



CIRCULATION ELEMENT WHITE PAPER NO. 4

IMPACT OF NORTH-SOUTH TRAFFIC

INTRODUCTION

Beverly Hills is not well served from a regional transportation accessibility standpoint. This is especially true in regard to north-south access to the City. Figure 1 shows in “broad-brush” terms the key paths for north-south access to the City, as follows:

- Cahuenga Pass (via 101 Freeway and Sunset Boulevard)
- Sepulveda Pass (via 405 Freeway and Sunset Boulevard)
- Interstate 405 Corridor (via Santa Monica Boulevard)
- Canyon routes connecting to the Valley (Coldwater Canyon/Beverly Drive, Benedict Canyon/Canon Drive and Beverly Glen Boulevard to Sunset Boulevard)
- South Bay connections from Santa Monica Freeway (via Robertson, La Cienega and San Vicente Boulevards)

As documented in the Technical Background Report, La Cienega Boulevard is the only designated principal north-south arterial traversing the City. Other north-south corridors, Robertson Boulevard and Beverly Drive, function as minor arterials and Doheny Drive functions as a collector street. Due to the heavy travel demand to and from the City in a north-south direction, major direct travel routes have become overloaded, thus forcing traffic to other, minor routes, many through established residential areas on streets not designated or developed as arterials (White Paper No. 5). As shown in Figure 2, these routes include:

- North Beverly Drive
- North Canon Drive
- Routes through areas to the south and southwest of Beverly Hills (Castle Heights Avenue/Beverwil Drive/Beverly Drive, Motor Avenue through Cheviot Hills to Pico Boulevard)

Though not shown in Figure 2, Overland Avenue also serves as a regional north-south connection to Beverly Hills by virtue of its interchange with the Santa Monica Freeway and the congested nature of alternate routes.

BACKGROUND

As the Westside and the surrounding sub-regions grow and traffic congestion increases in the post-freeway building era, persons seeking access to and through Beverly Hills have been forced to seek alternate routes, particularly in the north-south travel direction. First, it was via the surrounding freeway system and major arterials (Robertson/La Cienega) and cross-canyon routes (through Coldwater and Benedict Canyons). Later, such persons would increasingly use Sunset and Santa Monica Boulevards from the 405 Freeway and from the 101 Freeway. As congestion built even further, motorists increasingly utilized Motor Avenue and even Overland

Avenue to “filter through” Cheviot Hills and West Los Angeles en route to either Century City or Beverly Hills.

The brunt of north-south traffic into residential areas in Beverly Hills occurs north of Santa Monica Boulevard, as motorists seek both alternate north-south routes into the Beverly Hills area from the San Fernando Valley, and seek routes between Santa Monica Boulevard and Sunset Boulevard. The City is proposing three new traffic signals along Sunset Boulevard at Roxbury, Bedford and Canon Drives to address safety concerns related to such travel patterns.

TRAVEL FORECASTS

Based on available traffic modeling data we can expect even further growth in north-south traffic volumes in the City in the future. To get a glimpse of future traffic conditions, Figures 3 and 4 present the 1997 and 2025 p.m. peak hour volumes on Benedict Canyon, Coldwater Canyon, La Cienega Boulevard and Robertson Boulevard. While the growth in traffic volumes is not large, it is significant in light of today’s already congested environment. As anecdotal evidence of current congestion levels, try reaching West Hollywood via Robertson Boulevard through Beverly Hills from the Santa Monica Freeway just about anytime during the day (weekday or weekend). The point is that the growth in regional north-south traffic is increasingly affecting Beverly Hills. At the same time, there are limited street capacity improvements available and apparent resident concerns in Beverly Hills and Los Angeles about both traffic calming and projects to increase street capacity

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

If these traffic trends continue, they could have an adverse economic impact on Beverly Hills in terms of its attractiveness as a location for jobs, shopping and entertainment. Traditionally, cities and regions have sought to increase roadway capacity as a means to increase access and development potential. In this regard, a limited amount of help is on the way. As shown in Figure 5, completion of the Santa Monica Boulevard Transit Parkway in West Los Angeles, coupled with completion of the carpool lanes on the 405 Freeway will marginally improve north-south access to Beverly Hills. The Santa Monica Boulevard Transit Parkway will marginally add east-west travel capacity. It will reduce current congestion related to north-south traffic and will thus improve traffic flow in the east-west direction. If Beverly Hills improves Santa Monica Boulevard within its City limits, further benefits would be realized. As noted in White Paper Number 3, the City must determine the best alternative for improving multimodal traffic flow along the Santa Monica Boulevard Corridor through the City.

