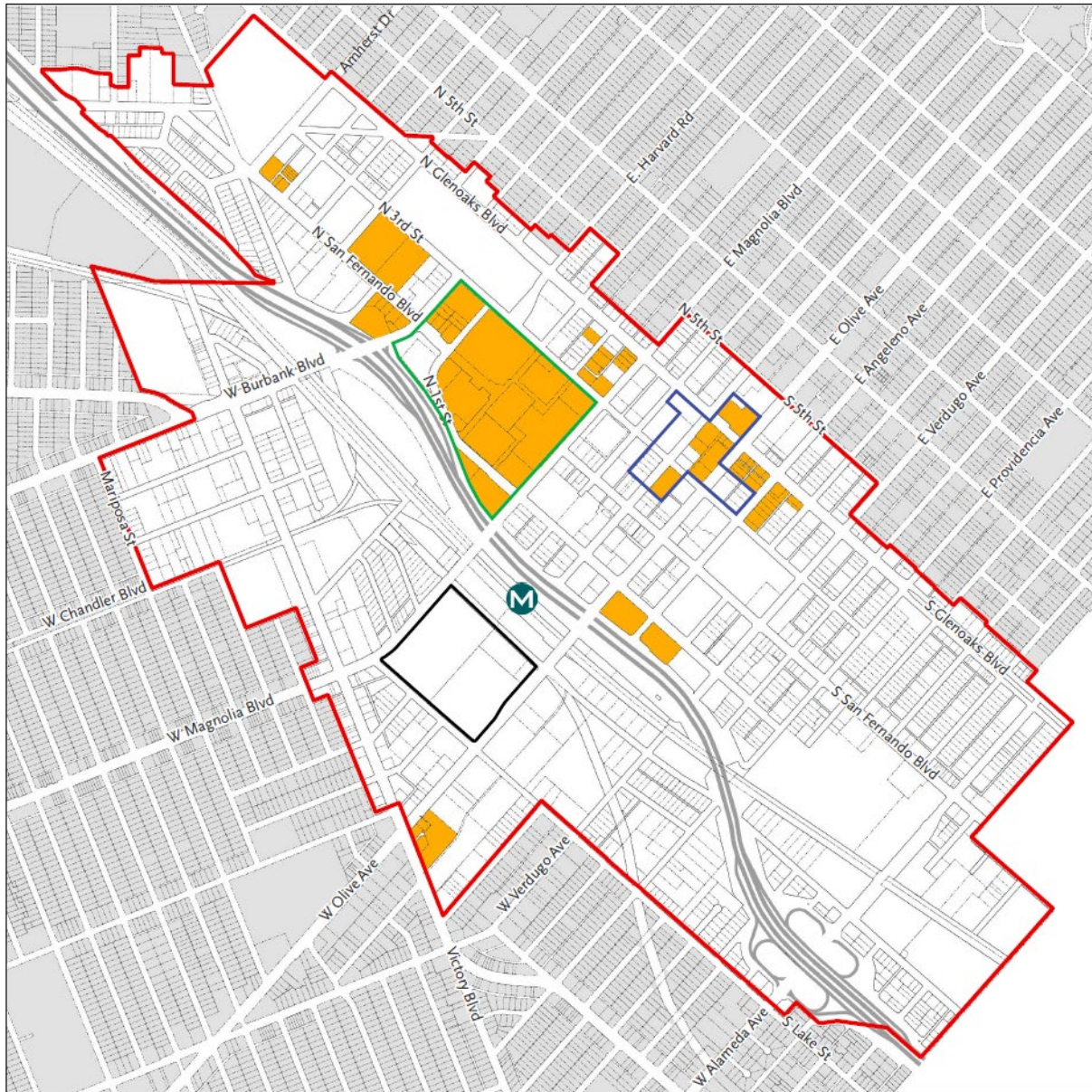
- Plan Area
- Burbank Downtown Metrolink Station
- Magnolia Power Plant (MPP) Site
- Burbank Town Center Sites
- Civic Center Sites
- Housing Element Opportunity Sites
- Specific Plan Redevelopment Sites (Residential Allowed)
- Specific Plan Redevelopment Sites (Residential Not Allowed)

