

Appendix D

Aesthetics and Visual Resources

LA RIVER PATH



Metro

FINAL

Impact Analysis Report: Aesthetics and Visual Resources

Task 6.4.1

Prepared for:



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DISCLAIMER

This Impact Analysis Report provides California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) environmental analysis in support of the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the LA River Path Project.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AVE	area of visual effect
CALGreen	California Green Building Standards
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
HAER	Historic American Engineering Record
I-	Interstate highway route
KOP	key observation point
LARMP	<i>Los Angeles River Master Plan</i>
LU	landscape unit
Metro	Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
MMRP	Mitigation and Monitoring and Reporting Program
National Academies	National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine
O&M	operations and maintenance
PARC	Park, Arts, River, and Connectivity Improvements
PO	public realm and open space
Proposed Project	LA River Path Project
ROW	right-of-way
SR	State Route
Union Station	Los Angeles Union Station
UP	Union Pacific Railroad
US	US Highway
USACE	US Army Corps of Engineers
VIA	visual impact assessment

INTRODUCTION

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) published *Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects* in 1988 to guide development of transportation projects. These guidelines define visual resources as “the appearance of the features that make up the visible landscape” (FHWA 1988). In the update to these guidelines (*Guidelines for the Visual Impact Assessment of Highway Projects* [FHWA 2015]), FHWA notes that “Community acceptance of a proposed transportation project is frequently influenced by the extent of its visual impacts.”

A visual impact assessment (VIA) focuses on the visual compatibility between proposed actions and the existing landscape. FHWA defines visual compatibility as “the ability of the environment to absorb the proposed project,” which is determined by assessing the similarity between a project’s elements and the existing landscape character (FHWA 2015). A landscape’s visual character includes natural and human-made elements, such as waterbodies, buildings, bridges, vegetation, and hillsides. These elements are inventoried and described in descriptive, non-evaluative terms, such as form, line, color, and scale (FHWA 1988, 2015).

A landscape’s existing visual quality, or excellence, is established to serve as the baseline for determining the degree of visual impacts based on changes to visual character. Although FHWA acknowledges that there is “no comprehensive official process for identifying” visual quality (FHWA 1988), it also notes that “human perception of what constitutes a pleasing landscape is remarkably consistent, not only within a society, but across cultures” (FHWA 2015). FHWA guidance recommends using one of “several sets of evaluative criteria [that] have been proposed and tested” to describe visual quality, and recommends defining visual quality based on a landscape’s vividness, intactness, and unity (defined in Chapter 4) (FHWA 1988).

Visual impacts are experienced by those traveling on a transportation facility and neighbors adjacent to it, collectively referred to as viewers. The sensitivity of viewers to a landscape change depends on a variety of factors, such as proximity to project elements, duration of view, and activity. For example, travelers’ visual preferences are related to their use of a transportation facility, and neighbors’ visual preferences are related to the use of their property. Therefore, changes to visual quality are based on the compatibility of the existing visual character and quality with the proposed changes and anticipated viewer response (FHWA 1988, 2015).

1.1 Methodology

The impact analysis for aesthetics and visual resources was completed using the methodology established in the 1988 *Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects* (FHWA 1988) and the 2015 *Guidelines for the Visual Impact Assessment of Highway Projects* (FHWA 2015). To provide a basis for evaluating Proposed Project impacts, computer modeling and rendering techniques were used to produce visual simulations that illustrate the key observation points (KOPs) as they would appear after Proposed Project development.

To render visual simulations, existing topographic and site data provided the basis for developing an initial digital model. Proposed Project engineers provided site plans and digital data for the proposed

designs, from which three-dimensional digital models of the Proposed Project were developed. These models were combined with the digital site model to produce a complete computer model of the Proposed Project and its options, Option 1 and Option 2. The visual simulations rendered from the model (refer to Attachment A) provide clear representations of the location, scale, and visual appearance of the Proposed Project and its options for each of the KOPs.

The Proposed Project's physical features are considered in evaluating changes to scenic vistas, scenic resources, visual character and quality, light, and glare. Physical features of the Proposed Project that would contrast enough with a visually interesting view to permanently affect the view's content or quality would be considered potentially significant impacts on scenic vistas. If the Proposed Project involves the loss or obstruction of a valued public view or valued scenic resource, including those within a scenic highway, these are considered potentially significant impacts on scenic resources. Viewer exposure and sensitivity to visual changes are considered when determining the Proposed Project's potential effects on scenic views and scenic resources.

Regional and local plans and zoning were reviewed, and applicable policies, goals, objectives, and regulations were identified. The compatibility of the Proposed Project and its options with these plans and directives was then analyzed.

Significant impacts related to light and glare would occur if Proposed Project-related light from ancillary path elements, such as new lighting along the path, spill over onto light-sensitive uses, such as residential uses, or if Proposed Project-related light causes glare at light-sensitive uses. The introduction of new light sources in low-lit areas and the potential of the Proposed Project to introduce reflective surfaces were also considered when evaluating light and glare impacts.

The same methodology is applied to evaluating the impacts of the Proposed Project and its options.

1.1.1 California Environmental Quality Act Thresholds of Significance and Impact Criteria

Based on California Environmental Quality Act's (CEQA's) sample initial study questions in its Guidelines, this VIA identifies the extent to which visual impacts would be significant by determining whether the Proposed Project and its options would do any of the following:

- **Impact AES-1:** Have a substantially adverse effect on a scenic vista?
- **Impact AES-2:** Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historical buildings within a state scenic highway?
- **Impact AES-3:** Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings, and conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point.)
- **Impact AES-4:** Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day- or nighttime views in the area?

1.1.2 Approach to Impact Analysis

The physical features of the Proposed Project are considered in evaluating changes to scenic vistas, scenic resources, visual character and quality, light, and glare. Proposed Project physical features that

would contrast enough with a visually interesting view so that the content and quality of the view is permanently affected are considered potentially significant impacts on scenic vistas. If the Proposed Project involves the loss or obstruction of a valued public view or a valued scenic resource, including those within a scenic highway, these are considered potentially significant impacts on scenic resources. Viewer exposure and sensitivity to visual changes are also considered when determining the Proposed Project's potential effects on scenic views and scenic resources. Regional and local plans and zoning were reviewed, and applicable policies, goals, objectives, and regulations were identified. The compatibility of the Proposed Project and its options with these plans and directives was then analyzed.

Significant impacts related to light and glare would occur if Proposed Project-related light from ancillary path elements such as new lighting along the path spill over onto light-sensitive uses such as residential uses, or if Proposed Project-related light causes glare at light-sensitive uses. The introduction of new light sources in low-lit areas and the potential of the Proposed Project to introduce reflective surfaces are also considered when evaluating light and glare impacts.

Although CEQA and other environmental laws recognize the importance of aesthetics (Chapter 2), federal laws that specify procedures for analyzing visual impacts nationwide do not exist. However, several federal agencies, including FHWA, have adopted a systematic approach to conducting VIAs for proposed actions within their purview. In a 2013 review of existing VIA methodologies, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (National Academies) noted, "Of the processes now in use, none has been shown to be more effective, more scientific, more legal, more publicly accepted, or more efficiently delivered" than the 1988 FHWA methodology. The review further states, "Throughout the country, this remains the standard methodology to identify visual impacts" for transportation improvements. Although written prior to FHWA's 2015 update, this statement underscores the reliability of the agency's overall approach. The review adds, "In both federal and local tests of VIA, the defensibility of the VIA procedure as reliable and pragmatic has been viewed by the courts as most important" (National Academies 2013).

As mentioned, FHWA updated its original VIA 1988 guidance in 2015. Although retaining and consolidating most of the original concepts into discrete phases, the update took a more transactional approach by focusing on the interaction between people and the environment, omitting the Visual Quality Evaluation Form included in the 1988 version. The Visual Quality Evaluation Form strives to establish a quantitative evaluative approach by assigning a numerical ranking for three measures of visual quality (such as vividness, intactness, and unity) based on various landscape characteristics, such as landform, vegetation, and the built environment. Although the National Academies review notes a "desirability of quantitative methods" for VIA analysis, it asserts that many VIAs "are not sophisticated or exemplary in their use" of such methods (National Academies 2013). However, the review also states the following:

"An objective VIA procedure is designed to eliminate individual bias. Ways to achieve this criterion include using an explicit measurement system of quantities or qualities of the landscape and viewers. This approach is strongly supported by legal precedents in the United States. It does not mean that all VIA procedures and each of their components must be reduced to a mathematical formula, but rather that explicit measurement on some scale (nominal, ordinal, interval, or ratio) should be employed, and that the ways in which the procedure specifies that different factors and their classes be combined should be unambiguous and defensible."

For these reasons, this Impact Analysis Report, which serves as a VIA for the Proposed Project, employs the 1988 Visual Quality Evaluation Form. Although assigning a numerical rating can be an

implicitly subjective practice, the National Academies review states, “The landscape perception literature demonstrates that quantitative assessment of landscape visual quality is possible and has been accomplished for many decades as part of science” (National Academies 2013). In addition, using the Visual Quality Evaluation Form forces practitioners to detach from and focus on specific landscape criteria, minimizing the tendency to impose personal generalities. Use of the Visual Quality Evaluation Form also does not preclude evaluating the transactional relationships between the landscape and viewers, as acknowledged by the National Academies: “There are many approaches to investigating these transactional dynamics using both quantitative and qualitative methods” (National Academies 2013). As a result of these findings, this Impact Analysis Report incorporates what are believed to be the most defensible and repeatable methods set forth in both the 1988 and 2015 FHWA guidelines to create an analysis that is as “unambiguous and defensible” as possible.

1.1.2.1 Proposed Project Visual Characteristics

The Proposed Project’s predominant visual characteristics (based on scale, form, and materials) are primarily related to its path typology; specifically, elevated sections are generally expected to be more visible than top-of-bank sections, which are expected to be more visible than incised sections. River crossings are also expected to be more visible, as well as access points and connectors, such as elevated paths or ramps. Ancillary path elements, such as restrooms and shade structures, are not expected to meaningfully affect the impact analysis. New sources of light or glare would be associated with ancillary path elements, specifically pathway lighting, signage and visualizations, seating, drinking fountains, restroom facilities, public art, bicycle fix-it stations, and shade structures.

1.1.2.2 Data Sources and Standards

To provide a basis for evaluating Proposed Project impacts, computer modeling and rendering techniques were used to produce visual simulations that illustrate the key views, referred to as key observation points (KOPs), as they would appear after Proposed Project development. Existing topographic and site data provided the basis for developing an initial digital model. Proposed Project engineers provided site plans and digital data for the proposed designs, from which three-dimensional digital models of the Proposed Project were developed. These models were combined with the digital site model to produce a complete computer model of the Proposed Project, Option 1, and Option 2. These simulations provide a clear image of the location, scale, and visual appearance of the Proposed Project for each of the KOPs. The images are accurate within the constraints of the available site and Proposed Project data. Attachment A contains “before” site photographs along with the “after” visual simulations.

1.1.2.3 Determine Aesthetics/Visual Resources Impact Analysis Area

Individual resource study areas (RSAs) addressed in each of the Proposed Project’s environmental technical studies may require uniquely defined study areas based on a specific resource’s potential for specific direct and indirect impacts. An RSA generally includes the area within 0.5 mile from the permanent and temporary Proposed Project footprints (including construction staging areas) that encompass the alignments and access points for the Proposed Project and its options. The RSA for aesthetics/visual resources, shown on Figure 1-1, was identified to show the area in which reasonably foreseeable direct or indirect impacts of the Proposed Project may occur.

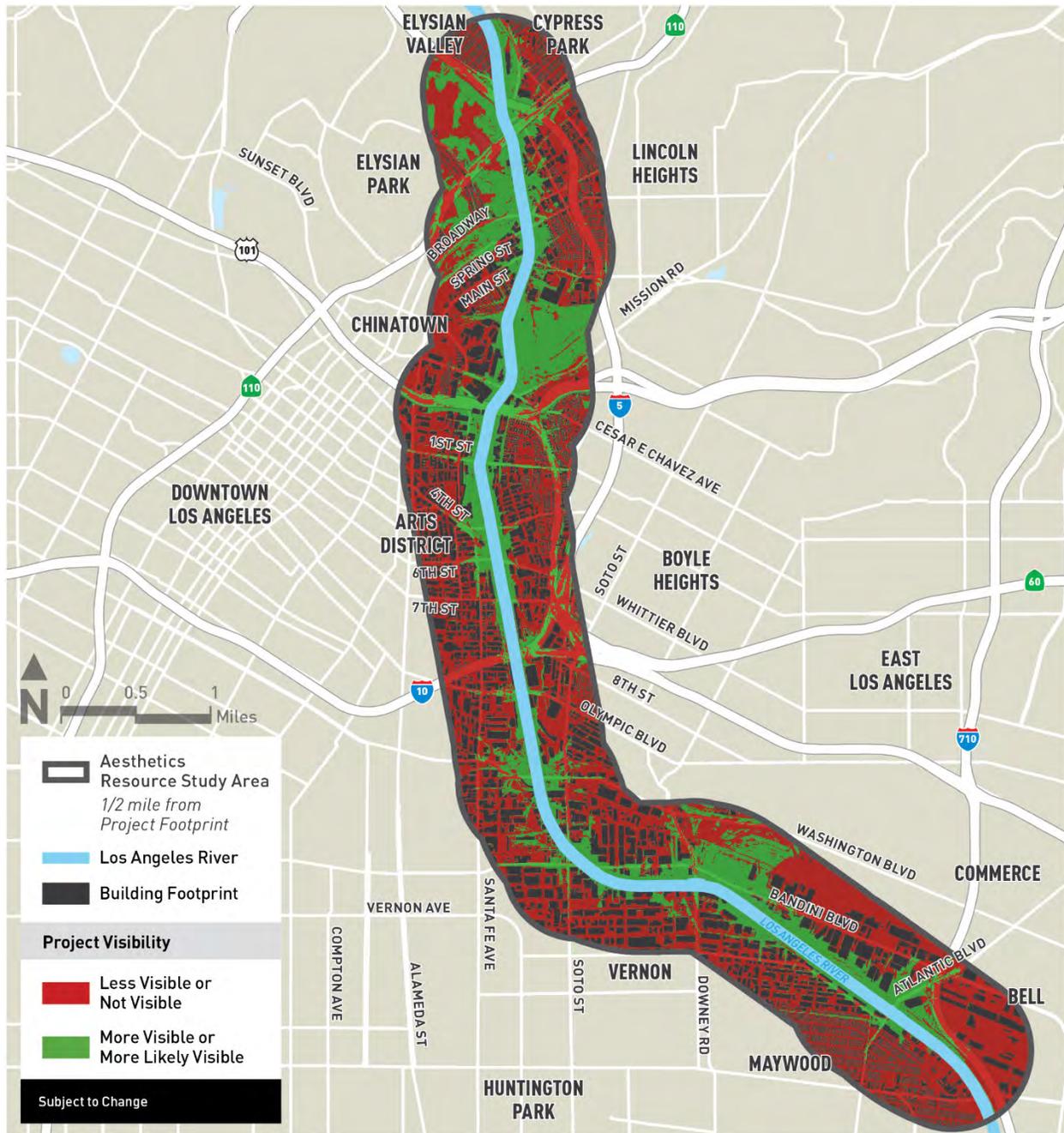
The RSA for aesthetics/visual resources encompasses the area of visual effect (AVE), which is defined as an area with a line of sight (exclusive of vegetation) looking toward and away from a project. Establishing the AVE helps determine a project’s viewshed, which is the surface area visible from a

given point or series of points, as well as the area from which such points could be seen (FHWA 1988). A project’s viewshed is larger than the Proposed Project area because built and natural features determine what can and cannot be seen. The Proposed Project’s viewshed was determined by visiting the site and reviewing plans, aerial mapping, and topographical and Proposed Project area information. A computer viewshed analysis was also conducted to generate the AVE based on digital-elevation models of existing buildings, and the heights of Proposed Project elements. The resulting map (Figure 1-2) demonstrates where Proposed Project elements could be visible within 0.5 mile on either side of the LA River centerline, a distance that is expected to capture most views based on the highly developed nature of the area. However, such maps may not account for surface elements, like vegetation, that could block views.

Figure 1-1. Aesthetics and Visual Resources Resource Study Area



Figure 1-2. Viewshed of the Proposed Project and Its Options in the Resources Study Area



1.2 Project Features

As described in Draft EIR Appendix C, *Project Features*, a number of features have been incorporated into the Proposed Project and its options, Option 1 and Option 2, to comply with the laws, guidelines, or best practices of federal, state, local, and regional agencies. The following project features are relevant to the Proposed Project's aesthetics and visual resources.

1.2.1 Construction Project Features

PF-AES-01, *Screen Direct Lighting and Glare for Nighttime Work*

When nighttime work is required, the construction contractor shall install temporary down lighting in a manner that directs light toward the construction area and away from residential units. The construction contractor shall install temporary shields as necessary so that light does not spill over into residential areas.

PF-AES-02, *Construction Lighting*

Construction-related light fixtures shall be equipped with glare diffusers and feature directional shielding to avoid the spillover of light onto adjacent residences.

PF-AES-03, *Construction Staging*

Construction staging shall be screened to minimize visual intrusion into the surrounding landscape. The screening shall be at a height and consist of a type of material that is appropriate for the context of the surrounding land uses. Lighting within construction areas shall face downward and shall be designed to minimize spillover lighting into adjacent properties.

1.2.2 Operations and Maintenance Project Features

PF-AES-04, *Permanent Lighting*

During final design, all new or replacement lighting shall comply with maximum allowable California Green Building Standards (CALGreen) glare ratings (Title 24 *California Building Standards Code* Part 11) and shall be designed to be directed away from residential units. Permanent operations-related light fixtures shall feature directional shielding to avoid the spillover of backlight and uplight onto adjacent residences. Screening elements, including landscaping, shall also be incorporated into the design, where feasible.

PF-AES-05, *Aesthetic Treatments*

Materials, color, artwork, murals, landscaping, or other aesthetic treatments shall be integrated into the design of the Proposed Project or its options to minimize impacts, such as to limit the effects that lighting associated with the Proposed Project or its options would have on the surrounding area, to limit new sources of glare, and to match or improve the aesthetic quality of the existing built environment.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

2.1 Federal

2.1.1 Federal Highway Administration National Scenic Byways Program

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 established the National Scenic Byways Program (23 *United States Code* [USC] Section 162), a “collaborative effort established to help recognize, preserve, and enhance selected roads throughout the United States.” Under the program, FHWA can designate a roadway as a State Scenic Byway, a National Scenic Byway, or an All-American Road based upon intrinsic scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archaeological, or natural qualities. A road must exemplify the criteria for at least one of these qualities to be designated a National Scenic Byway (FHWA 2015). Nominations must be submitted to FHWA through a state's scenic byway agency and include a corridor management plan designed to protect the scenic byway’s unique qualities. FHWA policy regarding scenic byway protection states, “The level of protection for different parts of a National Scenic Byway or All-American Road can vary, with the highest level of protection afforded those parts which most reflect their intrinsic values. All nationally recognized scenic byways should, however, be maintained with particularly high standards... for preserving the highest levels of visual integrity and attractiveness” (60 *Federal Register* 96).

2.2 State

2.2.1 State Scenic Highway Program

Created by the California legislature in 1963, the purpose of the California Scenic Highway Program is to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from changes that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. The program includes a list of highways that are eligible for designation as scenic highways or that have been designated as such. A highway may be designated as scenic based on how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes on the traveler’s enjoyment of the view. State laws governing the California Scenic Highway Program were established through Senate Bill 1467 in 1963, which added Sections 260 through 263 to the Streets and Highways Code.