The *Westside Mobility Study Final Report* proposed regional multimodal corridor capacity enhancement for the Robertson/La Cienega/Fairfax corridors, as well as a major reconfiguration of the Robertson Boulevard/Venice Boulevard/Santa Monica Freeway interchange. Such enhancements, if feasible, would improve access to Beverly Hills, as well as reduce impacts to residential neighborhoods along these three corridors.

Possible selected changes to land use may assist in mitigating such north-south travel-related impacts, particularly if corridor improvements are multimodal, in which case transit oriented development may be appropriate. But it must be stressed that the north-south traffic is predominantly regional in nature, thus, local land use decisions may have limited positive effect.

The City could also consider reclassifying and upgrading existing streets from local and collectors to minor or principal arterials. Candidates for reclassification include Beverly Drive, N. Canon, Robertson and Doheny Drives.

In the final analysis, it is unlikely that significant congestion relief would be realized even if all these projects were implemented. For example, there would be no relief for the canyon routes from the San Fernando Valley. As long as cross-mountain routes remain available and no viable regional access options are provided, commuter traffic will continue to intrude on residential neighborhoods in the north part of the City.



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The Beverly Hills General Plan Update



REFERENCES

'Calmed' Roads Led to a Storm, Martha Groves, Los Angeles Times, July 20, 2005.

Final General Plan Circulation Committee Report and Recommendations, January 2004.

Mid-City/Westside Transit Corridor Study, Re-Evaluation/Major Investment Study Report, MTA, February 24, 2000.

Smart Growth Transportation Guidelines and ITE Proposed Recommended Practice, ITE Smart Growth Task Force, 2003.

Westside Mobility Study Final Report, Kaku Associates, Inc., October 2003.