Figure 2 Plan Area and Growth Sites per Increased Growth Alternative



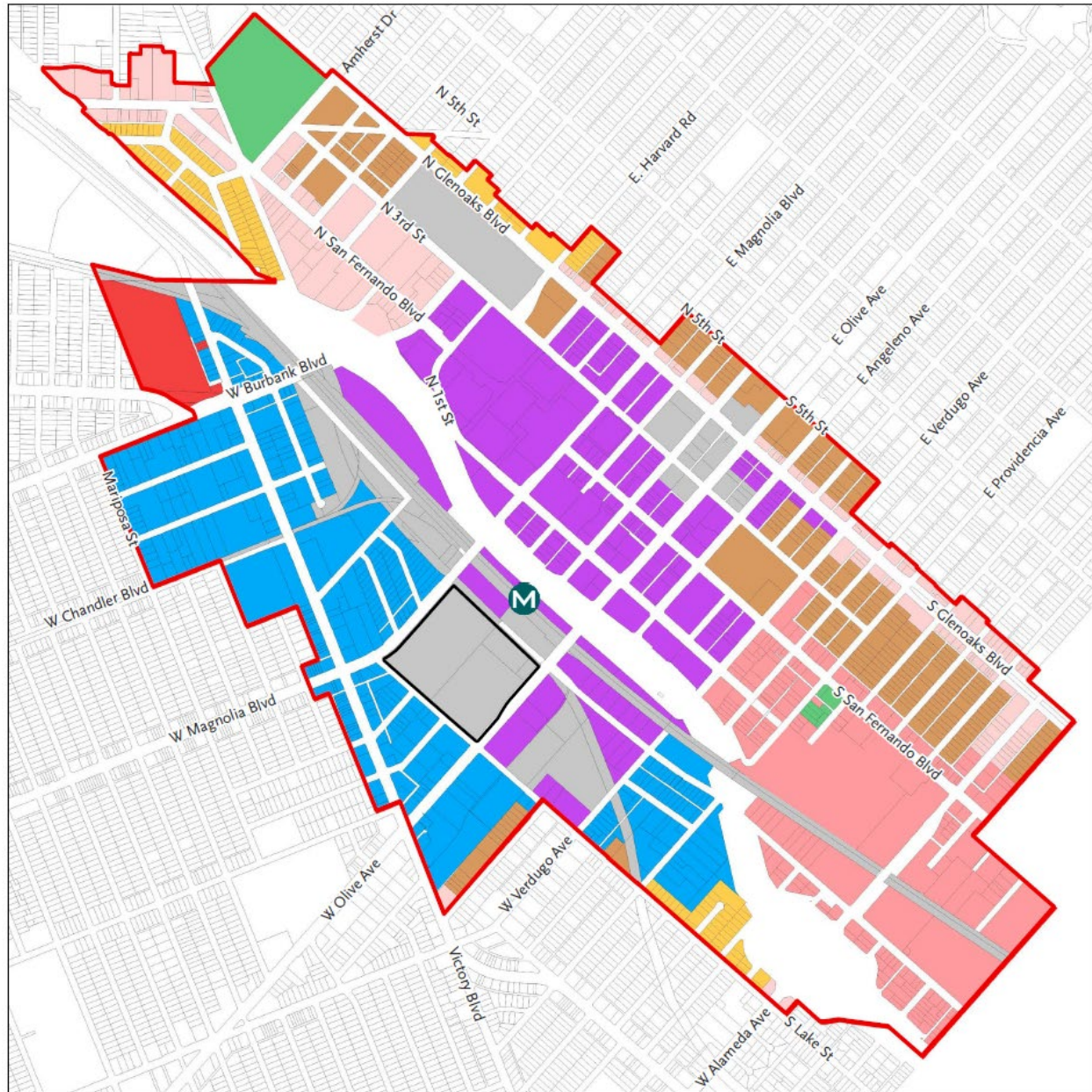
- Plan Area
- M Burbank Downtown Metrolink Station
- Magnolia Power Plant (MPP) Site
- Burbank Town Center Sites
- Civic Center Sites
- Housing Element Opportunity Sites
- Specific Plan Redevelopment Sites (Residential Allowed)
- Specific Plan Redevelopment Sites (Residential Not Allowed)
- Additional Infill Sites (Res. Allowed)

Figure 3 Plan Area and Growth Sites per No-Project Alternative



- Plan Area
- Burbank Downtown Metrolink Station
- Magnolia Power Plant (MPP) Site
- Burbank Town Center Sites
- Civic Center Sites
- Housing Element Opportunity Sites

Figure 4 Plan Area Existing Burbank2035 General Plan Land Use Designations



- Plan Area
- Downtown Commercial
- Institutional
- Regional Commercial
- South San Fernando Commercial
- High Density Residential
- Corridor Commercial
- North Victory Commercial/Industrial
- Medium Density Residential
- Open Space

Figure 5 Plan Area Proposed Burbank2035 General Plan Land Use Designations