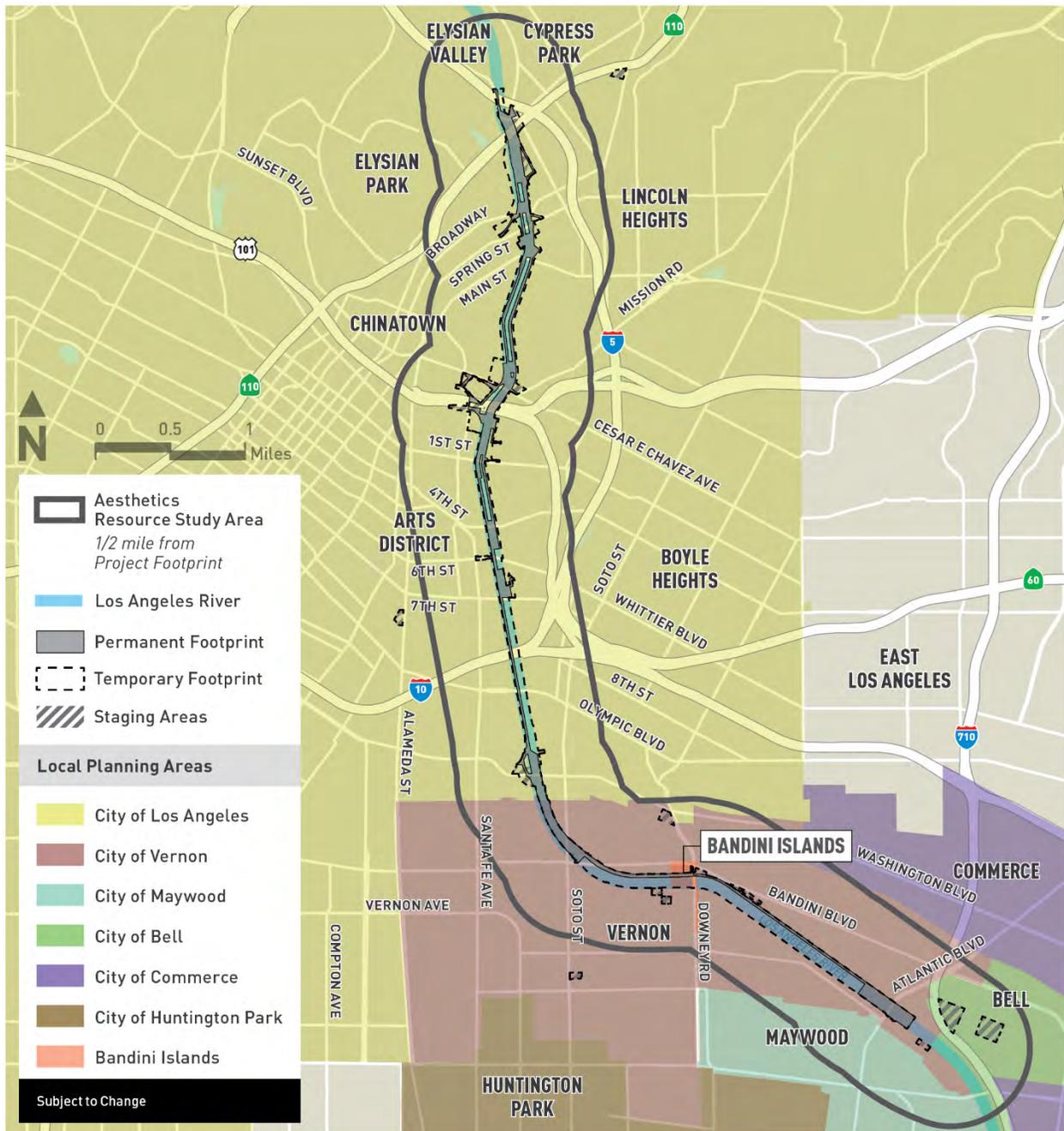
2.3 Regional and Local

The RSA is located within the Cities of Los Angeles, Vernon, Maywood, and Bell. An unincorporated County of Los Angeles community, the Bandini Islands, is also located within the RSA.

Figure 2-1 shows the local planning areas and communities in which the RSA is located. As shown, the RSA is located within several City of Los Angeles Community Plan and Specific Plan Areas, and is

within two Los Angeles County Planning Areas. Applicable regional, county, and local plans, as they pertain to aesthetics and visual resources, are identified and discussed below.

Figure 2-1. Local Planning Areas



2.3.1 Metro Art Program Percent-for-Art Policy

Through its Metro Art Program, Metro adopted a percent-for-art policy that allocates a minimum of 0.5% of capital project construction costs for public art. The program is built on three guiding principles: put people first, connect to creative communities throughout Los Angeles County, and champion innovation. Metro Arts & Design oversees and directs all arts and cultural programs on

Metro property and is the technical lead for arts and cultural strategic initiatives for non-Metro property (Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority [Metro] 2020).

2.3.2 Los Angeles County's *General Plan 2035*

The RSA is located within Los Angeles County. Los Angeles County's *General Plan 2035* (Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning 2022) provides the policy framework for how and where the unincorporated county will grow through 2035. *General Plan 2035* is divided into 11 planning areas to provide a mechanism for local communities to work with Los Angeles County. The RSA is within the County's Metro and Gateway Planning Areas. As shown in Figure 2-2, the Metro Planning Area encompasses the City of Los Angeles, and the Gateway Planning Area encompasses the Cities of Vernon, Maywood, and Bell. A portion of the RSA is within the unincorporated Bandini Islands community, which is within the Gateway Planning Area.

2.3.2.1 *General Plan 2035 Elements*

Part III, Planning Elements of *General Plan 2035* (Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning 2022) states, "Civic art...can be used in conjunction with community design efforts to sustain and enhance community character and a sense of place. The arts can play a central role in comprehensive community revitalization efforts that include...transportation, planning, and design. The General Plan... promotes the creation of new art to enhance communities. *General Plan 2035* also includes implementation programs that promote creative place-making to enhance the physical and social character of healthy, livable communities." *General Plan 2035* includes the following land use, mobility, and scenic resources policies relevant to aesthetic resources:

- Policy Land Use 5: "The County Civic Art Policy requires certain capital development projects, either wholly or partially funded by the County, to dedicate one percent of the design and construction cost to public art projects on the site."
- Policy Land Use 10.3: "Consider the built environment of the surrounding area and location in the design and scale of... architectural styles, and reflect appropriate features such as massing, materials, color, detailing or ornament."
- Policy Land Use 10.5: "Encourage the use of distinctive landscaping, signage and other features to define the unique character of districts, neighborhoods or communities, and engender community identity, pride and community interaction."
- Policy Land Use 10.10: "Promote architecturally distinctive...focal points at prominent locations, such as major commercial intersections and near transit stations or open spaces."
- Policy Land Use 11.2: "...utilize light-colored paving materials...."
- Policy Mobility 2.5: "Ensure a comfortable bicycling environment by implementing appropriate lighting on all bikeways."

To further the goal to "protect visual and scenic resources," Part IV, Scenic Resources of *General Plan 2035* includes Conservation and Natural Resources Policy 13.3: "Reduce light trespass, light pollution, and other threats to scenic resources."

2.3.2.2 **General Plan 2035 Metro Planning Area and Gateway Planning Area**

General Plan 2035 (Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning 2022) notes that the LA River waterway provides “an opportunity for enhancement” to serve as a “community asset” in the Metro Planning Area. No policies or issues related to aesthetics and visual resources were identified for the County’s Gateway Planning Area and the unincorporated Bandini Islands community.

2.3.2.3 **Los Angeles County *Los Angeles River Master Plan***

Los Angeles County’s *Los Angeles River Master Plan* (LARMP) (Los Angeles County Department of Public Works [LACDPW] 2022) recognizes the river as a body of resources of regional importance that must be protected and enhanced by implementing efforts identified by the LARMP. These efforts include goals to “improve the appearance of the river and the pride of local communities in it.”

2.3.3 **City of Los Angeles**

The City of Los Angeles’ General Plan Land Use Element (Los Angeles Department of City Planning 2021) divides the City into 35 Community Plan areas.¹ The Community Plans establish neighborhood-specific goals and implementation strategies to achieve the broad objectives laid out in the City’s General Plan. Specific plans implement the goals and policies of the City’s General Plan and Community Plans. Specific plans contain development standards and implementation measures to which future projects located within the specific plan area must adhere. The RSA is within four Community Plan areas and two Specific Plan areas. Community Plan and Specific Plan areas that apply to the RSA are shown in Figure 2-2 and are discussed below.

2.3.3.1 **Silver Lake – Echo Park – Elysian Valley Community Plan Area**

The Silver Lake – Echo Park – Elysian Valley Community Plan area encompasses Elysian Park in the northwest portion of the RSA. The *Silver Lake – Echo Park – Elysian Valley Community Plan* document (Los Angeles Department of City Planning 2004) includes the following relevant opportunities, goals, and objectives:

- Goal 1, Objective 3, Policy 1-3.2: “Preserve existing views in hillside areas. Require decision-makers to condition new development adjacent to or in the viewshed of Elysian Park, the Los Angeles River, Echo Park Lake and the Silver Lake Reservoir to protect views from public lands and roadways, when discretionary actions are required.”
- Goal 14: “A system of safe, efficient and attractive bicycle, pedestrian and equestrian facilities” (Policy 14-1.1 of the community plan endorses implementation of the LA River Bike Path under this goal).

2.3.3.2 **Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan Area**

The Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan area is located in the northeast portion of the RSA. The *Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan* document (Los Angeles Department of City Planning 1999) includes the following issues and objectives that apply to aesthetics and visual resources:

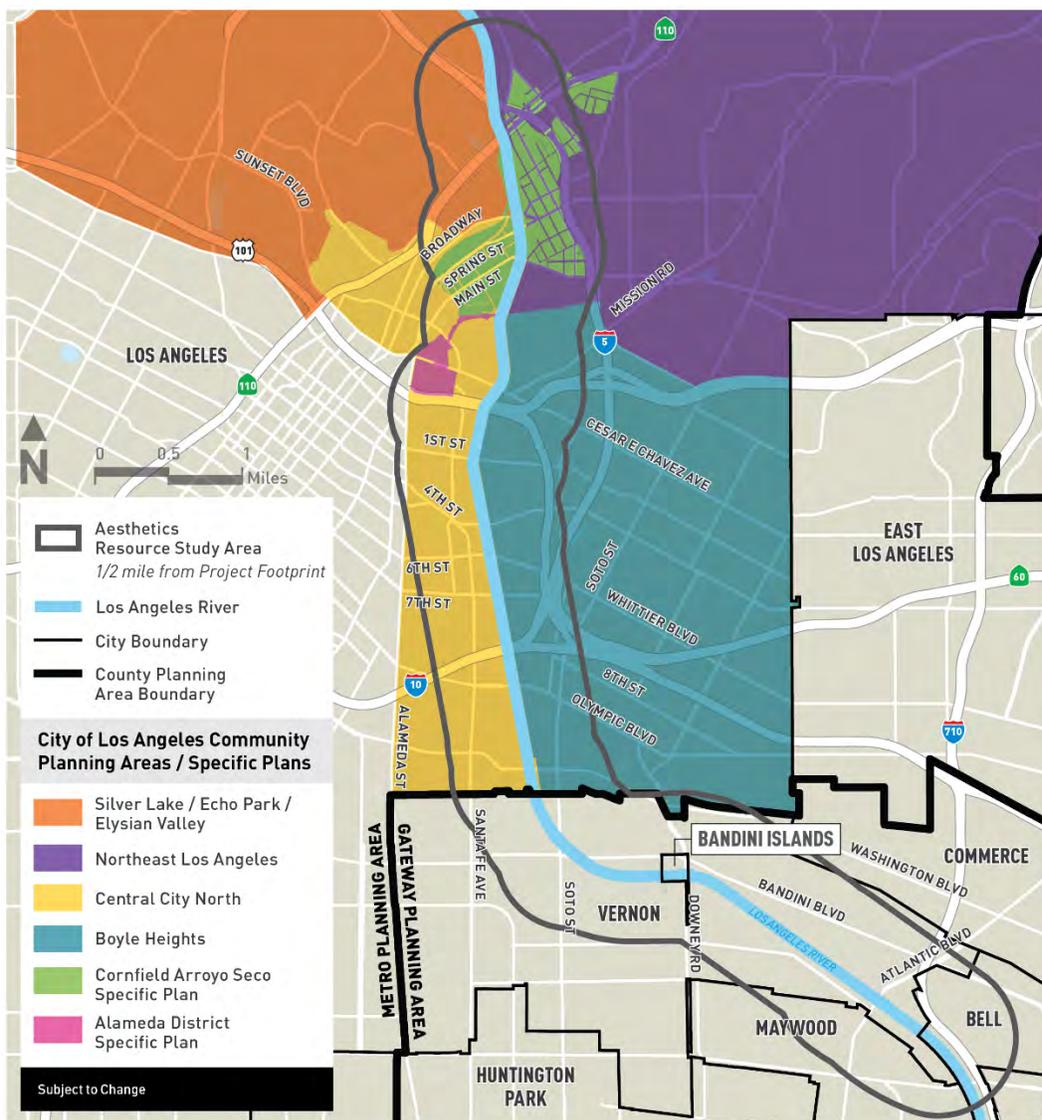
¹ <https://planning.lacity.gov/plans-policies/community-plans>

- Issue: “Destruction and deterioration of community resources, including scenic views and viewsheds, open space, open space corridors, and historic structures.”
- Goal 15, Objective 15-1: “Improve the visual environment of existing commercial and industrial areas.”

2.3.3.3 Central City North Community Plan Area

The *Central City North Community Plan* (Los Angeles Department of City Planning 2000) includes urban design policies and standards for multiple residential, commercial, and industrial projects. The goal and purpose of the urban design policies and standards “are to ensure that residential, commercial, and industrial projects and public spaces and rights-of-way incorporate specific elements of good design. The intent is to promote a stable and pleasant environment.” The Community Plan also includes community design and landscaping guidelines for public spaces and rights-of-way (ROWS) to enhance the community’s identity.

Figure 2-2. City of Los Angeles Community Planning Areas



Sources: Los Angeles County 2020, Los Angeles City Planning 2021

2.3.3.4 Central City North Community Plan Area

The *Central City North Community Plan* (Los Angeles Department of City Planning 2000) includes urban design policies and standards for multiple residential, commercial, and industrial projects. The goal and purpose of the urban design policies and standards “are to ensure that residential, commercial, and industrial projects and public spaces and rights-of-way incorporate specific elements of good design. The intent is to promote a stable and pleasant environment.” The Community Plan also includes community design and landscaping guidelines for public spaces and rights-of-way (ROWS) to enhance the community’s identity.

2.3.3.5 Alameda District Specific Plan Area

The City’s Central City North Planning Area includes the Alameda District Specific Plan area, which generally encompasses Union Station and US Post Office Terminal Annex to the north. The *Alameda District Specific Plan* document (Los Angeles Department of City Planning 1996) identifies development projects proposed in the southeastern area of this specific plan area. No development projects or land use changes are identified in the portion of the Specific Plan area that is within the RSA. A review of the *Alameda District Specific Plan* did not identify any visual or aesthetic issues or goals relevant to the Proposed Project.

2.3.3.6 Boyle Heights Community Plan Area

The *Boyle Heights Community Plan* (Los Angeles Department of City Planning 2020, 2023) identifies the following relevant Public Realm and Open Space (PO) goals associated with aesthetics and visual resources:

- PO 3.1: “Promote the creation of a network of linked public spaces in areas along the rail-River corridor that provide safe and attractive public access to the Los Angeles River by way of gateways, plazas, paseos, and pedestrian paths.”
- PO 3.2: “Design urban trails and paths that connect the eastside to the river-adjacent areas using pervious paving and native, drought-tolerant, and watershed-friendly landscaping to encourage biodiversity and maximize water recapture.”
- PO 3.4: “Provide convenient and visually interesting paths of travel for pedestrians from nearby neighborhoods and transit stations to destinations along the River.”

2.3.3.7 Cornfield Arroyo Seco Specific Plan Area

The Cornfield Arroyo Seco Specific Plan area occupies the northern portion of the RSA. East of the LA River, the Cornfield Arroyo Seco Specific Plan area is located within the Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan area. The Cornfield Arroyo Seco Specific Plan area is also located within the Central City North Community Plan area west of the LA River. The *Cornfield Arroyo Seco Specific Plan* document (Los Angeles Department of City Planning 2021) provides zoning regulations for the Specific Plan area. The purpose of the urban design zoning regulations for the *Cornfield Arroyo Seco Specific Plan* as it pertains to aesthetics and visual resources is to “provide well-designed, energy efficient, architectural and landscape lighting that contributes to a safe and inviting atmosphere without casting light into the night sky, adjacent properties, or sensitive habitat areas.”

The LA River channel is zoned Open Space in the Cornfield Arroyo Seco Specific Plan area. The purpose of the Open Space zoning regulations as they pertain to aesthetics and visual resources is intended to “generate visual interest by creating focal points and meeting places to enhance the area’s image” and “establish a positive interface between river-adjacent property and river parks and/or greenways” (Los Angeles Department of City Planning 2021).

2.3.3.8 Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan

The *Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan* (City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works 2007) provides a 25- to 50-year blueprint for transforming the City’s 35-mile stretch of the river into an “emerald necklace” of parks, walkways, and bike paths, as well as providing better connections to the neighboring communities, protecting wildlife, promoting the health of the river, and leveraging economic reinvestment. The *Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan* includes the following goals and recommendations for aesthetic and visual resources:

- Goal: Connect Neighborhoods to the River
 - Recommendation 5.6: Increase direct pedestrian and visual access to the River.
- Goal: Extend Open Space and Water Quality Features Into Neighborhoods
 - Recommendation 5.9: Incorporate best management practices (BMP) in streetscapes and all public landscapes.
- Goal: Enhance River Identity
 - Recommendation 5.12: Identify physical opportunities to improve the visibility of the River Corridor.
 - Recommendation 5.14: Encourage local and diverse character within the River Corridor.
- Goal: Incorporate Public Art Along the River
 - Recommendation 5.15: Identify physical opportunities to introduce art along the River.

2.3.3.9 City of Vernon General Plan

The *City of Vernon General Plan* states, “The major open space resources in Vernon consist of the Los Angeles River Channel and utility easements. No riparian habitat exists, as the Los Angeles River channel is concrete lined along this portion of the river. Given the City’s industrial character, Vernon does not contain and does not have a need for public parks” (City of Vernon 2007). However, the General Plan includes a policy to upgrade the appearance of the river channel:

POLICY R-3.2: “Cooperate with regional efforts to upgrade the appearance and open space value of the Los Angeles River Channel.”

2.3.3.10 City of Maywood General Plan, Land Use Element

The City of Maywood is located adjacent to the LA River. The applicable goal and objective of the *Maywood General Plan* Land Use Element as it relates to aesthetics and visual resources are to “invest in the aesthetic quality of Maywood’s public and private realms” (City of Maywood 2023).

2.3.3.11 City of Bell 2030 General Plan

The *City of Bell 2030 General Plan* (City of Bell 2018) provides the following applicable policy that pertains to aesthetics and visual resources:

Policy 1: “The City of Bell will recognize the social, economic and aesthetics benefits which accrue from the preservation of open space.”

2.3.3.12 Municipal Codes of Affected Jurisdictions

Each jurisdiction in which the LA River is located has a municipal code, which contains the zoning ordinance. The zoning ordinance regulates the general design and visual quality of development projects, and designates and regulates the location, use, height, and size of buildings. It also addresses parking, landscaping, and a number of other topics that influence the aesthetics of development projects. Lighting regulations are provided in the zoning ordinance or in other sections of the municipal codes. However, municipal codes do not directly regulate the design of transportation infrastructure elements, such as pedestrian and bicycle paths.

EXISTING SETTING

A landscape's aesthetics and visual resources form the stimuli upon which visual experience is based, which can be altered by transportation projects. Therefore, an inventory of existing visual resources and their characteristics enables analysis and comparison of the visual impacts of the Proposed Project and its options (FHWA 1988).

People experience a landscape as an integrated whole composed of individual objects. Visual understanding of the environment is based on the visual character of these objects and their interrelationships. The assessment of visual character is descriptive and not evaluative; it is not based on attributes considered "good" or "bad." Instead, visual character is based on visual pattern elements of form, line, color, and texture, and the pattern characteristics of dominance, scale, and continuity (FHWA 1988).

3.1 Affected Viewers

The population affected by changes to the visual environment of a project is referred to as viewers. Viewers are composed of neighbors (static viewers) and travelers (dynamic viewers) based on activity (FHWA 2015):

- Neighbors are adjacent to a transportation facility and have views of it. They tend to prefer the status quo and are leery of visual encroachments that may cause adverse effects on the setting of their activity. Within the RSA, neighbor types that have the potential to be affected by the Proposed Project and its options are primarily industrial, but also include recreational, commercial, civic, and residential.
- Travelers have views from the transportation facility. Within the RSA, travelers that have the potential to be affected by the Proposed Project and its options include drivers of all types (such as commuters, truckers, tourists) traveling on bridges that cross the river channel, and new pedestrian and bicycling travelers who will use the Proposed Project facility when complete. Pedestrians represent the most common, and slowest, travel mode. Bicyclists travel at greater speeds than pedestrians but are typically much slower than motorized travelers (unless in congested urban areas).