FIGURE 1
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SETTING: NORTH-SOUTH ACCESS TO BEVERLY HILLS

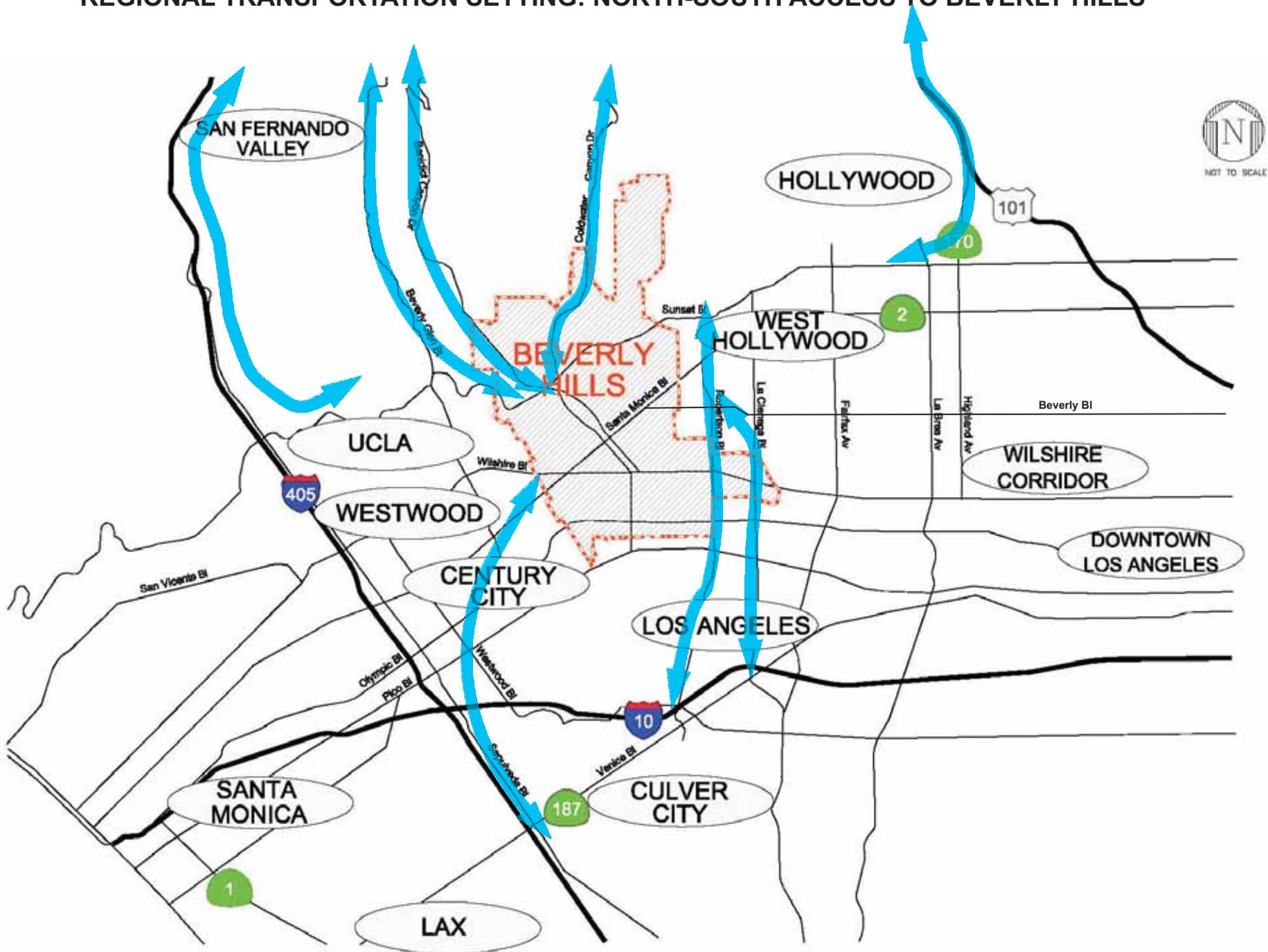
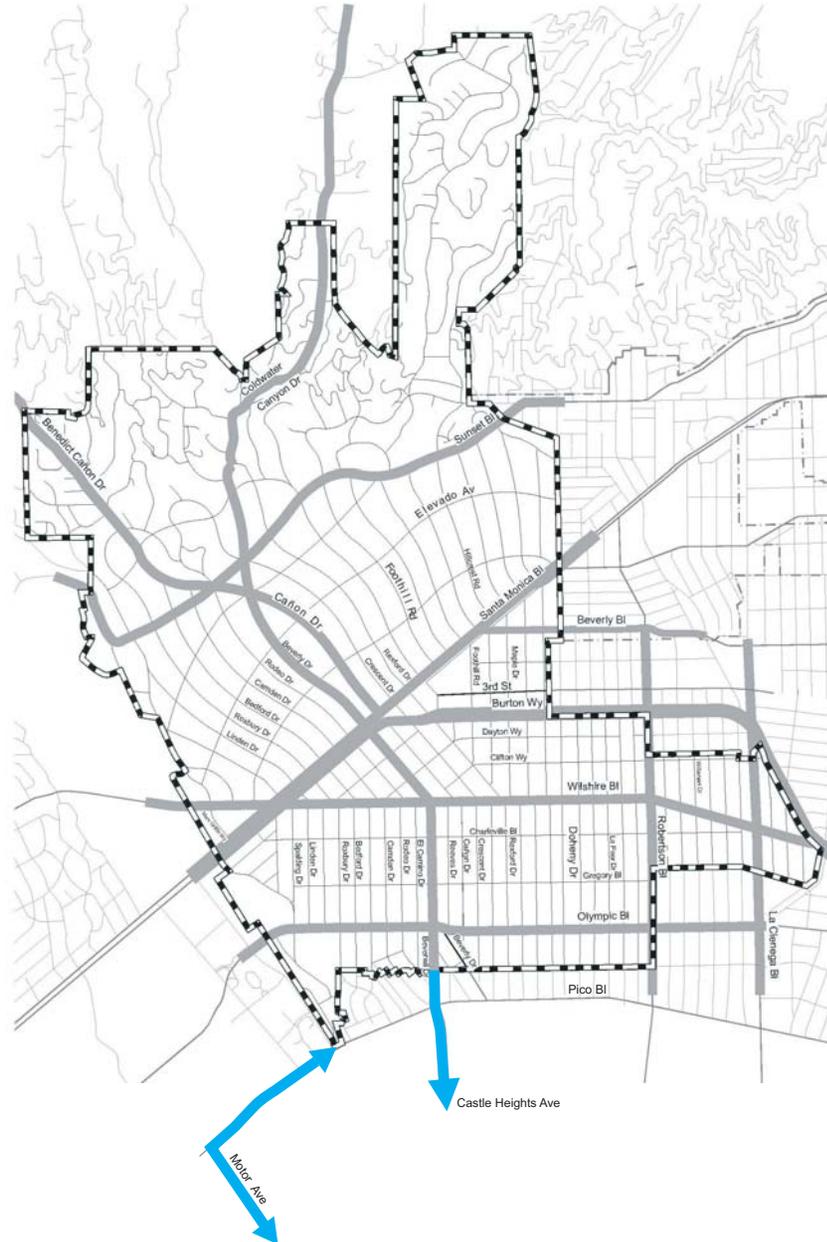