3.2 Viewer Sensitivity

FHWA guidance directs preparers of visual impact analyses to "evaluate the sensitivity of viewers to changes and define the sensitivity of viewers as either sensitive or insensitive to visual impacts." Viewer sensitivity is based on viewer exposure and viewer awareness (FHWA 2015).

3.2.1 Viewer Exposure

The greater the exposure to a view, the higher the viewer sensitivity. Viewer exposure is based on the following (FWHA 2015):

- **Proximity:** The farther the distance between an object (discernible Proposed Project elements) and a viewer, the less viewer exposure. The closer the distance between an object and viewer, the greater the viewer exposure. Distance is divided into three zones:
 - Foreground: 0.25 to 0.5 mile from the viewer
 - Middle ground: Extends from foreground to 3 to 5 miles from viewer
 - Background: Extends from middle ground to the limit of visibility
- **Extent:** Extent refers to the number of viewers. Fewer viewers mean less viewer exposure, and many viewers means greater viewer exposure.
- **Duration:** Duration refers to length of viewing time. Faster travel speed means short duration and viewer exposure. Slower (or no) travel speed means long duration and viewer exposure.
- **Field of view:** A narrow field of view encompasses fewer visual elements and results in shorter viewer exposure. A wider field of view encompasses more visual elements and results in longer viewer exposure.

3.2.2 Viewer Awareness

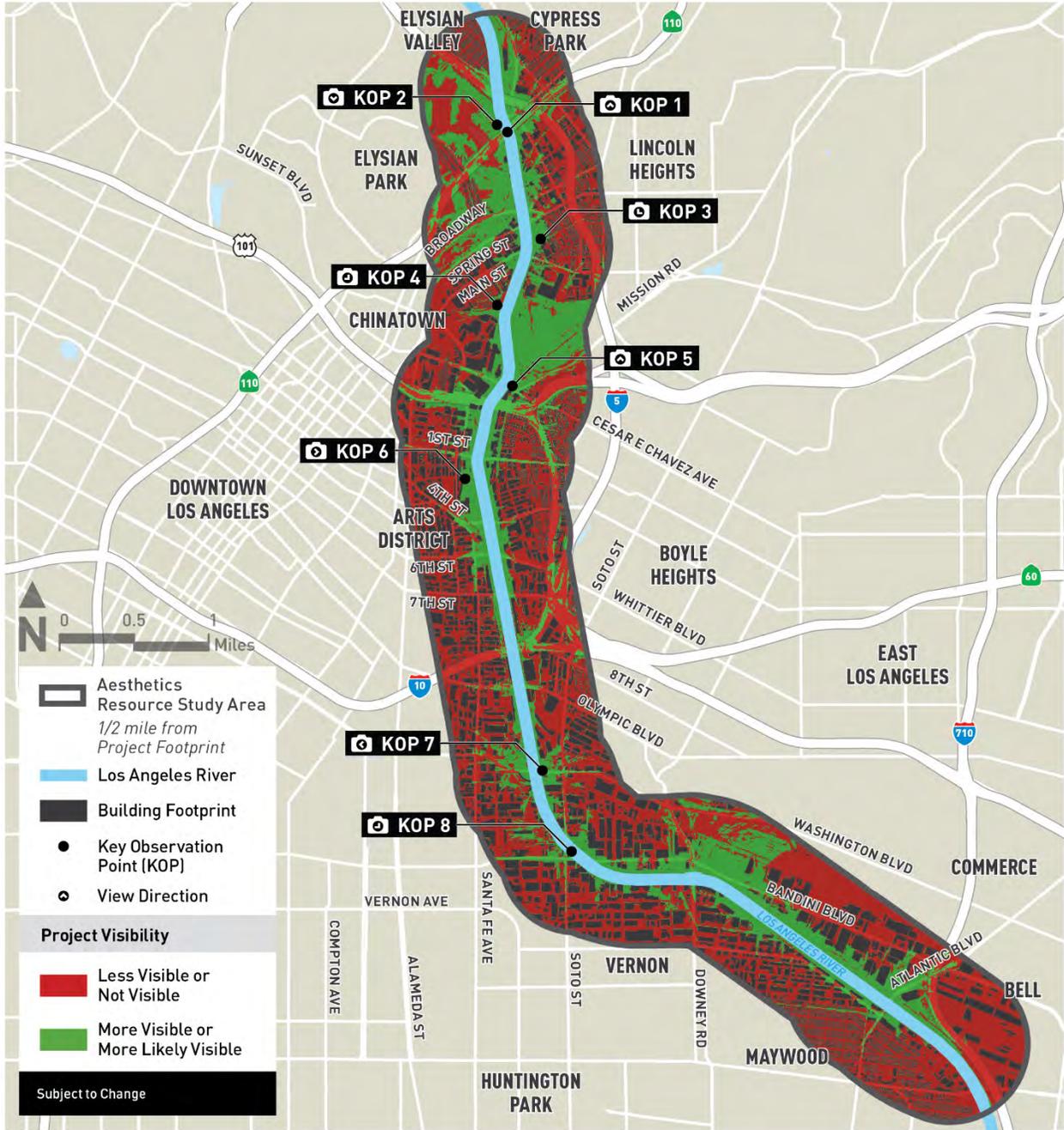
The greater a viewer is aware of a view, the higher the viewer sensitivity. Viewer awareness is based on the following (FHWA 2015):

- **Attention:** The more routine a scene is, the less awareness of and sensitivity to it viewers have. The more unique a scene is, the greater awareness of and sensitivity to it viewers have.
- **Focus:** Views that contain no specific visual element or focal point result in less sensitivity. Views that contain single or a limited number of focal points result in greater sensitivity.
- **Protection:** Viewers are less sensitive to areas with no restrictions placed on the view or object being viewed, such as scenic byways. Viewers are more sensitive to areas with restrictions placed on the view or object being viewed.

3.3 Key Views

An analysis of viewer types and locations was conducted to identify areas of high viewer sensitivity and resulting representative key views, or KOPs. A total of 14 KOPs were initially identified based on sensitivity criteria (Section 3.2). These views were photographed using a 35-millimeter camera set to approximate the human field of vision most closely. The photographs were reviewed with Metro, and eight were selected as the basis for the impact analysis (Figure 3-1). Table 3-1 lists the KOPs that were considered for analysis (the “Original Number” column), with a brief rationale for those that were dismissed and retained (the “New Number” column). Attachment A includes photographs of the existing views from the KOPs. Detailed descriptions of the visual character of each KOP are included in Attachment B. An adequate photograph representing KOP 6 could not be obtained because public access is not available. More detail is provided in Section 3.5.

Figure 3-1. Key Views



Sources: Los Angeles County 2021, United States Geological Survey 2019

Table 3-1. Key Observation Point Selection Summary

Original No.	Landscape Unit	Primary Viewers	Reason Proposed	Disposition Rationale	New No.
1	Parkland	Recreationists	Document views of the Proposed Project from the southern terminus of the existing bicycle path.	Eliminated <i>Visual change would be minor</i>	-
2	Parkland	Recreationists	Document views of the Proposed Project from Point Grandview, a designated viewpoint in Elysian Park.	Selected <i>Reason proposed</i>	2
3	Parkland	Motorists	Document views of the Proposed Project from Arroyo Seco Historic Parkway (SR 110), a designated State Scenic Byway.	Selected <i>Reason proposed</i>	1
4	Parkland	Recreationists	Document views of the Proposed Project from hiking trails in Elysian Park.	Eliminated <i>An alternate KOP in Elysian Park was selected for analysis</i>	-
4A	Parkland	Recreationists	Document views of the Proposed Project from a picnic area and trailhead in Elysian Park.	Eliminated <i>Visual change would be minor; an alternate KOP in Elysian Park was selected for analysis</i>	-
5	Iconic Bridges/ Industrial	Recreationists	Document views of the Proposed Project from Los Angeles State Historic Park.	Eliminated <i>Visual change would be negligible</i>	-
6	Iconic Bridges/ Industrial	Recreationists	Document views of the Proposed Project from Albion Riverside Park.	Selected <i>Reason proposed</i>	3
7	Iconic Bridges/ Industrial	Motorists	Document views of the Proposed Project from Cesar E Chavez Avenue, a heavily trafficked thoroughfare connecting Boyle Heights to Union Station.	Selected <i>Reason proposed</i>	5
8	Iconic Bridges/ Industrial	Residential	Document views of the Proposed Project from the One Santa Fe apartment complex, a residential community adjacent to the LA River.	Selected <i>Reason proposed</i>	6
9	Iconic Bridges/ Industrial	Motorists	Document views of the Proposed Project from the Fourth Street Viaduct looking south toward the new (under construction) Sixth Street Viaduct.	Eliminated <i>The Sixth Street Viaduct is currently under construction; address qualitatively in cumulative analysis included in the EIR</i>	-
10	Iconic Bridges/ Industrial	Motorists	Document views of the Proposed Project from Washington Street as it crosses the LA River.	Selected <i>Reason proposed</i>	7
11	Industrial	Commercial	Document views of the Proposed Project from a commercial	Selected <i>Reason proposed</i>	8

Table 3-1. Key Observation Point Selection Summary

Original No.	Landscape Unit	Primary Viewers	Reason Proposed	Disposition Rationale	New No.
			center adjacent to the LA River in the City of Vernon.		
12	Industrial	Recreationists	Document views of the Proposed Project from the northern terminus of the existing bicycle path.	Eliminated <i>Visual change would be minor</i>	-
13	Transportation	Commuter	Document views of the Proposed Project from Union Station and the surrounding area.	Eliminated <i>Visual change would be minor</i>	-
14	Iconic Bridges/ Industrial	Residential	Document views of the Proposed Project from the William Mead Homes public housing development, a residential community adjacent to the LA River.	Selected <i>Reason proposed</i>	4

3.4 Existing Aesthetics/Visual Resources and Character

The 51-mile LA River flows through the San Fernando Valley, Downtown LA, and the Cities of Vernon, Bell, and Maywood, reaching the Pacific Ocean at Long Beach Harbor. Between 1938 and 1960, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD) constructed the concrete-lined “engineered waterway” that now conveys the river for most of its length (Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority [MRCA] 2021; Los Angeles County Public Works 2024). The *Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan* (City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works 2007) notes, “the river has become both literally and figuratively isolated from most people and communities. Most residents cannot see the river, let alone enjoy it as a valuable public resource. For the six decades since the river was paved, it has been treated as an unwelcome guest in many neighborhoods.... Like many railroads, the river travels through the undesirable and neglected parts of the City—the back of everything—including backyards, warehouses, trash dumps, power lines, and freeways.”

Within the RSA, the river channel is within a highly developed urban setting and flows primarily south, despite a few slight curves, until reaching 26th Street, after which it bends sharply to the east, taking a southeasterly path just beyond Downey Road. The concrete channel forms a broad, pale, generally flat surface approximately 160 feet wide, visually similar to a paved road, and is flanked on both sides with uniformly shallow-sloped concrete walls that form a trapezoidal shape for most of its length within the RSA. The walls display multiple, randomly applied, white rectangular patches of sealant or paint, creating a mottled effect. Because the channel is below grade, it is not typically visible from ground level, and most views of it are further blocked by development.

The presence and amount of water in the river channel varies by season, rain events, and release of wastewater discharged from three treatment plants in Los Angeles, Burbank, and Glendale (Guerin 2018). During dry weather, flows are “minimal” (City of Los Angeles 2018), and the river appears as a dark, flat ribbon following the center of the channel, occasionally widening or braiding.

During rain events, the channel fills with floodwater that can become dark and turbulent depending on velocity (Chilhand 2019).

Dense urban development fronts both sides of the river channel and includes a variety of visual elements, both vertical and horizontal, such as numerous lattice-style transmission towers and lines; buildings of various heights, colors, ages, and designs; and multiple transportation facilities, including multi-lane highways, side streets, and railroad tracks. The primary land use and zoning type within the RSA is industrial, which is visually reflected by a prevalence of warehouses, railroad facilities, and parking areas. Concrete walls and chain-link fences, many topped with coils of barbed wire, are prevalent along the sides of the river channel. Although parks are few, they are prominent in the northwest area of the RSA.

More than 220,000 lights in the City of Los Angeles consisting of more than 400 designs, many of which are historical, illuminate 4,500 miles of streets and bridges. Within the RSA, City of Los Angeles street bridges include street lighting consisting of overhead street light poles. Street lighting is also adjacent to the LA River in the City of Vernon as well. Several locations along the river do not have street lighting, as indicated in Draft EIR Section 3.18, *Utilities and Service Systems*.

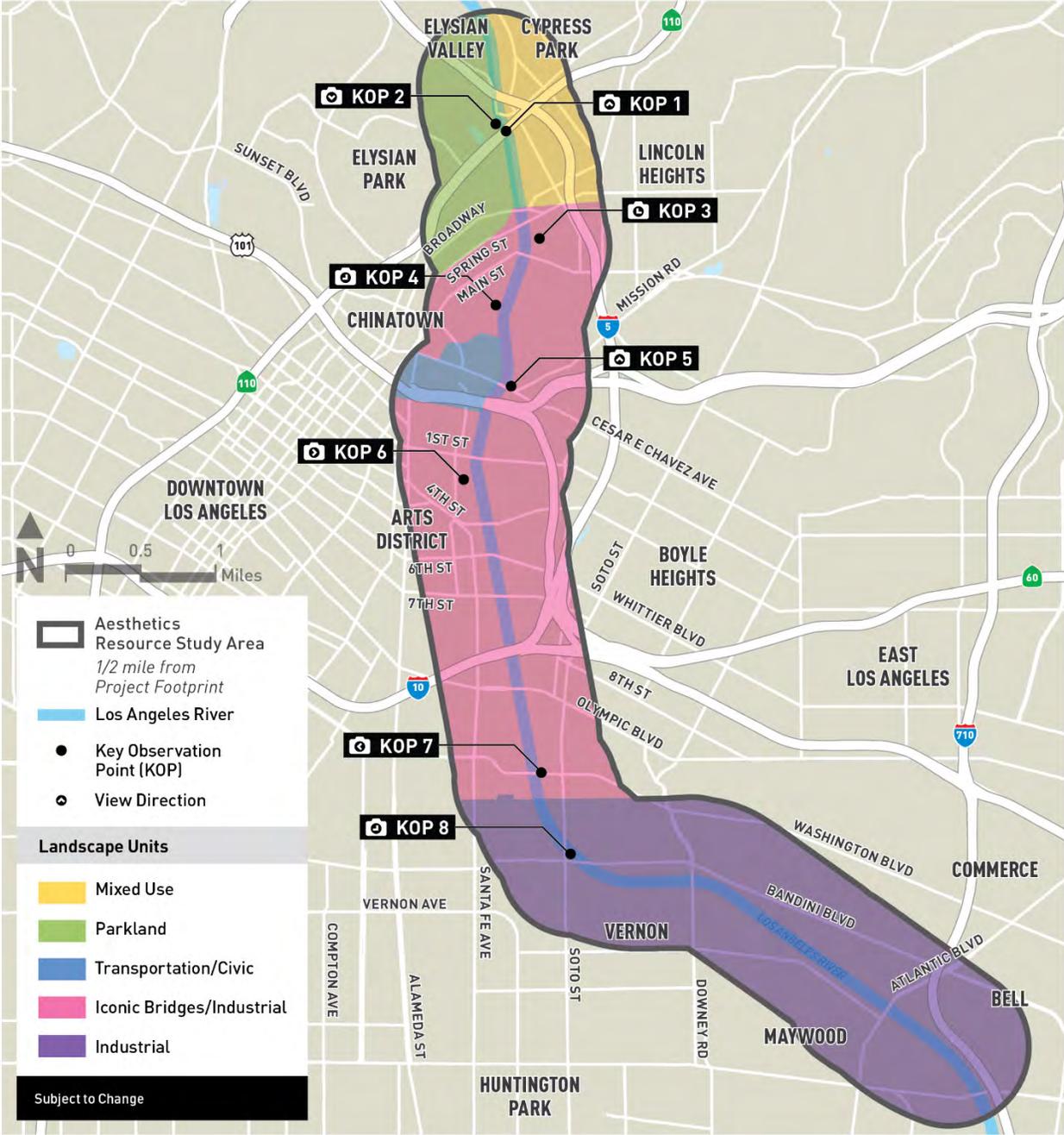
As indicated in Draft EIR Section 3.11, *Land Use and Planning*, most of the land uses within the RSA are industrial, followed by transportation/communications/utilities, which together account for approximately 75% of land uses within the RSA. Aerial maps indicate that the largest transportation land uses within the RSA are expansive rail yards. Exterior lighting associated with industrial facilities typically includes flood lights, canopy lights, or wall pack lights to illuminate parking areas, walkways, and landscaping. Large-scale operations can have hundreds of exterior lights, especially for large facilities (CommercialLEDLights.com 2023). Rail yards are lit for security and safety purposes, and lighting consists of high powered, high mast (tower), multi-directional luminaires to illuminate railway platforms and other areas (Kellwood Lighting 2024, Google Maps 2019).

3.4.1 Landscape Units

To assist in describing the RSA's existing visual character, the RSA is divided into landscape units (LUs) that identify a particular visual character and the neighbors who would potentially be affected by changes in the visual environment associated with the Proposed Project. LUs are visually homogeneous geographic areas with only one viewshed and one landscape type. Landscape types are homogeneous combinations of slope (such as mountains, plains, and valleys) and landcover (such as water, vegetation, and human development). LUs are established using aerial imagery and often correspond to land use types (FHWA 1988, 2015).

Based on this approach, five LUs were identified within the RSA (Figure 3-2), all of which coincidentally correspond with Los Angeles County's Metro Planning Area, except for the Industrial LU, which is within the County's Gateway Planning Area. Describing the Metro Planning Area, the County states, "the majority of the Planning Area is urbanized, with little variation in elevation. There are no large areas of natural open space. All open space areas are contained with parks and recreational areas" (Los Angeles County 2015). The County's plan for the Gateway Planning Area notes the area's "built-out nature," "large percentage of industrial land," and a "lack of parks and recreational opportunities" (Los Angeles County 2015).

Figure 3-2. Landscape Units



3.4.1.1 Parkland Landscape Unit

The Parkland LU encompasses the east side of Elysian Park and Los Angeles State Historic Park and corresponds to the Open Space zoning identified by the City of Los Angeles (City of Los Angeles 2021b). This LU extends from the northern Proposed Project boundary to the north side of Broadway and follows Baker Street to Spring Street to include Los Angeles State Historic Park. The eastern boundary is the LA River. Elysian Park and Los Angeles State Historic Park are distinctive landscapes that stand out in the AVE’s predominantly urban, industrial landscape. Topography also changes dramatically in this LU, because hills within Elysian Park rise abruptly from the generally flat landscape of the AVE and are dominant visual features.

Elysian Park includes “525 acres of wooded canyons and hills adjacent to downtown Los Angeles” (City of Los Angeles 1971). The park straddles both sides of the Arroyo Seco Historic Parkway (State Route [SR] 110), a designated National Scenic Byway (described under Section 3.4.2) that cuts into the park’s hillside (this byway is designated as a national, not state, scenic byway [California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) 2018]). Broadway forms the park’s southern boundary, separating it from Los Angeles State Historic Park. Although Elysian Park contains a variety of recreational amenities, only visitors on the east side would have views of the Proposed Project. This area of the park includes hiking trails and roads that snake along the steep hillside, reaching prominent overlooks. Vegetation, primarily low trees and shrubs, as well as occasional tall and slender palm trees, grows in varying densities on the park’s eastern hills. These natural elements are uncommon in the AVE and interject green color and fine-grained texture into the landscape. This vegetation also blocks views from many areas of the park. After rains, “an upsurge of native grasses and small flowers” occurs throughout the park, which is home to a variety of wildlife, including birds and small mammals that are more visible in the park’s “remote areas” (City of Los Angeles 1971). The transmission towers and lines that are dominant features throughout the AVE are more visually absorbed at views from Elysian Park because the towers are not skylined and their thin lines are more absorbed into the background elements.

Located between Broadway and Spring Street, Los Angeles State Historic Park occupies a narrow sliver of land “in one of the most park-poor, underserved communities” of Los Angeles (Los Angeles State Historic Park 2021). The park’s 32 acres of open space directly adjacent to Chinatown provides pathways where visitors can “enjoy a view of downtown” to the southwest (away from the AVE), as well as “inventive architectural features in the landscape [that] hint of the park’s history” (California Department of Parks and Recreation 2021). Groundcover consists of grass and a few landscaped deciduous trees. Tapering at its east and west ends, the park is primarily flat and open, with several circular paths and a slightly elevated walkway that offers restricted views of the curved arches of the Broadway bridge and distant hills to the east. However, ground-level views from the park toward the river channel are mostly blocked due to the park’s tapering at the east end, where it is surrounded by buildings and walls.

Interstate (I-)5, Riverside Drive, and SR 110 provide elevated views where they cross the river channel in both the Parkland LU and Mixed Use LU (defined in the following section). Most southern views of the river from I-5 and Riverside Drive are blocked by the adjacent highway and railroad bridges. The Proposed Project area terminates just north of I-5. Therefore, northern views are nominal. The eastbound and westbound lanes of the SR-110 Bridge are split, with the higher westbound bridge blocking views to the north for eastbound travelers. However, southern views from this bridge, as well as northern views from Broadway, are mostly unhindered. The Broadway bridge provides views to the north into both LUs, where the river channel leads the eye toward distant mountains. Transmission towers that parallel both sides of the channel appear in linear formation. Low mountains are visible on clear days, as are middle ground hills and vegetation (including that of Elysian Park), giving this northern view the AVE’s most natural appearance.

3.4.1.2 Mixed Use Landscape Unit

The Mixed Use LU is on the opposite (east) side of the river from the Parkland LU, sharing the north side of Broadway as the southern boundary. Consistent with city zoning, this LU consists of a variety of uses, primarily industrial and commercial with associated large parking lots, such as a Home Depot, City of Los Angeles North Central Sanitation District Yard, a large laundry service, and some small pockets of residences and tiny parks. Buildings and walls block nearly all ground-level views of the river channel, which is below grade, leaving only the tops of the opposite channel walls visible in a few locations.

Building styles vary considerably, from curved metal Quonset huts to two-story brick or cinder-block commercial buildings and warehouses to a few diminutive one-story frame houses. The abandoned five-story Lincoln Heights Jail is a notable, dominant feature. The original green and white Art Deco-style building, with a series of striking vertical columns, contrasts with the more modern, beige addition attached to it. The windows are covered with boards or graffiti. The back of the building is separated from the river by a chain-link fence, but views of the channel are visible from ground level, with more prominent views likely from upper floors. Mixed-use redevelopment is currently proposed for this site (Lank and Sanchez 2020).

Vegetation is sparse, consisting of a few small, landscaped trees and shrubs. A sliver of the Ed P. Reyes Greenway offers a path and bench beside the river channel, views of which are partially screened by a fence. Another narrow channel enters the LA River just south of SR 110 and is visually similar to the LA River channel, although smaller and slightly more tree lined.

3.4.1.3 Iconic Bridges/Industrial Landscape Unit

The Iconic Bridges/Industrial LU includes Broadway as the northern border and extends south to 26th Street. Consistent with city zoning, this LU is heavily industrial but visually notable for the many historic or iconic bridges (some of which are referred to as viaducts) that cross the river or are under construction. The Los Angeles Bridges Recording Project documented 15 historic bridges in the City of Los Angeles, 12 of which cross the LA River. Per the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) conducted in 2000, nine of the 12 bridges are within this Proposed Project's AVE and include the North Broadway Viaduct; North Spring Street Viaduct; Main Street Bridge; Cesar E Chavez Viaduct; the First, Fourth, and Seventh Street Viaducts; Olympic Boulevard Viaduct; and Washington Boulevard Bridge. Built between 1909 and 1934, the group of 15 bridges "contains many of the finest examples of City Beautiful bridges and viaducts in the United States.... Through the use of the reinforced concrete arch, bridge builders harmonized architectural beauty and structural integrity, creating structures that unified the city and created pride in its public works" (HAER 1968a).

With the exception of the Washington Boulevard Bridge and Sixth Street Viaduct, which was demolished and is currently being reconstructed, these bridges exhibit similar designs and white color, including curved arches and horizontal, round-topped portals between the bridge deck and arch support(s). Of particular note is the Fourth Street Bridge, with ornamental elements such as precast railings and cast aluminum lanterns, and a triangular trefoil pattern on the railing. This bridge exhibits various architectural styles, including Beaux Arts in its four concrete towers and Gothic Revival in its porticos, lighting standards, and railings. Along with the Cesar E Chavez Avenue Viaduct, the Fourth Street Viaduct is one of only two Downtown LA bridges that feature Period Revival design. The Cesar E Chavez Avenue Viaduct, another outstanding visual element, was built in the Spanish Revival style (Water and Power Associates n.d.) and is similarly flanked with tall, decorative towers and features more pronounced rounded portals. The Broadway bridge is of similar design, notable for the tall Greek-style columns that flank it and multiple spans crossing both the river channel and railroads. Farther south, the Washington Boulevard Bridge is "architecturally significant for its decoration: four massive pylons, paired at each end of the bridge, which carry terra cotta frieze panels" (HAER 1968b). Although each bridge is slightly different, the bridges' uniform color and similar design style create a visually connected interlude that markedly contrasts with their primarily industrial surroundings.

Two bridge design consistency exceptions are the new Sixth Street Viaduct and the truss-style railroad bridge that curves across the river just south of Washington Boulevard. The new Sixth Street Viaduct will incorporate 10 pairs of continuous arches that "will create a sinuous profile as the 3,060-foot-long, 100-foot-wide viaduct soars over the 101 Freeway, several railroads, the LA River and the downtown Los Angeles arts district" (Cho 2021) (refer to the cumulative impacts discussion in the Draft EIR).

The railroad bridge consists of multiple thick, dark brown horizontal and diagonal trusses that support the track, creating a visually dominant crisscross pattern of substantial girth supported by heavy concrete piers. At this location, the walls of the channel also become vertical and consist of slim, dark, rectangular metal columns that create a repeating vertical pattern. These walls generally extend between the railroad bridges on either side of Washington Boulevard, including the truss bridge. The eastern wall appears to have been randomly sprayed with beige paint. Tufts of weedy grasses drape over the walls on both sides of the channel. South of the truss bridge, the channel walls become concrete again and are slightly less vertical, but steeper than the lower-angle walls consistently seen to the north.

The river channel in this LU is surrounded on both sides primarily by industrial uses. As noted in the *Central City North Community Plan*, which encompasses the west side of this LU, “The entire area south of the 101 Freeway between Alameda Street and the Los Angeles River (and railroad lines) is a major industrial district, consisting of a variety of different industrial activities.” The plan further states that this area includes “one of the highest concentrations of industrially designated land use plans in the city” (City of Los Angeles 2000). Most buildings are one to two stories high and back up to the river channel, presenting windowless gray or beige facades, some covered in graffiti.

Railroads have a large presence in this LU, primarily due to the Metro Division 20 Train Yard between First and Fourth Streets on the west side of the river, where more than 20 tracks parallel the channel. Approximately 10 tracks parallel the east side of the river in this area as well. Multiple tracks become prominent again just north of Washington Boulevard at the Redondo Junction Roundhouse on the river’s west side. The tracks on both sides of the river veer away from it south of Washington Boulevard. The tracks and train cars reinforce this LU’s industrial nature, as do large, multi-strand, lattice-style transmission towers that parallel the channel. Because of the channel’s curves, these towers do not appear to follow a linear formation and, therefore, fill a large amount of the skyline, particularly when coupled with adjacent multi-strand telephone poles. These prominent vertical elements and their numerous lines create a visual tangle of wires and are noticeable intrusions into the skyline, particularly affecting mountain views to the north. These elements detract from the historic feeling of the bridges, which are otherwise unobscured within the channel despite the industrial surroundings.

Parks and residences are mostly absent in this LU with some exceptions. Downey Recreation Center and Riverside Park on the east side of the channel between Spring and Albion Streets provide walking paths beside the river and a green space in the form of two large soccer fields. Views toward the river channel are unobstructed, but the channel is below grade and not visible. Benches placed alongside the path face the river, but an approximately 6-foot-tall wire metal fence screens views. Vegetation throughout this LU is sparse and consists mostly of small, landscaped trees and shrubs. Where shallow water is present in the river channel, mounds of green algae and low mats of vegetation tend to clump near the Washington Boulevard Bridge.

The William Meade apartment buildings are a diagonally arranged residential area north of Bolero Street on the west side of the river and consist of several two- to three-story red brick buildings. Those closest to Bolero Street include balconies that face the river. One Santa Fe is a series of modern, elongated, six-story, multi-family buildings that line Santa Fe Avenue between First and Fourth Streets on the west side of the numerous railroad tracks at the Metro Station. Although separated by at least 600 feet from the river channel, east-facing residents on upper floors are expected to have views of it.

3.4.1.4 Transportation/Civic Landscape Unit

The Transportation/Civic LU encompasses Union Station East, the LA Metro Headquarters, the Los Angeles Police Department, the C. Erwin Piper Technical Center, and Metro Division 3, all of which occupy a large footprint, as well as US-101 on the west side of the channel. With the exception of the LA Metro Headquarters, these buildings feature unmemorable, windowless, exteriors. The Metro building is a skyscraper with a honey-colored convex façade reminiscent of Art Deco design. The adjacent entrance to Union Station East employs the same color but is sleeker, with a large bank of green-hued windows forming a curved expanse of glass. The buildings' sizes and attention to architectural and artistic detail, including an alternating pattern of colored bricks on the bus driveway encircled with an intricately carved metal fence and palm trees, make the site stand out from its surroundings.

US-101, just south of these buildings, consists of 10 traffic lanes plus a separate, elevated bus tollway and is a dominant transportation feature. This LU also extends slightly south to Commercial Street, which is fronted by parking lots and wide, two- to three-story utilitarian commercial buildings with few windows and no memorable architectural details.

3.4.1.5 Industrial Landscape Unit

The Industrial LU extends south from 26th Street, which is the approximate municipal boundary between Los Angeles and Vernon, to the Proposed Project's southern boundary. This LU is located primarily within Vernon, as well as a small part of Maywood. This LU is heavily industrial, consistent with the *City of Vernon General Plan*, which states, "The City of Vernon was founded in 1905 as an industrial city, and it remains so today...." In recognition of Vernon's unique status as an exclusively industrial city, the General Plan contains one land use category (Industrial), and five Overlay Districts (Commercial, Rendering, Slaughtering, Housing, and Emergency Shelter) (City of Vernon 2007). Only one extremely small section of land (approximately 1.3 acres) is zoned residential, which is intentional, as the plan notes, "For the foreseeable future, Vernon will continue to be an almost totally industrial city, with limited retail commercial and food service operations to support the large daytime business population, and few residences" (City of Vernon 2007).

This LU's industrial setting is similar to that of the Iconic Bridges/Industrial LU. Buildings are mostly low and pale-colored, with windowless walls facing the river. Large parking areas, some storing freight trucks, are common. The walls of the river channel are steeper from this LU's northern end to Bandini Boulevard, making the river channel appear wider and deeper in this section, where water can tend to braid and fill the entire channel. The slope of the channel walls flattens again southeast of Bandini Boulevard, similar to the northern part of the AVE. The river takes a sharp bend to the east at the northern end of this LU, turning southeast at Downey Road. Bridges crossing these bends (Soto Street and Bandini Boulevard) provide more views of the industrial facilities lining the channel because of the change in the line of sight. Some bridges in this LU (particularly the Atlantic Street Bridge) include a concrete arch design and were built in the 1920s and 1930s, demonstrating visually interesting lines and forms. However, they lack the ornamentation and stylization of the bridges farther north and are visually more utilitarian. Railroad tracks reappear on both sides of the channel south of Downey Road, with at least a dozen tracks abutting the southwest side of the channel at the BNSF Railway Los Angeles Junction Railway. As throughout the AVE, transmission towers and lines are a dominant feature. Vegetation and parks are essentially absent. The *City of Vernon General Plan* states, "The major open space resources in Vernon consist of the Los Angeles River Channel and utility easements. No riparian habitat exists, as the Los Angeles River channel is concrete lined along this portion of the river. Given the City's industrial character, Vernon does not contain and does not have a need for public parks" (City of Vernon 2007).

A small area of commercial buildings occupies a triangle of land at the northeast intersection of Soto Street and Bandini Boulevard. In contrast to most of the setting, the facades of these buildings face the river and consist largely of windows. The buildings share a similar design that includes staggered roof lines, awnings, slightly decorative columns, consistent shades of beige and green, and a pitched or curved central roof.

Some of the houses in Vernon's sole, 1.3-acre residential area have views toward the river channel. However, these views are blocked by a concrete wall alongside District Boulevard, which parallels the channel. In addition, the channel is below grade and not visible. Residential areas occupy the City of Maywood in this area, which abuts the south side of the City of Vernon and represents a visually stark contrast in the form of densely spaced single-family houses. However, none of these residences have views of the river, which is below grade, and views of it are blocked by Vernon's industrial buildings and/or walls.

The Land Use Element of the undated *Maywood General Plan* describes the city as a "built out community" that is "bounded on all sides by mature urban development" and has "for many years, faced the challenge" of preserving its character. Land within Maywood that is adjacent to Vernon is "dedicated to industrial use," the majority of which is "in close proximity to residential uses" (City of Maywood 2023). Although most of Maywood is densely packed with small residential properties, in contrast to much of the surrounding industrial use, aerial imagery, site visits, and the AVE map confirm that residential views of the river would be blocked.

3.4.2 Scenic Vistas and Scenic Resources

Chapter 9, Part VII, Scenic Resources of Los Angeles County's *General Plan 2035* (Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning 2022) notes that "scenic resources consist of designated scenic highways and corridors (or routes), and hillsides and ridgelines."

No scenic vistas or scenic resources were identified within, or within view of, the RSA other than the Arroyo Seco Historic Parkway – SR-110 National Scenic Byway (SR-110), which connects Los Angeles and Pasadena (FHWA n.d. b). Within the RSA, SR-110 crosses over the LA River channel on a bridge. The parkway was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in February 2011, designated a National Scenic Byway by the US Secretary of Transportation in 2002, and designated a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark in 1999 by the American Society of Civil Engineers. The *Historic Arroyo Seco Parkway Corridor Partnership Plan* notes that the parkway "is considered by many engineers and transportation historians to be one of the most significant historic roads in the United States" (California Department of Transportation [Caltrans] 2012, NPS n.d.).

SR-110 was nominated as a National Scenic Byway for its historic, recreational, cultural, and natural qualities (Caltrans 2012). Because FHWA policy limits designation to a single intrinsic quality, it was designated under the historic quality only. However, the *Historic Arroyo Seco Parkway Corridor Partnership Plan*² recognizes and integrates all four qualities. The plan's vision statement states, "The Parkway is beautiful and well maintained, and the surrounding neighborhoods and parklands feel connected and accessible. Access to alternative travel modes is generous and convenient.... The

² According to the *Historic Arroyo Seco Parkway Corridor Partnership Plan* (Caltrans 2012), the plan does not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the State of California or the Southern California Association of Governments, nor does it constitute a standard, specification, or regulation.

landscape along the Parkway creates a park like setting and views of nature...” (Caltrans 2012). The plan’s goals include “preserv[ing] the historic Parkway design features, views, and community relationships as a park corridor,” and “maintain[ing] the Arroyo Seco Parkway as a historically significant road, designated a California State Historic Parkway, designated a National Scenic Byway and listed as part of the National Register of Historic Places historic district” (Caltrans 2012). The National Park Service notes that the parkway “was heavily landscaped with native plants and ran through dedicated parkland for much of the route in Los Angeles, including going through Elysian Park near downtown,” which “gave it much of the character of a parkway. To the contemporary observer, it feels much more like a parkway, despite many compromises to the landscaping for safety purposes over the years” (NPS n.d.).

3.4.3 Important Nighttime Views

No important nighttime views were identified within the RSA. The RSA is not within an area that is designated as part of the International Dark Sky Places Program (International Dark Sky Association n.d.). In addition, the RSA experiences substantial light pollution (Figure 3-3).

Figure 3-3. Light Pollution within the Area of Visual Effect

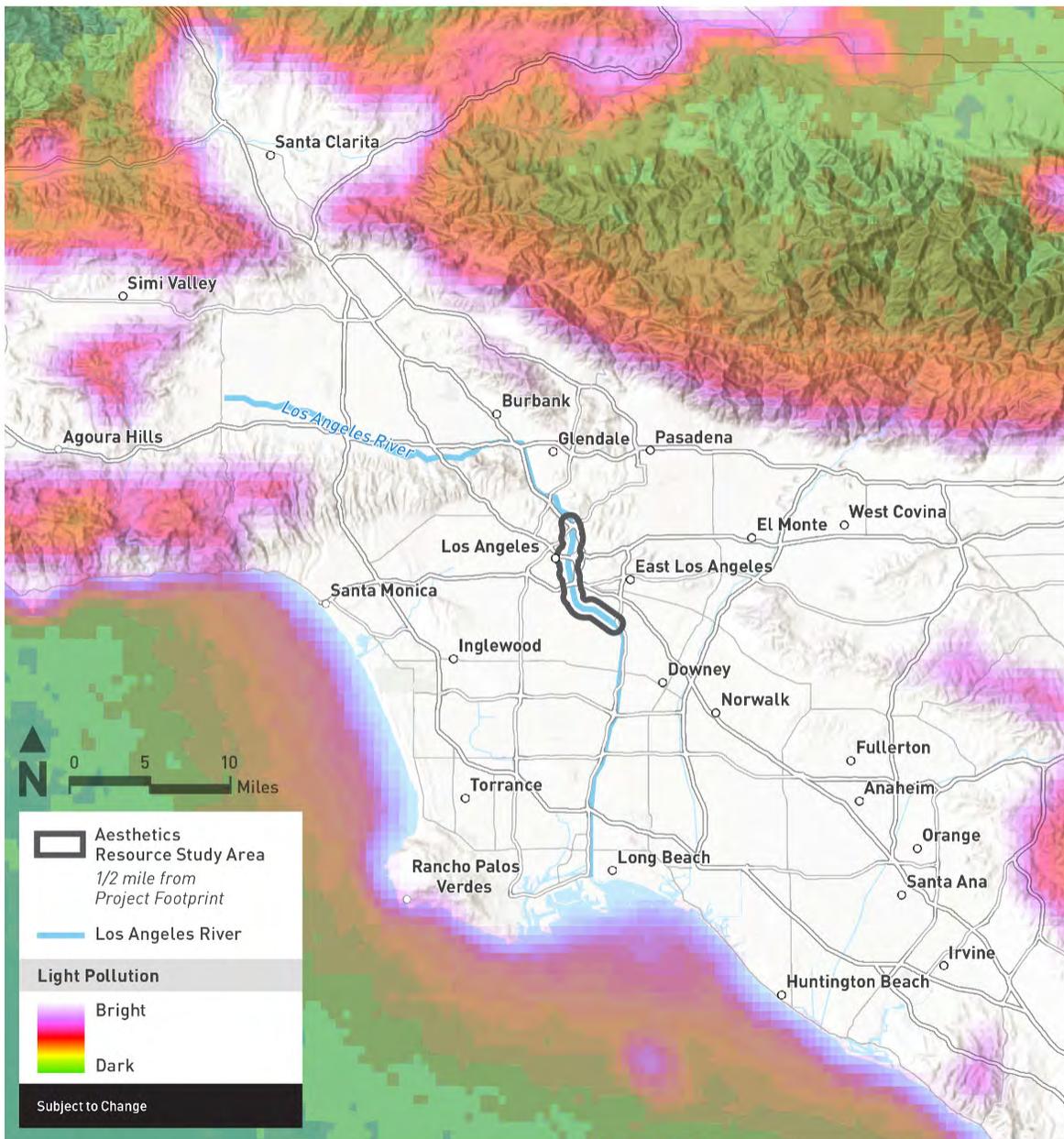


Image and data processing by NOAA's National Geophysical Data Center.
 DMSP data collected by US Air Force Weather Agency.

3.5 Existing Visual Quality

The numerical rating system used in FHWA's 1988 *Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects* (FHWA 1988) was used to define the visual quality of specific KOPs. Each of the three dimensions of visual quality—vividness, intactness, and unity—were assessed and documented using an FHWA rating sheet. These dimensions are defined as follows:

- *Vividness*: “The memorability of the visual impression received from contrasting landscape elements as they combine to form a striking and distinctive visual pattern.”
- *Intactness*: “The integrity of visual order in the natural and human-made landscape, and the extent to which the landscape is free from visual encroachment.”
- *Unity*: “The degree to which the visual resources of the landscape join together to form a coherent, harmonious visual pattern. Refers to the compositional harmony, or the inter-compatibility, between landscape elements.”

A numerical rating score was assigned to each dimension, ranging from very low (1) to medium (4) to very high (7) visual quality. The individual scores were then averaged to generate an overall visual quality score, summarized in Table 3-2. Results of this process show that the RSA generally has low to medium visual quality due to its highly developed industrial nature, as described in Section 3.4.