FIGURE 2 STREETS CARRYING NORTH-SOUTH REGIONAL TRAFFIC

LEGEND:

- Regional Through Traffic Street
- - - Los Angeles/West Hollywood City Limits
- ▬ Beverly Hills City Limits



WITHIN CITY LIMIT:

- Benedict Canon Drive
- Coldwater Canyon Drive
- Robertson Boulevard
- Santa Monica Boulevard/State Route 2
(from 405 & 101 freeways)
- Sunset Boulevard
(from 405 & 101 freeways)
- La Cienega/San Vicente Boulevards

OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS

- Beverly Glen Boulevard
- Beverwill Drive/Castle Heights Avenue
- Motor Avenue/Pico Boulevard

FIGURE 3
EXISTING (1997) NORTH-SOUTH PM PEAK HOUR VOLUMES ON SELECTED ROUTES

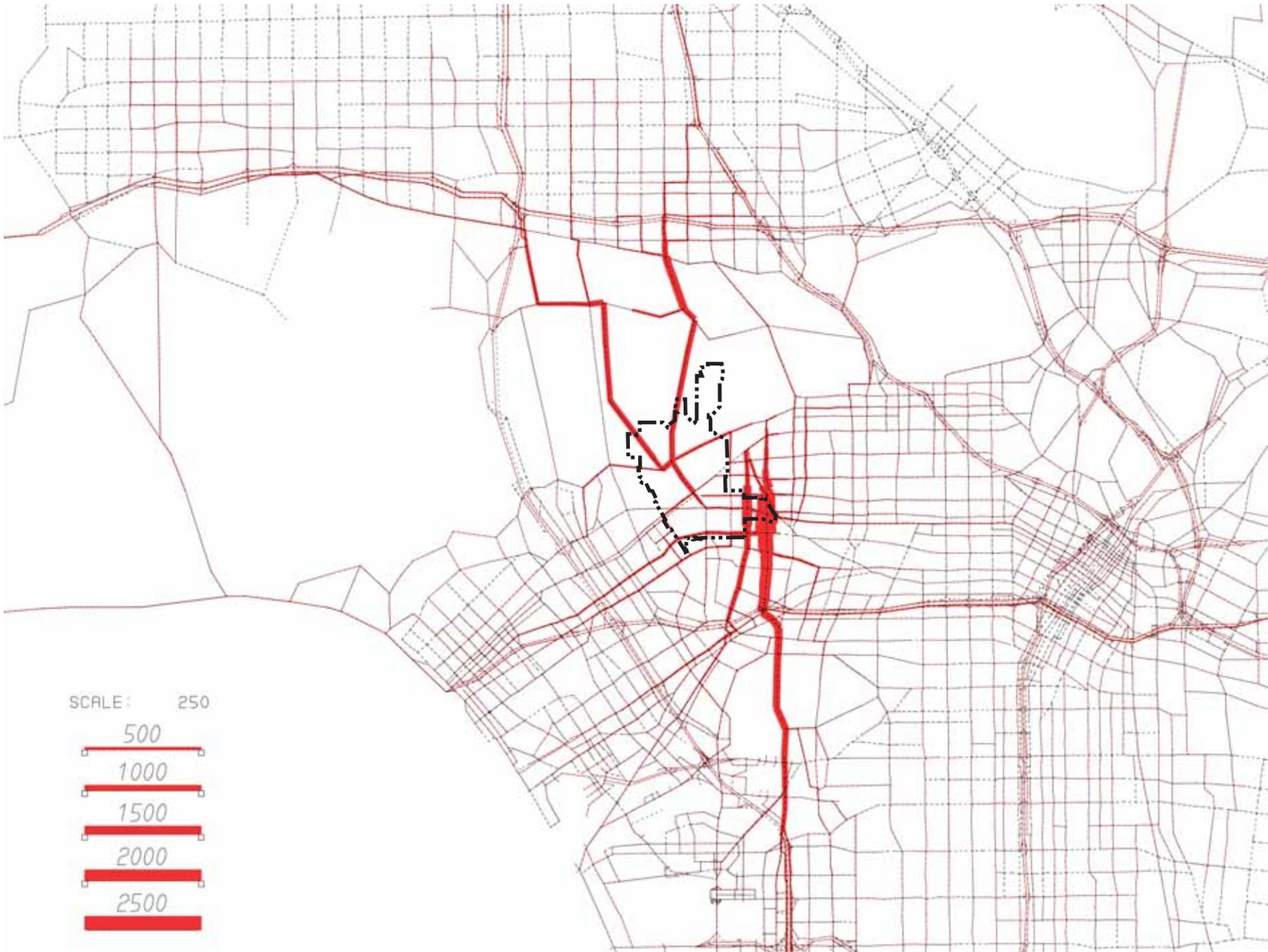


FIGURE 4
FUTURE (2025) NORTH-SOUTH PM PEAK HOUR VOLUMES ON SELECTED ROUTES

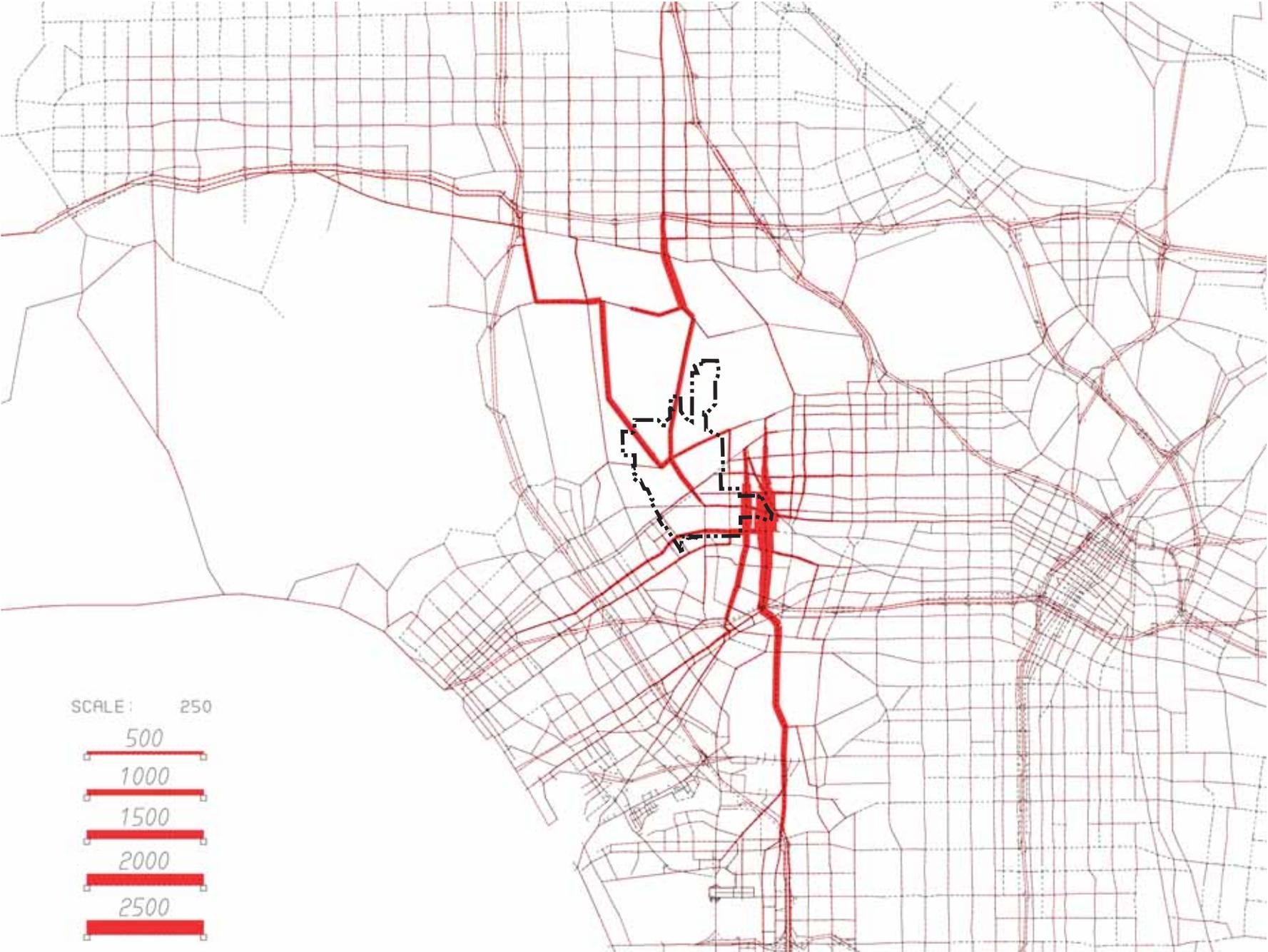
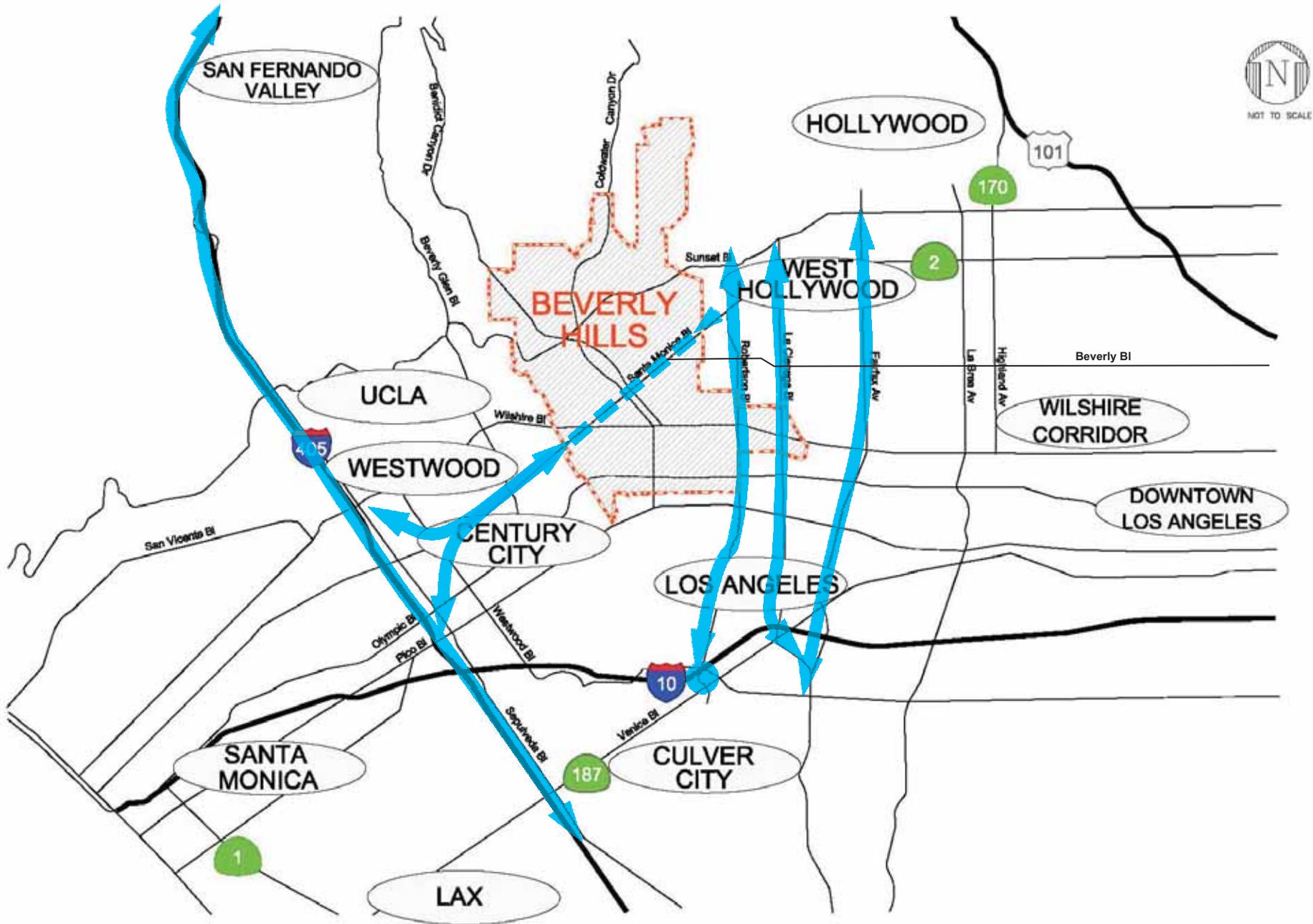


FIGURE 5
POTENTIAL INCREASES IN NORTH-SOUTH TRAFFIC CAPACITY



**FIGURE 6
REGIONAL RAIL SYSTEM EXPANSION**