Table 3-2. Visual Quality Rating Summary by Key Observation Point

	KOP 1	KOP 2	KOP 3	KOP 4	KOP 5	KOP 6 ^a	KOP 7	KOP 8
Average Rating	3.46	3.88	2.85	1.71	2.69	1.17	2.17	1.83
Descriptive Equivalent	Medium	Medium	Moderately Low	Low	Moderately Low	Very Low	Low	Low

^a Based on aerial and street view online imagery and photos taken looking southeast from First Street Viaduct because a photograph from the One Santa Fe apartment buildings could not be obtained

Photographs of existing conditions and simulations are included in Attachment A. However, an adequate photograph representing KOP 6, the One Santa Fe apartment complex, could not be obtained due to inaccessibility to the public. A photograph from the First Street Viaduct at the north end of the apartment complex was considered but dismissed because it was not an accurate representation. Drone footage from above the apartment complex was also considered but dismissed because a drone’s-eye-view would be higher than any residential view, and, to best approximate the field of human view, the drone would require a 35-millimeter camera, which would cost-prohibitive for one viewpoint. Therefore, KOP 6 is analyzed in narrative only based on design drawings, with no accompanying photographs or simulations.

Attachment B includes detailed ratings spreadsheets for the KOPs. A summary description of each KOP follows.

3.5.1 Key Observation Point 1: State Route 110 Looking North

Although not a State Scenic Byway, the section of the Arroyo Seco Historic Parkway – SR-110 National Scenic Byway through the RSA is designated scenic at the national level, as described in Section 3.4. Therefore, this KOP was selected to approximate views from within a scenic highway of any designation to help evaluate the Impact AES-2 threshold of significance. The existing view from this KOP is shown in Attachment A, Figure A-1.

The undulating topography and view of distant mountains, as well as the presence of water and vegetation, are moderately vivid elements, as are the strong lines and mass of the varying crisscrossing bridges, but to a lesser degree. However, the numerous patterns in the bridges lack integrity of visual order. The scene is somewhat unbalanced, with little visual relationship between the

developed and natural elements, although the forms of distant hills are somewhat symmetrical and balance the farther view. Overall visual quality is medium.

3.5.2 Key Observation Point 2: Elysian Park Grandview Point, Looking South

As shown in the existing view in Figure A-2, this elevated view provides sweeping views of the landscape. Clusters of dark deciduous trees on the foreground hill add vividness, as does the dark diagonal line of the water and river channel, which draws the eye through the scene. However, the visual patterns of the vegetation are not integrated with the surrounding urban development, and the industrial structures encroach upon the view. The scene appears somewhat chaotic and jumbled in the foreground but becomes more coherent as details fade in the distance. Overall visual quality is medium.

3.5.3 Key Observation Point 3: Albion Riverside Park, Looking Southwest

Vividness in this view is attributed mostly to the views of Downtown LA and the brilliant green color of the artificial turf, as shown in the existing view in Figure A-3. However, no visual interrelationship of patterns exists between the cityscape and soccer field, which starkly contrast with each other and appear unbalanced, although landscaping at the edge of the soccer field helps transition between the two disparate halves of the view. The large lattice transmission towers encroach upon, and block, farther views. Overall visual quality is moderately low.

3.5.4 Key Observation Point 4: William Meade Apartment Buildings, Looking Southeast

The imposing lattice transmission towers are memorable (that is, vivid), but not necessarily positive, visual elements, as shown in the existing view in Figure A-4. The bright green lawn in the foreground is also vivid, but not memorable. The various visual patterns and textures, as well as the residential and industrial elements, are not integrated and lack visual order. The vegetation contrasts with the dominant industrial features, which encroach upon the residential setting in the foreground. The view lacks compositional harmony because it is unbalanced and the various transmission structures lend a chaotic and jumbled appearance. Overall visual quality is low.

3.5.5 Key Observation Point 5: Cesar E Chavez Avenue Viaduct, Looking North

Although low, slightly undulating hills in the distance add a slight degree of vividness, the broad swath of the river channel is the dominant feature and imbues a sense of balance between the left and right sides of the view, as shown in the existing view in Figure A-5. The sinuous curve of the channel creates an orderly flow through the foreground, but the various built elements, particularly the transmission towers, lack visual order because of their contrasting patterns. Paint patches on the concrete channel and graffiti on the foreground walls lend a disorderly appearance. The transmission towers encroach upon the view because of their large numbers and vertical prominence. Overall visual quality is moderately low.

3.5.6 Key Observation Point 6: One Santa Fe Apartment Buildings, Looking East

As previously noted, public access is not available for this KOP. Flat landform, a general lack of vegetation, and obscured views of the river channel result in low vividness. A large number of railroad tracks in the foreground, as well as railroad cars, lattice transmission towers and lines, construction work, and industrial buildings, are dominant, but not memorable, visual elements. All of these disparate features lack visual order and encroach upon the view, resulting in a lack of unifying elements and, thus, compositional harmony. Overall visual quality is very low.

3.5.7 Key Observation Point 7: Washington Boulevard Bridge, Looking West

The Washington Boulevard Bridge's historic-style ornamentation contrasts with the utilitarian design of the rest of the scene, as shown in the existing view in Figure A-6. An overhead railroad bridge cuts a dark, heavy swath across the view, creating a visually dominant crisscross pattern of substantial girth and a striking, but not necessarily memorable, element. The river channel is reinforced with a dark metal corrugated wall that is also vivid but unmemorable. These dark, disparate visual structures create an unbalanced composition. A lattice transmission tower is a prominent vertical element. The contrasting color, pattern design, and style of these structures lack an integral visual relationship and encroach upon the historic character of the Washington Boulevard Bridge. Overall visual quality is low.

3.5.8 Key Observation Point 8: Commercial Area at Bandini Boulevard and Soto Street, Looking Southeast

As shown in the existing view in Figure A-7, the industrial nature of this view lacks striking or memorable elements and thus, vividness. A handful of deciduous trees interject minimal color and texture but are unmemorable and not integrated into the setting. The patterns created by the asphalt paving, chain-link fence, and transmission towers lack an integral visual relationship, and parked cars encroach upon views of the river. The scene is primarily unbalanced. The parked cars appear large relative to other features, and the varying heights and girths of the lattice towers appear haphazardly arranged. Overall visual quality is low.

IMPACT ANALYSIS

This chapter describes the impact analysis using the CEQA thresholds of significance impact evaluation questions for aesthetics/visual resources and provides the impact findings resulting from the construction and O&M of the Proposed Project.

4.1 CEQA Thresholds of Significance Evaluation

The significance thresholds used to evaluate project impacts associated with aesthetics/visual resources are based on the sample initial study questions set forth in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. Specifically, a significant impact related to aesthetics and visual resources would occur if the Proposed Project and its options would do any of the following:

- **Impact AES-1:** Have a substantially adverse effect on a scenic vista?
- **Impact AES-2:** Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historical buildings within a state scenic highway?
- **Impact AES-3:** Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings, and conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point.)
- **Impact AES-4:** Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day- or nighttime views in the area?

4.2 Construction

4.2.1 Proposed Project

Visual impacts related to construction would not occur or would be less than significant under the Proposed Project.

Impact AES-1: Have a substantially adverse effect on a scenic vista?

No impact. No scenic vistas are available within the RSA. Therefore, construction activities would not adversely affect scenic vistas, and **no impact** on scenic vistas is expected.

Impact AES-2: Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historical buildings within a state scenic highway?

Less than significant impact. One National Scenic Byway (but no state-designated Scenic Byways or scenic highways) is located within or would be visible from the RSA. The Arroyo Seco Historic Parkway – SR 110 is a National Scenic Byway and is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places. State Route (SR) 110 crosses over the LA River channel via a bridge within the RSA. Because

the Proposed Project and its options would be elevated over the LA River channel, but located below SR 110, construction activities associated with the Proposed Project and its options would not affect views of either the LA River channel and the surrounding area from SR 110 or views of SR 110. As shown in the simulated view of KOP 1 (Figure A-1), a small, willow tree north of the elevated highway at ground level and adjacent to the river would be removed. This tree is not within the SR 110 ROW, and the removal of this tree would not affect views to and from SR 110. Additionally, the Proposed Project and its options do not involve any construction activities that would damage SR 110 or alter SR 110 in a manner that would affect its National Scenic Byway designation. Therefore, a **less than significant impact** is anticipated regarding substantial damage to scenic resources.

Impact AES-3: Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). Conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

Less than significant impact. During construction, some large equipment (such as cranes and associated vehicles, including bulldozers, backhoes, graders, scrapers, and trucks), as well as stockpiled construction-related materials, would be visible from public streets, sidewalks, and adjacent properties. These construction-related views would be isolated and temporary. As provided by PF-AES-03, *Construction Staging*, construction staging would be screened to minimize visual intrusion into the surrounding landscape. The screening would be at a height and would consist of a type of material that is appropriate for the context of the surrounding land uses. Metro-branded community-relevant messaging would be incorporated along the perimeter of the construction staging walls. Lighting within construction areas would face downward and would be designed to minimize spillover lighting into adjacent properties.

MM-NOI-01, *Noise Control and Monitoring Plan* (discussed in Draft EIR Section 3.12, *Noise and Vibration*) would require installation of temporary noise barriers or noise control curtains, where appropriate and feasible, to reduce construction-related noise levels. These temporary noise barriers or noise control curtains may be visible from existing public places, including access points, parks, and Union Station. As with construction screening for PF-AES-03, *Construction Staging*, any necessary noise barriers or noise control curtains would be at a height and would use materials that are appropriate for the context of the surrounding land uses. The screenings and temporary noise barriers or noise control curtains would limit views of the construction area and would only be present during Proposed Project construction.

Construction work in the LA River may require temporary water diversion structures, such as cofferdams, to address water pollution control within a construction work zone. These water diversion structures would be located mainly in the concrete-lined LA River channel and would not degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the channel and surrounding area. Visual intrusion into the surrounding landscape would be minimal and temporary, resulting in a **less than significant impact**.

Construction activities associated with the Proposed Project and its options would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. Therefore, the impact would be **less than significant**.

Impact AES-4: Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day- or nighttime views in the area?

Less than significant impact. Construction lighting used to support work during daytime hours would be minimal. For nighttime construction, lighting would be focused on the immediate work

environment to minimize light and glare impacts on surrounding sensitive uses. A moderate level of ambient nighttime light already exists because of the urban setting of the RSA. The Proposed Project and its options would implement PF-AES-01, *Screen Direct Lighting and Glare for Nighttime Work*, PF-AES-02, *Construction Lighting*, and PF-AES-03, *Construction Staging*. These project features would direct lighting downward or toward construction areas and away from residential uses, install temporary shields so that light does not spill over into residential areas, and would equip light fixtures with glare diffusers. These project features would minimize potential construction light and glare intrusion onto the surrounding area. Therefore, impacts related to light and glare would be **less than significant**.

4.2.2 Option 1

Less than significant impact. Visual impacts related to construction would not occur or would be less than significant under Option 1. Refer to the Proposed Project findings for details.

4.2.3 Option 2

Less than significant impact. Visual impacts related to construction would not occur or would be less than significant under Option 2. Refer to the Proposed Project findings for details.

4.3 Operations and Maintenance

4.3.1 Proposed Project

Visual impacts related to O&M would not occur or would be less than significant under the Proposed Project.

Impact AES-1: Cause a substantially adverse effect on a scenic vista?

No impact. Impacts on scenic vistas from operations and maintenance (O&M) activities would not occur because none would be visible from the RSA. Therefore, **no impact** on scenic vistas is expected.

Impact AES-2: Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historical buildings within a state scenic highway?

Less than significant impact. The simulation developed for KOP 1 portrays expected changes to views from SR 110 looking north. The proposed elevated pathway associated with the Proposed Project and its options would be consistent with the visual character of the area, which primarily consists of infrastructure-related uses (for example, roadway bridges and the concrete-lined LA River channel). The components of the Proposed Project and its options would not alter or damage SR 110. As mentioned above for construction, SR 110 crosses over the LA River channel via a bridge within the RSA. Because the Proposed Project and its options would be elevated over the LA River channel, but located below SR 110, O&M activities and elements associated with the Proposed Project and its options would not alter views of the LA River channel and the surrounding area from SR 110 or views of SR 110. Therefore, no change to SR 110 scenic byway designation would occur, and a **less than significant impact** is anticipated regarding substantial damage to scenic resources.

Impact AES-3: Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). Conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

Less than significant impact. Due to the industrial nature and numerous transportation corridors within the RSA, the Proposed Project and its options would not change the existing visual character of the RSA (described in Section 3.2.4.4). The linear nature of the bike path and the materials that would be used for the Proposed Project and its options would be similar to and consistent with the visual character of the channelized river, roads, and railroads within the RSA. These existing elements, in addition to numerous lattice transmission towers and lines, create a highly urban visual character that would not change with the addition of the Proposed Project components.

As with existing conditions, a numerical rating score was assigned to each dimension of visual quality based on simulations of the eight KOPs. Results of this process show that the RSA's existing low to medium visual quality would not change (Table 4-1). Visual quality was shown to decrease slightly at most KOPs, with small increases or no change at the remaining KOPs. Increased visual quality typically resulted from increased vividness, resulting from changes such as introduction of a bold, curving shape into an industrial setting, or integrating existing disparate elements. Decreased visual quality typically resulted from introduction of diverging pattern elements, visual clutter, or elements that obscure views.

Table 4-1. Visual Quality Rating Summary by Key Observation Point

Average Rating	KOP 1	KOP 2	KOP 3	KOP 4	KOP 5	KOP 6	KOP 7	KOP 8 ^a
Existing Conditions	3.46	3.88	2.85	1.71	2.69	1.17	2.17	1.83
Proposed Project	3.88	3.88	2.86	1.71	2.58	1.17	2.19	-
Option 1	3.88	3.75	2.36	1.69	2.54	1.13	2.19	-
Option 2	3.88	3.79	2.54	1.56	2.45	1.17	2.19	-
Truss Bridge Design	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.08
Arch Bridge Design	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.52

7 = Very High, 6 = Moderately High, 5 = High, 4 = Medium, 3 = Moderately Low, 2 = Low, 1 = Very Low, 0 = None

^a Truss and arch bridge designs only apply to KOP 8.

Viewer sensitivity to the impacts to visual resources determines the degree of impacts to visual quality (FHWA 2015). Viewer sensitivity to changes in visual quality would vary by viewing location and the factors listed under Section 3.2.4.1. Some viewers would be sensitive to visual impacts where visual quality would diminish, some would not be as sensitive where visual quality would increase. For example, viewers in close proximity to the Proposed Project and its options, such those traveling over Cesar E Chavez Avenue Viaduct at KOP 5 (Figure A-5), would be more sensitive to changes associated with the Proposed Project and its options than viewers from farther viewpoints. However, viewers at KOP 5 would also be mobile, so the view of the Proposed Project components would be temporary, although recurring for regular commuters. At other locations, such as Elysian Park at KOP 1 (Figure A-1), viewers would experience a longer view duration and would likely pay more attention to the sweeping views that are somewhat unique in the area due to elevation. The number of viewers and the activities that the viewers are engaged in would also affect viewer sensitivity, which would vary by location. For example, viewers from the William Meade apartment buildings at KOP 4 (Figure A-4) would be more sensitive to changes in visual quality because several people who have stationary, long-term views would be affected. Viewers at locations where Proposed Project elements obscure views of

focal points, such as of Downtown LA from KOP 3 (Figure A-3) at Albion Riverside Park, may also be more sensitive to changes in visual quality.

Implementation of the Proposed Project elements would result in some change to the existing visual character and visual quality of historic resources. Particularly, the North Broadway Viaduct, River Station Area, North Spring Street Viaduct, North Main Street Bridge, the Factory building at 1734 N. Main Street, Cesar E Chavez Avenue Viaduct, First Street Viaduct, and Fourth Street Viaduct would experience a slight diminishing of visual quality. The Proposed Project would add linear forms, a greyish color, and a smooth cement texture, which are generally consistent with the existing visual character of the LA River Channel. Refer to Table 4-2 for additional details on changes to the visual character and visual quality of historic resources. Changes in the visual quality of historic resources resulting from the Proposed Project would be minimal, and some changes in visual quality would be neutral and beneficial. Therefore, impacts to visual character or quality of historic resources would be less than significant.

As shown in Tables 4-1 and 4-2, overall changes in visual quality would be slight, and some changes in visual quality would be neutral and beneficial. Therefore, overall impacts to visual character or quality would be **less than significant**.

Implementation of Proposed Project elements would not change zoning in the Proposed Project temporary or permanent footprints. Within the City of Los Angeles, the areas within the Proposed Project temporary and permanent footprints are zoned Open Space, Commercial manufacturing, Public Facilities, Limited Industrial and Heavy Industrial. In the City of Vernon, the Proposed Project temporary and permanent footprints are zoned as Industrial and Truck and Freight Terminal. In the City of Bell, the Proposed Project temporary and permanent footprints are zoned as Commercial Manufacturing; and the unincorporated Bandini Island community zoned the Proposed Project temporary and permanent footprints as Manufacturing. None of the Proposed Project elements would conflict with the zoning designations of the local jurisdictions in the RSA as it pertains to visual character and quality. As called for in regional and local plans, the Proposed Project would consider opportunities for installation of art and/or architecturally distinctive focal points for appropriate Proposed Project elements, which would consider use of materials, color, and detailing relative to the surrounding built environment. Incorporating elements of good design would help visually enhance or improve the appearance of the river and create attractive public access to the river. Any paving materials would be light colored and pervious, and lighting would be designed to minimize light trespass. As previously described, views of hillsides and from public lands and roadways would be preserved, and no scenic views, viewsheds, or historic structures would be destroyed. Any landscaping would include native, drought-tolerant plants. The aesthetics of the river's open space would not be degraded. For these reasons, O&M activities would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Table 4-2. Potential Changes to Visual Character and Visual Quality of Historic Resources

HR*	Description	Public Views/Viewers	Existing Visual Character/Quality	Change in Visual Character/Quality
1	LA River Channel District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travelers crossing bridges over the LA River Channel. No designated LA River Recreation Zones are within the RSA (Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority n.d.); viewers within the river channel are expected to be few. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad, pale, flat surface approximately 160 feet wide, flanked on both sides with shallow-sloped concrete. Walls display multiple, randomly applied, white rectangular patches of sealant or paint, creating a mottled effect. Low visual quality due to low vividness and low unity resulting from paint patches and graffiti. 	<p>Proposed Project/all Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New, mostly linear features, some raised above channel elevation and alternating east and west sides of channel, would echo the channels' linearity and color. No change to existing low visual quality. Vividness would remain low; intactness would be slightly degraded due to addition of new elements. Unity would be slightly degraded although new elements would share similar linearity and color as channel.
2	Elysian Park 929 Academy Rd, Los Angeles	<p>Travelers crossing bridges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Westbound (WB) SR-110 WB Broadway WB Spring Street WB Main Street <p>Primarily affects passengers turning to the north (right); drivers would be primarily looking west.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elevated hillside covered in green grass and deciduous vegetation with some horizontal, light gray walls indicating road cuts. Moderately high visual quality due to elevated topography and presence of natural elements uncommon in the RSA, with high vividness and mostly intact and uniform visual elements. 	<p>Viewed from SR-110:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New, elevated, in-channel linear features would share a horizontal alignment with I-5 on-ramp, which has a similar visual character. No change to existing visual quality due to the views of Elysian Park remaining intact. <p>Remaining viewpoints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed Project/all Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New linear features would be viewed below views of Elysian Park. No change to existing visual quality due to the views of Elysian Park remaining intact.
10	Lincoln Heights Jail 401 N Avenue 19, Los Angeles	<p>Visitors to Elysian Park:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Static overlooks: see KOP 2. Southbound (SB) Elysian Park Drive: Fleeting views through vegetation, limited primarily to passengers as drivers would be focused north/south instead of to the east, toward the jail. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blocky, beige, 5-story building with horizontal rows of dark windows; graffiti; chain link fences. Low visual quality due to low vividness resulting from neglect; disrupted intactness and unity from graffiti and architecture displaying different design eras. 	<p>Viewed from Elysian Park Overlooks (KOP 2):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option 2: Bend in elevated path on east side of channel would cover an extremely small outer edge of the jail, with no notable change to visual character or quality. <p>Viewed from Elysian Park Drive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option 2: Elevated path would interfere with fleeting views of the lower part of the structure. <p>Other Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change to views or visual character/quality because Proposed Project elements would not hinder views of the building from this elevated viewpoint.
11	Quonset hut style building 147 N Avenue 18, Los Angeles	<p>Visitors to Elysian Park:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Static overlooks: see KOP 2. Elysian Park Drive: Fleeting views through vegetation limited primarily to passengers as drivers would be focused north/south instead of to the east toward building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red building with rounded roof that creates a half-dome shape, partially hidden from views from the park by flat-roofed, blocky out-buildings. Medium visual quality due to unique shape but barely perceptible due to small size and intervening, incongruous objects that reduce intactness and unity. 	<p>Viewed from Elysian Park Overlooks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed Project/all Options (KOP 2): Proposed Project elements would not interfere with views that are restricted to side view of building's roof; no change to visual character or quality. <p>Viewed from Elysian Park Drive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option 1 and 2: Elevated bike path would hinder lower views of the building, which is partially visually obstructed by existing outbuildings. Very slight change to visual character due to addition of new linear features; no change to visual quality because the structure's unique rounded form would remain visible.
12	North Broadway Viaduct Bridge ID 6	<p>Visitors to Elysian Park:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Static overlooks: see KOP 2. SB Elysian Park Drive: Fleeting views through vegetation limited primarily to passengers as drivers would be focused north/south instead of to the east toward the viaduct. <p>Travelers crossing bridges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Spring Street, looking north. SR-110, looking south. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White concrete bridge with one central vertical pier and four arch spans (two in the river channel), with arched, open spandrels; white sculpted concrete railing between 12 rounded viewing balconies; two pairs of fluted Ionic columns on high square pedestals topped by a cornice and balustrade at each entrance (Los Angeles Conservancy 2024). High visual quality due to vividness of multiple arching shapes, open spandrels, and adornments; high intactness as the bridge remains visually whole; high unity as the design repeats similar forms and decorative features. 	<p>Viewed from Elysian Park overlooks (KOP 2) and Elysian Park Drive:</p> <p>Option 1, Design Variation 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New arched bridge with criss-crossing supports would partially obscure views of North Broadway Viaduct. Vividness, intactness, and unity would be diminished but Proposed Project elements would be visually absorbed due to distance and adjacent chaotic visual elements. Visual quality would be reduced but not substantially degraded. <p>Option 1, Design Variations 2 and 3 (KOP 2):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New horizontal bridge with vertical supports under bridge deck would partially obscure views of the lower part of the viaduct.

Table 4-2. Potential Changes to Visual Character and Visual Quality of Historic Resources

HR*	Description	Public Views/Viewers	Existing Visual Character/Quality	Change in Visual Character/Quality
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vividness, intactness, and unity would be diminished but Proposed Project elements would be visually absorbed due to distance and adjacent chaotic visual elements. Visual quality would be reduced but not substantially degraded. <p>Viewed from Spring Street Viaduct:</p> <p>Proposed Project/All Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – New linear bike path elements would be visible just below west channel bank traveling under the viaduct. ▪ Option 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Linear bike path would enter from Baker Street to the west and travel under the west end of viaduct outside of channel. Elevated linear bike path would also travel along the east side of channel. ▪ Option 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Elevated Linear bike path would travel on the east side of railroad tracks adjacent to east side of channel, crossing under the viaduct outside of the channel. ▪ Slight disruption to intactness due to the introduction of new elements but views of the viaduct would remain intact, particularly under Option 2. Proposed Project would not degrade existing visual character or quality. <p>Viewed from SR-110:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Project, Option 2: Same as Spring Street Viaduct view. ▪ Option 1, Design Variations 2 and 3: Linear forms and vertical posts of bike path bridge would cross in front of North Broadway Viaduct as described for Elysian Park. U-shaped elevated entrance ramp would be visible to the east on the east bank of the channel and just east of the railroad track, outside the viaduct’s most prominent visual features. ▪ Visual quality for Option 1, all design variations, would be diminished to medium visual quality due to reduced intactness and unity. The viaduct would remain visible but obscured; the Proposed Project would not substantially degrade existing visual character or quality.
13	River Station Area (Los Angeles State Historic Park) 1231-1251 N Spring St, Los Angeles	Travelers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Westbound drivers on the east end of Baker Street (dead-ends at Broadway). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vine-covered fence obscures views of the park at the eastern end of Baker Street. As of 2022, the park in this area is a vacant dirt lot; the park contains tall, rounded forms of deciduous and palm trees and shrubs west of the intersection of Baker and Wilhard Streets where the proposed bike ramp begins. ▪ Visual quality is low to medium at the east end of the park where mature vegetation does not yet exist. 	<p>Option 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The linear bike path would gradually rise on the north side of Baker Street to North Broadway, where it would cross under the North Broadway Viaduct, adding a new diagonal line and vertical support posts. ▪ Visual quality would be diminished slightly at the far eastern end of the park, which is vacant (as of 2022). The project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the park because views of the majority of the park would remain intact.
14	North Spring Street Viaduct Bridge ID 7	Visitors to Elysian Park static overlooks: see KOP 2. Travelers crossing bridges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ North Broadway Viaduct, looking south. ▪ North Main Steet Bridge, looking north. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ White concrete bridge with one central pier and two arch spans with open, angular spandrels in the river channel, sculpted concrete railing with incised rounded arches between decorative lamp posts topped by octagonal-shaped lanterns (Los Angeles Conservancy 2010). ▪ High visual quality due to vividness of two arching shapes and open spandrels; high intactness as the bridge remains visually whole; high unity as the design repeats similar forms and elements. 	<p>Viewed from North Broadway Viaduct:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – New linear bike path would travel along the west side of the channel, under the viaduct. ▪ Option 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Elevated linear bike path would travel along the east side of channel, under the viaduct.

Table 4-2. Potential Changes to Visual Character and Visual Quality of Historic Resources

HR*	Description	Public Views/Viewers	Existing Visual Character/Quality	Change in Visual Character/Quality
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Option 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Elevated linear bike path would travel on the east side of the railroad tracks on east side of channel, passing under the viaduct to the east, outside of the channel and east of the viaduct’s most prominent visual features. ▪ Proposed Project/all Options: Slight disruption to intactness due to new elements, but views of the viaduct would remain intact overall. Proposed Project and options would not substantially degrade existing visual character or quality. <p>Viewed from North Main Street Bridge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Proposed Project: New linear bike path would be elevated as it crosses the river channel, with raised, descending ramps on east and west side of channel. An elevated entrance path on the west side would merge under the viaduct with a lower path traveling along the channel’s west bank, adding new lines and vertical posts. The ramp on the east side would create a 180-degree turn above the railroad tracks. ▪ Option 1: Elevated bike path on east side of channel would descend and travel under the viaduct. ▪ Option 1, Design Variation only, and Option 2: New elevated bridge would travel along west channel bank, cross river channel, and travel along east side of railroad tracks on east side of channel, crossing under the east side of North Spring Street Viaduct outside of views of bridge arches and spandrels. ▪ Proposed Project/all Options: A disruption to intactness, due to introduction of new elements, would be most evident where the new bridge crossings are proposed, particularly for the Proposed Project due to multiple linear components. Fewest impacts would result from Option 1 where no bridge would cross the channel. Overall, views of the viaduct would remain intact. Proposed Project would not substantially degrade existing visual character or quality.
21	North Main Street Bridge Bridge ID 8	Travelers crossing bridges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ North Spring Street Viaduct, looking south. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ White concrete bridge with two central piers and three shallow arch spans with short open, arched spandrels in the river channel. Two large prominent piers and decorative light posts. ▪ High visual quality due to arching shapes and open spandrels; high intactness as the bridge remains visually whole; high unity as the design repeats similar forms and elements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Linear bike path would cross river channel with new bridge and elevated ramps descending on the east and west sides. The new bridge would be near-level with the North Main Street Bridge deck. – Slight disruption to intactness, due to the introduction of a new bridge, but views of the North Main Street Bridge would remain intact overall. Project would not substantially degrade existing visual character or quality. ▪ Option 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Linear forms of bike path would be elevated over east side of bridge, with most views of prominent North Main Street Bridge elements unhindered. – Intactness and unity would be slightly diminished on east side of North Main Street Bridge due to elevated structure. Views of the North Main Street Bridge would remain intact overall. Proposed Project would not substantially degrade existing visual character or quality. ▪ Option 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Linear forms of bike path would be elevated over the west side of the bridge, with most views of prominent North Main Street Bridge elements unhindered. – Change to visual quality would be similar to Option 1 but the elevated structure would be on the west side of channel.

Table 4-2. Potential Changes to Visual Character and Visual Quality of Historic Resources

HR*	Description	Public Views/Viewers	Existing Visual Character/Quality	Change in Visual Character/Quality
23	Factory building 1734 N Main St, Los Angeles	Eastbound (EB) North Main Street Bridge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concrete building; flat roof with decorative parapets; plaster exterior siding; vertical windows; symmetrical façade; and metal fire escape on the north façade. Large mural of grapes on western façade. Mildly vivid due to decorative features and trim and spot colors. Intactness and unity are diminished by addition of fire escape, which disrupts visual cohesion. Overall visual medium quality. 	<p>Option 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linear form of the elevated bike path and vertical posts would hinder views of the building, the north side of which is currently partially obscured by an overhead railroad crossing sign. Visual quality would diminish due to an interrupted view of the building but would not degrade existing visual character or quality because most of the building would remain visible.
25	William Mead Homes (portion of) 1300 N Cardinal St, Los Angeles	Westbound travelers using commuter rail on east side of apartments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wide, two-story red brick apartment buildings with green doors and square, mullioned windows; small greenish front lawns with cement ramps and green railings leading to front doors. Railing along second floor balcony creates horizontal lines but is cluttered with disparate objects. The building displays uniform and repeating visual elements, but lacks vividness, with no outstanding visual components. Visual quality is medium. 	<p>Option 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train travelers would have views of vertical supports in conjunction with views of the William Mead Homes because the elevated bike path would travel above the train. No notable change to visual character or quality would result because most of the buildings would remain visible.
26	Mission Tower 1436 Alhambra Ave/337 E Cesar E Chavez Ave, Los Angeles	Residents of William Mead Homes, 1300 N Cardinal St, Los Angeles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tall, white rectangular structure with slightly overhanging red tile roof and horizontal row of windows wrapping structure below roofline creating a dark band. Fire escape and a few dark vertical windows are below the upper row of windows. Lower portion is blocked by shipping container. Vividness is moderate due to roof. Intactness is disrupted by fire escape and shipping container. Repeating elements create unity. Overall visual quality is medium. 	<p>Option 1 (KOP 4):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although the elevated bike path would be visible, it would pass behind the Mission Tower and not hinder views of it. The landscape surrounding the tower already includes various discordant elements. Existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings would not be substantially degraded.
29	Cesar E Chavez Avenue Viaduct Bridge ID 11	<p>Travelers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highway 101, looking north. Northbound drivers at north end of Keller Street (west side of channel, dead-ends at Cesar E Chavez Avenue Viaduct). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White, concrete, arched single span bridge with arched spandrels flanked on both sides with two pairs of tall, decorative, square-arched columns at each entrance. High visual quality due to arching shapes, open spandrels, and entrance columns; high intactness as the bridge remains visually whole; high unity as the design repeats similar forms and elements. 	<p>Viewed from Highway 101:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bike path would add a linear form traveling under viaduct on east side of the channel. Slight change to unity by adding new linear components below the viaduct; overall visual quality would remain high. Proposed Project would not substantially degrade views because the bike path would follow the contour of the channel bank. Option 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linear bike path would travel along west side of channel and become elevated where it would cross the river channel directly under the viaduct, adding a raised linear form and vertical posts. Decreased intactness and unity from elevated bridge crossing directly under the bridge. Visual quality would degrade to medium. Although Option 1 would detract from views of the bridge and hinder some views of the outer span, motorists on Highway 101 would continue to experience fleeting views of the bridge. Therefore, views of the bridge would not be substantially degraded. Option 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elevated bike path would travel along center of river channel, adding raised linear form and vertical posts. Decreased intactness and unity from the elevated bridge traveling under the viaduct along the channel center. Visual quality would diminish to medium. Although Option 2 would detract from views of the bridge, Option 2 would not hinder views of the bridge and motorists on Highway 101 would continue to experience fleeting views of the bridge. Therefore, views of the bridge from Highway 101 would not be substantially degraded.

Table 4-2. Potential Changes to Visual Character and Visual Quality of Historic Resources

HR*	Description	Public Views/Viewers	Existing Visual Character/Quality	Change in Visual Character/Quality
				<p>Viewed from north end of Keller Street:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Option 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Elevated bike path along west side of channel would cross under bridge and add linear forms and vertical posts. – Visual quality would decrease by reducing intactness and unity with addition of new elements, resulting in medium visual quality. Although Option 1 would interrupt closest views of bridge, Option 1 would not entirely hinder views of the bridge. Motorists and pedestrians along Keller Street would continue to experience views of the bridge. Therefore, views of the bridge from Keller Street would not be substantially degraded. ▪ Option 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Elevated bike path along the center of channel would add linear forms and vertical posts. – Visual quality would decrease by reducing intactness and unity with the addition of new elements, resulting in medium visual quality. Although Option 2 would interrupt farther views of bridge, Option 2 would not entirely hinder views of the bridge. Motorists and pedestrians along Keller Street would continue to experience views of the bridge. Therefore, views of the bridge from Keller Street would not be substantially degraded.
35	First Street Viaduct Bridge ID 14	<p>Travelers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Highway 101 bridge, looking south. ▪ Southbound North Meyers Street, east side of channel. ▪ Fourth Street Viaduct, looking north. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ White, concrete, arched double-span bridge with central pier and open spandrels with two pairs of tall, decorative columns with arched openings at each entrance. Some graffiti on arches. ▪ High visual quality due to arching shapes and open spandrels; high intactness as the bridge remains visually whole; high unity as the design repeats similar forms and elements. 	<p>Viewed from Highway 101 bridge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – New linear form would travel under the First Street Viaduct, just below top of east bank of channel. Additional views of the ramp farther west, above railroad tracks that would turn west at First Street Viaduct, would not affect views of the bridge. – Slight change to unity by adding new linear components below viaduct; overall visual quality would remain high. Proposed Project would not substantially degrade views because the bike path, in view of the viaduct, would follow the contour of channel bank. ▪ Option 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – New elevated linear form along west side of channel would travel under the First Street bridge and two elevated ramps to connect with the west side of the viaduct deck. – Change to unity by adding new elevated linear components on the east side of the bridge, but overall visual quality would remain high. Option 1 would interrupt but not entirely hinder closest views of the bridge, with no substantial degradation of views. ▪ Option 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Elevated bike path would introduce new vertical posts and several horizontal lines that travel down the center of channel, forming a T-intersection in front of the First Street Viaduct and branching east and west, creating 90-degree turns and traveling along the east and west banks. The west route would be elevated over the train tracks and turn west at First Street. The east route would travel above the east bank and under the First Street Viaduct. – T-intersection would reduce intactness and unity of views of the viaduct, reducing visual quality to medium. T-intersection would hinder views of the viaduct, which would still be visible below the elevated path. Option 2 would interrupt but not hinder views of the viaduct, with no substantial degradation of views.

Table 4-2. Potential Changes to Visual Character and Visual Quality of Historic Resources

HR*	Description	Public Views/Viewers	Existing Visual Character/Quality	Change in Visual Character/Quality
				<p>Viewed from North Meyers Street:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Linear forms of the elevated bike path and vertical supports over railroad tracks would hinder views of the viaduct. – Visual quality would diminish to medium due to decreased intactness and unity. The Proposed Project would interrupt, but not entirely hinder, views of the bridge. Motorists and pedestrians would continue to experience views of the bridge from North Meyers Street. Therefore, views of the bridge from North Meyers Street would not be substantially degraded. ▪ Option 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Linear forms of elevated bike path would be visible on west side of channel but slightly notable due to distance. – Visual quality would diminish to medium due to the decreased intactness and unity. Option 1 would interrupt, but not entirely hinder the farthest views of viaduct, with no substantial degradation of views. ▪ Option 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Linear form of the elevated bike path, T-intersection, and piers would hinder views of the viaduct. – Visual quality would diminish to low due to reduction in intactness and unity. Views would be limited to southbound travelers on road that is not a through street. Option 2 would interrupt but not entirely hinder views of the bridge, which would be visible below the bike path depending on viewing location, with no substantial degradation of views. <p>Viewed from Fourth Street:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Project: Similar to views from Highway 101 but linear form of bike path would be on the east side of channel and travel under the east side of bridge. ▪ Option 1: Similar to views from Highway 101 but project elements would be on the west side of the channel and travel under the west side of the bridge. ▪ Option 2: Similar to Option 1 but the linear elements would not be elevated. ▪ No substantial degradation of views of the viaduct would occur, as described for views from Highway 101.
36	Fourth Street Viaduct Bridge ID 15	<p>Travelers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First Street Viaduct, looking south. ▪ Sixth Street Viaduct, looking north, only from central arch where not obscured by tall fence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ White, concrete, single-span arched bridge with open, arched spandrels flanked by pairs of tall, wide towers with arched openings at each entrance. ▪ High visual quality due to arching shapes and open spandrels; high intactness as the bridge remains visually whole; high unity as the design repeats similar forms and elements. 	<p>Viewed from First Street Viaduct:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bike path would add a linear form traveling under the Fourth Street Viaduct, just below top of east bank of channel. – Slight reduction in intactness and unity would occur but visual quality would remain high. No substantial degradation of views would occur because the path would be slightly hidden below the eastern arch of bridge and would not obscure views of it. ▪ Options 1 and 2: Similar to Proposed Project but the bike path’s linear form would travel on the west side of bank, just below the top of the channel, with same level of impact as the Proposed Project. <p>Viewed from Sixth Street Bridge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Arched bridge and interconnecting supports would diagonally cross the river channel, with a raised ramp lowering to pass under the far east side of viaduct, introducing several new shapes and lines into the view.

Table 4-2. Potential Changes to Visual Character and Visual Quality of Historic Resources

HR*	Description	Public Views/Viewers	Existing Visual Character/Quality	Change in Visual Character/Quality
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual quality would diminish to medium because the vividness of the viaduct would decline due to the disruption in intactness and unity. Although new Project elements would hinder views of the viaduct, they would not completely block them. Views would only be available from the central part of the Sixth Street Bridge due to fencing. Impacts would not substantially degrade views of the viaduct. Options 1 and 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New linear form would travel on the west side of bank just below the top of the channel. Minimal change to visual quality would occur as the linear form would be consistent to the linear river channel and would not hinder views of the bridge. No substantial degradation of views expected because the path would be slightly obscured below the western arch of bridge and would not preclude views of it.
39	Seventh Street Viaduct Bridge ID 17	Travelers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sixth Street Viaduct, looking south. I-10, looking north. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White concrete, three-span arched bridge with two pierce in channel, horizontal row of rectangular open spandrels below bridge deck, and wide pairs of entrance columns slightly above railing height at bridge entrances. High visual quality due to arching spans and rectangular open spandrels; high intactness as the bridge remains visually whole; high unity as the design repeats similar forms and elements. 	<p>Viewed from Sixth Street Viaduct, Proposed Project/all Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linear form of bike path would travel just below the west channel bench under the far western side of the bridge arch. No change to visual quality as the linear form would be consistent with that of the linear river channel bank. No substantial degradation of views would occur because the bike path would be slightly obscured below the western arch of the bridge and would not preclude views of it. <p>Viewed from I-10:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as views from Sixth Street Viaduct.
42	Olympic Boulevard Viaduct Bridge ID 19	Travelers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I-10, looking south <p>(Views north from Washington Blvd are obscured by adjacent railroad bridge).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White concrete, three-span arched bridge with two pierce in channel; arched, open spandrels; and brown, tapered decorative columns topped with lampposts aligned with bridge piers extending above bridge deck. High visual quality due to arching spans and open spandrels; high intactness as the bridge remains visually whole; high unity as the design repeats similar forms and elements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed Project: Slightly elevated, linear form of the bike path would travel just below the west channel bench under the far western side of the bridge arch. Options 1 and 2: Similar to the Proposed Project, but the linear form of the bike path would be incised and not elevated. Proposed Project/all Options: No change to visual quality as the linear forms would be consistent with that of the linear river channel bank. No substantial degradation of views would occur because the bike path would be slightly obscured below the western arch of the bridge and would not preclude views of it.
46	Washington Boulevard Bridge Bridge ID 21	Travelers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People on commuter rail south of Washington Blvd; viewpoint is mostly above the bridge and at oblique angles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White concrete with multiple rectangular spans and angular, 90-degree forms; no open spandrels. Four piers in channel extend northward beyond the bridge deck. "The bridge is architecturally significant for its decoration: four massive pylons, paired at each end of the bridge, which carry terra cotta frieze panels" (Historic American Engineering Record 1968). The frieze panels form a horizontal row below overhanging moulding that slightly obscures them when viewed from above. High visual quality due to decorative frieze panels; high intactness as the bridge remains visually whole; high unity as the design repeats similar forms and elements. 	<p>Proposed Project/all Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linear bike path would be elevated, traveling over the west side of Washington Boulevard Bridge and under the elevated railroad (KOP 7). The linear form would be similar to that of the railroad. No change to visual quality as the vividness of the road would not change. Slight diminishing of intactness and unity by introducing a new linear form over the west end of the bridge. Southbound viewers looking east would retain views of the pylons and their decorative friezes, as the bike path would be on the opposite (east side) of them. Views of the pylons and friezes would be partially obscured for northbound travelers depending on the viewing angle, which would change as they move. In addition, the friezes would be difficult to see from above. No substantial degradation of views would occur.
52	Atlantic Boulevard Bridge Bridge ID 30	Travelers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cyclists on existing bike path, west side of river channel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White concrete, seven-span arched bridge, closed spandrels below bridge deck, wide pier walls and by end diaphragm abutments. High visual quality due to arching spans; high intactness as the bridge remains visually whole; high unity as the design repeats similar forms and elements. 	<p>Proposed Project/all Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linear bike path would travel from the top of the bank down to the channel bottom and under the far west side of the bridge No change to visual quality as the linear form would be consistent with that of the linear river channel bank.

Table 4-2. Potential Changes to Visual Character and Visual Quality of Historic Resources

HR*	Description	Public Views/Viewers	Existing Visual Character/Quality	Change in Visual Character/Quality
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Notes:

HR #*: Historic Resource Number corresponds to the resources described in Appendix H - Built-Environment Historical Resources.

As shown in Table 4-1 and Table 4-2, decreased changes in visual quality would be slight, and some changes in visual quality would be neutral and beneficial. Therefore, impacts to visual character or quality would be less than significant.

Implementation of Proposed Project elements would not change zoning, described under Section 3.4.1 and Draft EIR Section 3.11, *Land Use and Planning*. As called for in regional and local plans, the Proposed Project would consider opportunities for installation of art and/or architecturally distinctive focal points for appropriate Proposed Project elements, which would consider use of materials, color, and detailing relative to the surrounding built environment. Incorporating elements of good design would help visually enhance or improve the appearance of the river and create attractive public access to the river. Any paving materials would be light colored and pervious, and lighting would be designed to minimize light trespass. As described above, views of hillsides and from public lands and roadways would be preserved, and no scenic views, viewsheds, or historic structures would be destroyed. Any landscaping would include native, drought-tolerant plants. The aesthetics of the river's open space would not be degraded. For these reasons, O&M activities would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. Therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**.

Impact AES-4: Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day- or nighttime views in the area?

Less than significant impact. Nighttime lighting from O&M activities would be limited to those necessary for public safety. A moderate level of ambient nighttime light already exists because of the urban setting of the RSA. O&M lights would be used during the nighttime hours and would be down-shielded to reduce impacts on the night sky and adjacent properties to the extent feasible. Pursuant to PF-AES-04, *Permanent Lighting* and PF-AES-05, *Aesthetic Treatments*, Proposed Project design and ancillary path elements, such as new lighting along the path or at access points, would avoid creating substantial light or glare. Maintenance activities would have no measurable impact on light or glare because they would consist of minor actions, such as cleaning, repairing, or replacing path elements, primarily during the daytime hours. Therefore, O&M lighting is not expected to substantially alter the lighting levels in the RSA, is not expected to spill over onto adjacent properties, and would not adversely affect the clarity of nighttime views in the area. Impacts on light and glare would be less than significant.

4.3.2 Option 1

Visual impacts related to O&M would not occur or would be less than significant under Option 1. Refer to the Proposed Project findings for details.

4.3.3 Option 2

Visual impacts related to O&M would not occur or would be less than significant under Option 2. Refer to the Proposed Project findings for details.

MITIGATION MEASURES

This chapter describes the mitigation measures that will be used to avoid or reduce potential Proposed Project-related direct impacts on the environment before, during, or after Proposed Project construction and implementation and during O&M.

Mitigation measures would reduce the significance of potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Project. Mitigation measures adopted through the CEQA process would be listed in the Proposed Project's Mitigation and Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP). An MMRP is designed to ensure compliance during project implementation and is required upon a public agency's adoption after consideration of a Final EIR. In accordance with state law, an MMRP must identify the action being monitored, the responsibility for implementation, the schedule for implementation, and the mechanism that verifies monitoring is complete. Mitigation measures would also be included in the Proposed Project's applicable construction documents (for example, in plans and specifications).

Mitigation measures are feasible actions or features that mitigate, avoid, or lessen any significant effects on the environment that may result from the implementation of the Proposed Project. CEQA Section 15370 defines mitigation as follows:

- a. Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action.
- b. Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation.
- c. Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the impacted environment.
- d. Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action.
- e. Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments, including through permanent protection of such resources in the form of conservation easements.

5.1 Construction Mitigation

Proposed Project construction would not result in significant impacts on visual resources; therefore, mitigation measures are not required.

5.2 Operations and Maintenance Mitigation

Operation of the Proposed Project and its options would not result in significant impacts on visual resources. No mitigation measures are required.

5.3 Level of CEQA Significance After Mitigation

5.3.1 Construction

No mitigation measures are required for the Proposed Project or its options, Option 1 and Option 2. The impacts are less than significant.

5.3.2 Operations and Maintenance

No mitigation measures are required for the Proposed Project or its options, Option 1 and Option 2. The impacts are less than significant.

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Attachment A
Key Observation Point Existing Views and Simulations

Figure A-1. KOP 1: SR-110 Looking North, Existing and Simulated Views

Existing Conditions



Simulated View, Proposed Project and Options



Figure A-2. KOP 2: Elysian Park Grandview Point, Looking South, Existing and Simulated Views

Existing Conditions



Simulated View, Proposed Project



Figure A-2. KOP 2: Elysian Park Grandview Point, Looking South, Existing and Simulated Views

Simulated View, Option 1



Simulated View, Option 2



Figure A-3. KOP 3: Albion Riverside Park, Looking Southwest, Existing and Simulated Views

Existing Conditions



Simulated View, Proposed Project



Simulated View, Option 1



Figure A-3. KOP 3: Albion Riverside Park, Looking Southwest, Existing and Simulated Views

Simulated View, Option 2



Figure A-4. KOP 4: William Meade Apartment Buildings, Looking Southeast, Existing and Simulated Views

Existing Conditions and Proposed Project



Simulated View, Option 1



Simulated View, Option 2



Figure A-5. KOP 5: Cesar E. Chavez Avenue Viaduct, Looking North, Existing and Simulated Views

Existing Conditions



Simulated View, Proposed Project



Figure A-5. KOP 5: Cesar E. Chavez Avenue Viaduct, Looking North, Existing and Simulated Views

Simulated View, Option 1



Simulated View, Option 2



Figure A-6. KOP 7¹: Washington Boulevard Bridge, Looking West, Existing and Simulated Views

Existing Conditions



Simulated View, Proposed Project and Options



¹ No existing conditions photo or simulation exists for KOP 6.

Figure A-7. KOP 8: Commercial Area at Bandini Boulevard and Soto Street, Looking Southeast, Existing and Simulated Views

Existing Conditions



Simulated View, Proposed Project and Options with Truss Bridge



Simulated View, Proposed Project and Options with Arch Bridge



Attachment B
Federal Highway Administration
Visual Quality Rating Worksheets

FHWA Visual Quality Evaluation

Project :	LA River Path		
Key View:	1		
Location:	34° 4'46.05"N / 118°13'37.43"W: Spiral pedestrian staircase on west side of Arroyo Seco Parkway (State Route 110)		
Orientation:	North		
Date:	May 17, 2021		
Viewers:	Activity:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreational	<input type="checkbox"/> Residential
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Business/Commuter	
	Number:	Several	Duration of View: Short-term (<10 mins)
View captures pedestrians walking the spiral staircase between the two differently elevated travel lanes of the bridge conveying Arroyo Seco Parkway (Highway 110) over the LA River, and highway passengers in westbound vehicles (eastbound views are mostly blocked by westbound elevation). High number of viewers (travelers) considered sensitive due to close proximity and scenic byway designation of Arroyo Seco Parkway. Pedestrians would have views of longest duration and impact.			

Visual Quality

Vividness (memorability, striking and distinctive visual pattern)

Component	Existing Description (form, line, color, and texture)	Existing Score*	Description with Proposed Project (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 1 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 2 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Design Option (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*
Landform	A steep slope in the immediate foreground to the west (left) shows signs of erosion; the slope flattens above the river channel wall (not visible) where a faint dirt path is seen. Topography is raised on the opposite channel wall and rises as a low hill in the middleground. Purple-hued mountains are visible in the background to the left but are partly obscured by fog, lending a slightly ethereal effect. The hill and mountains are mildly striking but visually subordinate to other elements in the view.	5.25	No change.	5.25	Same as Proposed Project.	5.25	Same as Proposed Project.	5.25		
Vegetation	A thin, willowy deciduous tree with spiky dark green foliage occupies the center of the view. Low, lighter green trees and shrubs cling to the foreground slope and are interspersed with tangled, rust-colored grasses that appear dead or dormant. A handful of deciduous trees flank each side of the view farther into the foreground. Trees appear on the hillside as dark green rounded forms. Although it interjects natural elements into the view, the vegetation is not particularly striking or memorable.	3.50	The thin deciduous tree in the center of the view is removed. Although its central position lends it some prominence, the tree is unmemorable. The tree is also outside the right-of-way of the Arroyo Seco Parkway, a Scenic Byway, the underside of which is visible at the top of this view.	3.25	Same as Proposed Project.	3.25	Same as Proposed Project.	3.25		
Water	A thin, flat, silvery layer of water is visible in the channel in the center of the view, partially blocked by the central tree. The water reflects some of the bridge elements above it and is moderately distinctive as a natural feature among several human-made elements.	4.00	The water is partially obscured by the new elevated path, but slightly more water is visible due to removing the center tree.	4.00	Same as Proposed Project.	4.00	Same as Proposed Project.	4.00		
Human-Made	The underside of the Arroyo Seco Parkway bridge deck and supporting column create a heavy roof-like presence at the top and right side of the view. A railroad bridge carrying dual tracks is a prominent feature on the south (right) side, creating strong vertical lines that lead the eye into the scene. Small buildings on the hillside are mostly indiscernible. Two concrete highway bridges create slightly diverging horizontal lines that partially block views of the water and hill. A highway ramp's concrete railing curves into the view to the left. Concrete river channel walls detract from the water's naturalness. Graffiti is evident on some of the bridge structures. These elements lack memorable or distinctive design patterns or features.	3.75	The bold, curving shape of the new path, the pattern created by its railings, and its bright white color are a striking additions to the view and slightly increase its memorability.	4.00	Same as Proposed Project.	4.00	Same as Proposed Project.	4.00		
Total		4.13		4.13		4.13		4.13		#DIV/0!

Intactness (integrity of visual order, free from encroachment)

Component	Existing Description (form, line, color, and texture)	Existing Score*	Description with Proposed Project (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 1 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 2 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Design Option (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*
Integrity of Visual Order (Inter-relationships of Visual Patterns)	The order of patterns, particularly the many diverging horizontal and vertical lines, contrasting textures between vegetation and concrete, and bulk of the overhead bridge deck, generally lack an integral visual relationship. The disparate textures and colors of the vegetated slope in the foreground, which occupies a large area of view, create a disorderly and somewhat neglected appearance.	3.00	Although the rail patterns are different, the new path shares similar visual elements and order with the other bridges in the view.	3.00	Same as Proposed Project.	3.00	Same as Proposed Project.	3.00		
Lack of Encroachment	The bridge deck at the top of the view creates a dark intrusion with a heavy presence. Horizontal bridges in the foreground encroach upon views of the more distant hills and mountains, and form a dividing line. The railroad bridge and tracks encroach upon views of the river and disrupt the curving line formed by the waterway. The central tree, although a natural feature, blocks views of the river.	2.50	The new path seamlessly curves around, through, and above the four existing bridges while maintaining a consistent elevation, and is of a similar scale and mass. Therefore, it is a compatible visual element and does not encroach upon the view.	2.50	Same as Proposed Project.	2.50	Same as Proposed Project.	2.50		
Total		2.75		2.75		2.75		2.75		#DIV/0!

Unity (elements join together, coherent pattern, compositional harmony)

Component	Existing Description (form, line, color, and texture)	Existing Score*	Description with Proposed Project (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 1 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 2 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Design Option (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*
Compositional Harmony	The highway bridge deck at the top of the view helps frame the scene but creates a lopsided composition. There is no visual relationship between the developed and natural elements and landform, particularly in the foreground. The central tree also shares no visual relationship with the other vegetation. Although the most dominant developed elements are bridges, they lack visually interrelated components. The vegetation on the foreground slope creates a chaotic and jumbled appearance. The horizon lines and forms of distant hills and mountains are somewhat symmetrical and balance the farther view.	3.50	The new path integrates the human-made elements and helps balance the view. The path's curve follows the curve of the river channel and draws the eye to the water and the pier of the central bridge. Its slightly curving form echoes the curve of the highway ramp to the left and the distant hills, and is a harmonious contrast to the otherwise straight lines of the other bridges. The path occupies an open space that creates an imbalance and unifies the various elements in the view.	4.75	Same as Proposed Project.	4.75	Same as Proposed Project.	4.75		
Total		3.50		4.75		4.75		4.75		0.00

Overall Visual Quality Score

Overall Existing Visual Quality Score **3.46**

Proposed Project Score **3.88**

Option 1 Score **3.88**

Option 2 Score **3.88**

Design Option Score **#DIV/0!**

*Scores/Rating are based on the following scale:
7 = Very High, 6 = High, 5 = Moderately High, 4 = Medium, 3 = Moderately Low, 2 = Low, 1 = Very Low, 0 = None

**Distance Zones are described as: Foreground (0 to 0.25 mile), Middleground (0.25 to 0.75 mile), and Background (0.75 mile and beyond)

FHWA Visual Quality Evaluation			
Project :	LA River Path		
Key View:	2		
Location:	34° 4'48.56"N / 118°13'41.73"W: Elysian Park Grand View Point		
Orientation:	South		
Date:	June 2, 2021		
Viewers:	Activity:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreational <input type="checkbox"/> Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Business/Commuter	
	Number:	Several	Duration of View: Medium-Term (10 mins-1 hr)
Grand View Point; high number of viewers (recreationists) considered sensitive due to park setting and elevated viewpoint, making it an uncommon scene in the area. View duration, attention, and focus would vary for individual viewers.			

Visual Quality										
Vividness (memorability, striking and distinctive visual pattern)										
Component	Existing Description (form, line, color, and texture)	Existing Score*	Description with Proposed Project (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 1 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 2 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Design Option (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*
Landform	Horizon line is essentially flat. A small, undeveloped hill in foreground to the west (right) is mostly absorbed by the background landscape, which diminishes its prominence. Despite the flat horizon, the elevated viewpoint provides sweeping views of the landscape.	5.00	No change.	5.00	No change.	5.00	No change.	5.00		
Vegetation	Several dark green trees of varying textures occupy the foreground hill and are prominent natural elements due to proximity and aggregation. Landscaped trees scattered farther within the urban landscape appear as small, rounded clumps due to distance and are not memorable.	4.00	No change.	4.00	No change.	4.00	No change.	4.00		
Water	A narrow ribbon of dark water occupies the bottom of the river channel, creating an irregularly edged diagonal line that draws the eye through the scene from the lower left to the center right.	3.00	No change.	3.00	Water in the channel in the foreground is slightly obscured by the new path crossing the channel.	2.90	Water in the channel in the foreground is slightly obscured by the new path crossing the channel.	2.90		
Human-Made	The wide, pale concrete river channel is a prominent visual element that cuts diagonally through this predominantly urban view from foreground to middleground. The channel's wide swath is a striking visual element, and is crossed by road and rail bridges. Several blocky buildings of various heights occupy the majority of this urban view, and are more prominent on the east (left) side, such as a distant high rise that draws the eye by disrupting the horizon line.	4.50	Except for a slight curve, the new path roughly parallels the river channel and railroad, following existing lines that converge at a similar vanishing point. Although it is bright white, the path does not stand out as a noticeable element in the landscape and is therefore not particularly striking or memorable, with no noticeable change to vividness.	4.50	The new path introduces several linear components into the landscape. The path is most noticeable where it crosses the channel in the foreground, and is visible on the east (left) side of the channel where it rises beyond the existing bridge. A new arch bridge in the middleground adds a noticeable curved, horizontal line across the river. The path takes a 180-degree turn to the east side of the new bridge. The path is also visible as it rises beyond this bridge. All of these varying lines and forms create a somewhat memorable element due to the high visibility of its white color against darker objects.	4.75	The new path introduces linear components that primarily parallel the edges of the river channel, and are most noticeable where the path crosses the channel in the foreground. Although it is bright white, the path is not particularly striking or memorable.	4.60		
Total		4.13		4.13		4.16		4.13		#DIV/0!

Intactness (integrity of visual order, free from encroachment)										
Component	Existing Description (form, line, color, and texture)	Existing Score*	Description with Proposed Project (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 1 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 2 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Design Option (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*
Integrity of Visual Order (Inter-relationships of Visual Patterns)	The visual patterns (color, form, texture) of the undeveloped hill and trees are not integrated with those of the dense urban development that occupies most of the scene. Road and rail bridges cross the channel horizontally and diagonally, interrupting its visual continuity. Although mostly indistinguishable, the buildings lack an integrated design, particularly evident in the foreground. Various uneven patches of paint or sealant along the canal detract from its visual continuity.	3.00	The path's smooth texture is similar to the concrete river channel and its linear form follows the channel's outer edge.	3.00	The path's smooth texture is similar to that of the concrete river channel. The path intersects multiple lines with varying angles where it crosses the river channel and changes elevation. These diverging pattern elements are not visually interrelated with the landscape, as only some parallel existing linear features.	2.75	The path's smooth texture is similar to the concrete river channel. The path adds two lines that roughly parallel opposite sides of the channel banks and follow an orderly linear pattern, except for the two connecting lines in the foreground and middleground.	2.80		
Lack of Encroachment	The bridges crossing the channel interrupt its sweeping line, particularly where it curves farther from view. The warehouse-style structures on the west (right) side of the channel encroach upon the undeveloped hillside. Graffiti along the channel and on buildings in the foreground on the east (left) side of the channel encroach slightly upon the developed features. The majority of the scene in the middle and background is free from encroachment.	4.00	Although elevated, the path appears level with the concrete channel and does not encroach upon this highly developed view.	4.00	The varying diverging lines created by the new path somewhat encroach upon this developed landscape because their patterns are not particularly integrated.	3.80	Although elevated, the path appears level with the concrete channel and only minimally encroaches upon this highly developed view where it crosses the river channel.	3.90		
Total		3.50		3.50		3.28		3.35		

Unity (elements join together, coherent pattern, compositional harmony)										
Component	Existing Description (form, line, color, and texture)	Existing Score*	Description with Proposed Project (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 1 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 2 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Design Option (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*
Compositional Harmony	The warehouse-style structures on the west (right) side of the channel are not visually related with the undeveloped hillside. The scene appears somewhat chaotic and jumbled in the foreground due to a haphazardly arranged appearance, but becomes more coherent as details fade in the distance.	4.00	Because the new path roughly follows existing lines that converge at a similar vanishing point, it harmonizes with the lines created by the river channel and adjacent railroad. Its pale hue also blends in with the concrete shade of the river channel.	4.00	The new path slightly disrupts the existing compositional harmony because its varying alignments and linear forms are not particularly balanced in the landscape.	3.80	Because the new path roughly follows the edges of the river channel, it is somewhat harmonious with the landscape composition.	3.90		
Total		4.00		4.00		3.80		3.90		

Overall Visual Quality Score											
Overall Existing Visual Quality Score		3.88	Proposed Project Score		3.88	Option 1 Score		3.75	Option 2 Score		3.79

*Scores/Rating are based on the following scale:
7 = Very High, 6 = Moderately High, 5 = High, 4 = Medium, 3 = Moderately Low, 2 = Low, 1 = Very Low, 0 = None

**Distance Zones are described as: Foreground (0 to 0.25 mile), Middleground (0.25 to 0.75 mile), and Background (0.75 mile and beyond)

FHWA Visual Quality Evaluation			
Project :	LA River Path		
Key View:	3		
Location:	34° 4'8.60"N / 118° 13'23.33"W: Albion Riverside Park soccer field		
Orientation:	Southwest		
Date:	June 2, 2021		
Viewers:	Activity:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreational <input type="checkbox"/> Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Business/Commuter	
	Number:	Several	Duration of View: Medium-Term (10 mins-1 hr)
Sensitive viewers include recreationists using the soccer field, whose attention would vary based on activity. Spectator seating is limited to a few metal benches facing the field. Sensitive viewers also include recreationists/pedestrians walking the surrounding paths.			

Visual Quality										
Vividness (memorability, striking and distinctive visual pattern)										
Component	Existing Description (form, line, color, and texture)	Existing Score*	Description with Proposed Project (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 1 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 2 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Design Option (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*
Landform	Landform is mostly flat except for a small, slightly imperceptible grassed berm left of center beyond the soccer field.	1.00	No change.	1.00	The berm is slightly obscured by a support beam for the path but the change is mostly imperceptible.	1.00	No change.	1.00		
Vegetation	Two medium-sized dark green evergreen trees and smaller trees and shrubs are visible beyond the soccer field but are not memorable.	3.50	Some shrubs are slightly obscured by the path as it descends to the south (left).	3.50	Vegetation, particularly the evergreen tree to the left, is partly obscured by the new path structure.	3.25	No change.	3.25		
Water	None	n/a	No change.	n/a	No change.	n/a	No change.	n/a		
Human-Made	The soccer field turf occupies the lower half of the view and includes two different vivid shades of green that stand out against other elements. Low buildings occupy the middleground, beyond which the skyscrapers of Downtown Los Angeles are visible. The skyline is partly obscured by haze and imposing lattice transmission towers and lines that occupy most of the sky in the immediate foreground and middleground. The mass, height, and cool, muted colors of the cluster of distant skyscrapers are moderately memorable.	4.25	The bright white diagonal horizontal lines and vertical support columns formed by the path in the immediate foreground are a prominent visual element, but generally remains below the skyline. The distant skyscrapers remain unobscured and the primary focal point	4.00	The bright white sloping and curving horizontal lines of the path in the immediate foreground are a prominent visual element, particularly where skylined. These lines and the vertical support columns partially block views of Downtown Los Angeles, especially to the south (left) where the path spirals downward and creates three horizontal lines. The path becomes a memorable element but the memorability of the city skyline is reduced.	3.50	The path's white sloping horizontal lines are a noticeable but not overwhelming visual element that partially obscures views of Downtown Los Angeles, notably to the north (right) where the path is higher. Buildings farther south help visually absorb the path, where it is less discernable. The memorability of the skyline is only minimally degraded.	3.75		
Total		2.92		2.83		2.58		2.67		#DIV/0!

Intactness (integrity of visual order, free from encroachment)										
Component	Existing Description (form, line, color, and texture)	Existing Score*	Description with Proposed Project (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 1 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 2 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Design Option (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*
Integrity of Visual Order (Inter-relationships of Visual Patterns)	The manicured turf and repeating hues create an integrated, sharply delineated color and texture pattern that contrasts with the built environment beyond. The landscaped trees and shrubs help transition between the turf and distant buildings. The cluster of high-rise buildings to the right of the view demonstrate similar mass and verticality, but the remaining buildings have a more disorderly arrangement. The various patterns created by the lattice towers and lines lack order and uniformity.	3.25	The path's slightly sloping horizontal lines somewhat parallel the edge formed by the soccer field and slightly extend the curve formed by the black chainlink fence on the south (left) side of the view around the scene to the north (right). The path's thick support columns are also consistent with the forms of the skyscrapers beyond them.	3.25	The path's strong horizontal and vertical lines and repeating pattern created by the railings do not join together with the various patterns beyond it, as well as the strong, broad patterns in the turf. The result is decreased integrity of visual order.	2.50	The path's strong, sloping horizontal line and repeating pattern do not include any pattern elements that exist within the view, resulting in slightly decreased integrity of visual order.	2.75		
Lack of Encroachment	The telephone poles and overhead transmission towers and lines encroach noticeably onto the scene, partially blocking views of downtown and filling the blue sky almost entirely.	2.00	Although a new human-made element in this view, the horizontal form created by the path helps obscure some cluttered elements beyond it.	2.25	The path encroaches upon views of downtown and adds another disparate element into the view that already includes several intrusions.	1.50	The path slightly encroaches upon views of downtown, particularly in the center of the scene.	1.75		
Total		2.63		2.75		2.00		2.25		#DIV/0!

Unity (elements join together, coherent pattern, compositional harmony)										
Component	Existing Description (form, line, color, and texture)	Existing Score*	Description with Proposed Project (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 1 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 2 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Design Option (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*
Compositional Harmony	The upper and lower half of the view lack a unifying visual relationship and compositional harmony. The top half is cluttered and jumbled due to the transmission towers and lines, as well as some randomly arranged buildings, while the bottom half is smooth and unencumbered.	3.00	the horizontal form created by the path helps obscure some cluttered elements beyond it, slightly increasing compositional harmony but to a mostly undetectable degree given the number of visually disjointed elements in the view.	3.00	The path's sloping lines and concentration of structures to the south (left) create an unbalanced scene, and the contrasting patterns against the background add visual clutter.	2.50	The path's horizontal lines somewhat mimic those of the overhead transmission lines, and the path's higher elevation to the right somewhat balances the vertical elements (telephone poles, trees) to the left. However, the change is mostly imperceptible.	2.70		
Total		3.00		3.00		2.50		2.70		0.00

Overall Visual Quality Score														
Overall Existing Visual Quality Score		2.85	Proposed Project Score		2.86	Option 1 Score		2.36	Option 2 Score		2.54	Design Option Score		#DIV/0!

*Scores/Rating are based on the following scale:
7 = Very High, 6 = Moderately High, 5 = High, 4 = Medium, 3 = Moderately Low, 2 = Low, 1 = Very Low, 0 = None

**Distance Zones are described as: Foreground (0 to 0.25 mile), Middleground (0.25 to 0.75 mile), and Background (0.75 mile and beyond)

FHWA Visual Quality Evaluation			
Project :	LA River Path		
Key View:	4		
Location:	34° 3'45.37"N / 118°13'41.52"W: William Meade apartment buildings		
Orientation:	FHWA Visual Quality Evaluation		
Date:	August 20, 2021		
Viewers:	Activity:	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Business/Commuter	
	Number:	Several	Duration of View: Long-Term (>1 hr)
Sensitive viewers include residents of the William Meade apartment buildings on Bolero Lane, west side of LA River, north side of railroad tracks.			

Visual Quality										
Vividness (memorability, striking and distinctive visual pattern)										
Component	Existing Description (form, line, color, and texture)	Existing Score*	Description with Proposed Project (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 1 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 2 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Design Option (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*
Landform	Landform is flat in the immediate foreground that includes lawn and street, beyond which a flat berm rises approximately 10 feet to support railroad tracks that create a horizontal line through the majority of the view.	1.00	No change.	1.00	No change.	1.00	No change.	1.00		
Vegetation	Bright green lawn occupies the immediate foreground, with a medium-sized deciduous bright green tree and lower shrubs to the left. Medium-sized green shrubs line the middle and top of berm to the right of center. Smaller reddish and yellow shrubs are also interspersed along the berm, lending a dormant appearance.	3.00	No change.	3.00	No change.	3.00	No change.	3.00		
Water	None	n/a	No change.	n/a	No change.	n/a	No change.	n/a		
Human-Made	A sidewalk, paved street, and parked cars occupy the immediate foreground, indicative of a suburban setting. A black metal fence separates the street from the railroad berm, upon which a railroad track creates a horizontal line. Multiple utilitarian and industrial elements are visible beyond the berm, particularly large lattice towers and boxy buildings associated with the railroad that are prominent vertical elements. Utility lines crisscross the blue sky that occupies roughly half the view. The industrial elements, while vivid, contrast sharply with the residential elements.	2.00	No change.	2.00	The light-hued path creates a horizontal line behind the lattice towers that reflects the line of the berm and black fence. The path is not particularly noticeable due to its light color, horizontal line, and distance, with no meaningful change to vividness.	2.00	The path is a prominent horizontal feature roughly dividing the sky in half and is memorable, but not necessarily positive, due to its close proximity and scale.	1.80		
Total		2.00		2.00		2.00		1.93		#DIV/0!

Intactness (integrity of visual order, free from encroachment)										
Component	Existing Description (form, line, color, and texture)	Existing Score*	Description with Proposed Project (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 1 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 2 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Design Option (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*
Integrity of Visual Order (Inter-relationships of Visual Patterns)	The various visual patterns and textures, particularly the lattice towers, fence, and vegetation, are not integrated and lack visual order. The residential and industrial elements are not visually integrated and lack visual cohesion; the berm is a sharp dividing line between the two. Vegetation contrasts with the stark industrial elements that dominate the scene.	1.75	No change.	1.75	The path's horizontal line mimics that of the top of the berm and fence, slightly, but not measurably, supporting the integrity of visual order.	1.75	Similar to Option 1, the path's horizontal line mimics that of the top of the berm and fence, slightly supporting integrity of visual order. However, the pattern elements, which are more evident in this closer view, are not integrated with the surrounding features.	1.75		
Lack of Encroachment	The utilitarian and industrial elements, particularly the lattice towers, encroach upon the residential setting in the immediate foreground.	1.50	No change.	1.50	Although the path somewhat encroaches upon distant views of the sky, the change is negligible due to the extent of existing intrusion.	1.40	The path and its vertical supports encroach upon views of the sky.	1.25		
Total		1.63		1.63		1.58		1.50		#DIV/0!

Unity (elements join together, coherent pattern, compositional harmony)										
Component	Existing Description (form, line, color, and texture)	Existing Score*	Description with Proposed Project (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 1 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 2 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Design Option (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*
Compositional Harmony	The view is mostly unbalanced, although the tree to the left is somewhat balanced by the building to the right. The placement of the lattice towers is random, lacking compositional harmony. The vertical elements and utility lines lend a chaotic and jumbled appearance.	1.50	No change.	1.50	The path ties the left and center areas of the view together, slightly unifying it. However, the addition of another human-made element among the various lattice towers increases visual clutter to a minimal degree due to distance.	1.50	The path ties the left and right sides of the view together, unifying both sides. However, the scene remains unbalanced and the contrasting patterns in this view are increased, adding to visual clutter.	1.25		
Total		1.50		1.50		1.50		1.25		0.00

Overall Visual Quality Score									
Overall Existing Visual Quality Score	1.71	Proposed Project Score	1.71	Option 1 Score	1.69	Option 2 Score	1.56	Design Option Score	#DIV/0!

*Scores/Rating are based on the following scale:
 7 = Very High, 6 = Moderately High, 5 = High, 4 = Medium, 3 = Moderately Low, 2 = Low, 1 = Very Low, 0 = None

**Distance Zones are described as: Foreground (0 to 0.25 mile), Middleground (0.25 to 0.75 mile), and Background (0.75 mile and beyond)

FHWA Visual Quality Evaluation			
Project :	LA River Path		
Key View:	5		
Location:	34° 3'17.07"N / 118°13'35.05"W: Cesar Chavez Bridge		
Orientation:	North		
Date:	June 2, 2021		
Viewers:	Activity:	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreational <input type="checkbox"/> Residential <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Business/Commuter	
	Number:	Several	Duration of View: Short-term (<10 mins)
Sensitive viewers include primarily commuters, including transit users, traveling across Cesar Chavez Bridge.			

Visual Quality										
Vividness (memorability, striking and distinctive visual pattern)										
Component	Existing Description (form, line, color, and texture)	Existing Score*	Description with Proposed Project (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 1 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 2 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Design Option (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*
Landform	Slightly undulating, low hills are visible in the distance, partially obscured by haze, particularly to the east (right).	3.00	No change.	3.00	No change.	3.00	No change.	1.00		
Vegetation	The distant hills are mostly covered with trees, but are indistinguishable due to distance and appear as landcover. A handful of trees are visible in the foreground to the west (left) but appear small and are absorbed by background elements. Small clumps of grass line the river channel to the east (right).	2.00	No change.	2.00	No change.	2.00	No change.	3.25		
Water	A narrow, flat, dark ribbon of water is visible in the channel, making an "S" curve in the center of the view.	2.00	Views of the water are partially obscured by the elevated bike path.	1.50	Views of the water are more obscured from the presence of two elevated bike path structures.	1.25	Changes are similar to Proposed Project.	1.50		
Human-Made	The curving, pale-hued concrete river channel is a dominant element, occupying much of the foreground. The concrete has been painted over in lighter-colored patches, creating a disorderly appearance. Colorful graffiti covers a wall in the immediate foreground. Railroad tracks roughly parallel both sides of the channel. Low, industrial buildings and a tall parking garage fill the remainder of the foreground. Tall lattice towers and connecting wires also parallel the channel, creating a jumbled appearance against the distant hills and sky.	3.75	The white elevated bike path is a prominent visual element due to its proximity because it creates a mostly horizontal line in the immediate foreground. The patterns in the railing are evident, and the columns are noticeable vertical features. A sweeping curve of the new path is also visible to the east (right) where it bends down into the river channel. The slim arch of the path's bridge over the river channel is visible just above the new foreground elements. The nearness of the structures make them a memorable feature.	4.50	Changes are similar to Proposed Project but more pronounced because an additional path is visible on the perimeter of the channel's east side, following the curve of the channel. The arch of the bridge in Proposed Project is not included.	4.60	Changes are similar to Proposed Project but without the arched bridge and the path follows the west (left) side of the river channel. More of the structure is visible in the immediate foreground where it curves, made evident primarily by the staggered support columns.	4.50		
Total		2.69		2.75		2.71		2.56		#DIV/0!

Intactness (integrity of visual order, free from encroachment)										
Component	Existing Description (form, line, color, and texture)	Existing Score*	Description with Proposed Project (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 1 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 2 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Design Option (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*
Integrity of Visual Order (Inter-relationships of Visual Patterns)	The sinuous curve of the channel creates an orderly flow through the foreground, but the various built elements, particularly the transmission towers, lack visual order due to their contrasting patterns.	3.00	The patterns in the bridge railings contrast with the variety of patterns in the transmission lattice towers and are not inter-related with other visual patterns in this view.	2.75	Changes are similar to Proposed Project, but because more path elements are visible, they share an inter-relationship together. The convergence of path elements to the right lead the eye to its continuation into the distance.	2.70	Changes are similar to Proposed Project, but somewhat more pronounced due to the perceived random placement and dissimilar size of the vertical supports.	2.40		
Lack of Encroachment	Although the setting is mostly developed and modified (that is, the river has been channelized), the transmission towers encroach upon the view due to their large numbers and vertical prominence, which interfere with distant views and occupy much of the sky.	1.75	The close proximity of the new elevated bike path encroaches upon views of the river channel. The slim arch of the new bridge minimally encroaches upon the distant hills due to its small perceived size, but stands out due to its light color.	1.75	The close proximity of the two new elevated bike path structures encroaches upon views of the river channel, particularly in the immediate foreground.	1.50	Similar to Proposed Project, the close proximity of the new elevated bike path encroaches upon views of the river channel. Unlike Proposed Project, the arched bridge is not included, but the additional vertical posts in the immediate foreground further encroach upon the view.	1.75		
Total		2.38		2.25		2.10		2.08		#DIV/0!

Unity (elements join together, coherent pattern, compositional harmony)										
Component	Existing Description (form, line, color, and texture)	Existing Score*	Description with Proposed Project (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 1 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 2 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Design Option (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*
Compositional Harmony	The curving river channel in the center of the view and the distant hills create a slight sense of balance by roughly dividing the view into left and right sides. The water and the channel lead the eye through the scene to the farther hills. Although they generally parallel the channel, the transmission towers appear randomly placed and disrupt compositional harmony. The graffiti in the immediate foreground adds visual clutter.	3.00	The new path elements interrupt the existing balanced composition and leads the eye away from the distant hills. Although the design is open and the lines are minimal, the path has a somewhat heavy appearance due to its close proximity.	2.75	Similar to Proposed Project, the new elements interrupt the existing balanced composition. The sweeping curve of the lower structure mimics the lines in the upper one and helps harmonize the view by following the bend of the river channel and leading the eye farther into the scene.	2.80	Similar to Proposed Project, the new elements interrupt the existing balanced composition. The overlapping structures create a sense of clutter. The edge of the curve to the east (right) appears to abruptly end in space. The path continues north along the west (left) side of the channel, leading the eye toward the distant hills to a slight degree because its color is not particularly noticeable beside the concrete channel.	2.70		
Total		3.00		2.75		2.80		2.70		0.00

Overall Visual Quality Score														
Overall Existing Visual Quality Score		2.69	Proposed Project Score		2.58	Option 1 Score		2.54	Option 2 Score		2.45	Design Option Score		#DIV/0!

*Scores/Rating are based on the following scale:
 7 = Very High, 6 = Moderately High, 5 = High, 4 = Medium, 3 = Moderately Low, 2 = Low, 1 = Very Low, 0 = None

**Distance Zones are described as: Foreground (0 to 0.25 mile), Middleground (0.25 to 0.75 mile), and Background (0.75 mile and beyond)

FHWA Visual Quality Evaluation

Project :	LA River Path		
Key View:	6		
Location:	34° 2'44.46"N / 118° 13'54.86"W: One Santa Fe Apartments		
Orientation:	East		
Date:	N/A		
Viewers:	Activity:	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreational	<input type="checkbox"/> Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Business/Commuter
	Number:	Several	Duration of View: <input type="checkbox"/> Long-Term (>1 hr)
Apartment buildings west side of river between 1st and 4th Streets along Santa Fe Ave -- NO PHOTO OR SIMULATION, NO PUBLIC ACCESS			

Visual Quality

Vividness (memorability, striking and distinctive visual pattern)

Component	Existing Description (form, line, color, and texture)	Existing Score*	Description with Proposed Project (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 1 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 2 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Design Option (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*
Landform	Landform is flat except for difference between channel depth and ground level.	1.00	No change.	1.00	No change.	1.00	No change.	1.00		
Vegetation	Deciduous trees and palm trees are visible on the horizon but appear small due to distance. No other noticeable vegetation is present.	1.00	No change.	1.00	No change.	1.00	No change.	1.00		
Water	A thin, dark swath of water is visible in the river channel; however, visibility varies based on viewing location in the apartment building.	1.00	No change.	1.00	Views of the water are partially obscured by the presence of an elevated bike path on the west bank of the river channel.	1.00	No change.	1.00		
Human-Made	Ten to over 20 railroad tracks occupy land between the apartment buildings and the river channel. Although somewhat transient, parked railroad cars obscure views of the river channel. Construction is occurring on the east side of the apartment buildings just south of 1st Street, where large piles of dirt, fencing, construction vehicles, and construction material is present. The east flank of the concrete river channel is visible to varying degrees based on viewer elevation. Tall lattice-style transmission towers and connecting lines parallel both sides of the river channel. Low industrial buildings, some covered with graffiti, occupy the opposite (east) side of the channel. To the northeast and southeast, the apartments have views toward the iconic 1st Street, 4th Street, and 6th Street Bridges.	2.00	An incised bike path on the east bank of the river channel may be partially visible from some viewing locations in the apartment building.	2.00	An elevated bike path gains elevation as it travels north along the western side of the river channel to provide a connection to the road surface of the 1st Street Bridge, partially obscuring views from some apartment viewing locations toward the historic bridge structure.	1.50	An incised bike path on the west bank of the river channel would likely not be visible from most locations in the apartment building.	2.00		
Total		1.25		1.25		1.13		1.25		#DIV/0!

Intactness (integrity of visual order, free from encroachment)

Component	Existing Description (form, line, color, and texture)	Existing Score*	Description with Proposed Project (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 1 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 2 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Design Option (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*
Integrity of Visual Order (Inter-relationships of Visual Patterns)	The view lacks integrity of visual order due to the disparate visual patterns created by the railroad tracks and railroad cars, construction equipment and activities, transmission lines, river channel bank, and industrial buildings.	1.00	The bike path's horizontal line mimics that of the river channel and railroad tracks, slightly, but not measurably, supporting the integrity of visual order.	1.00	Same as Proposed Project.	1.00	No change.	1.00		
Lack of Encroachment	The railroad tracks and cars, lattice towers, and industrial structures encroach upon the view of the river. Although temporary, the construction activities encroach as well.	1.00	Although the path somewhat encroaches upon views of the river channel, the change is negligible due to the extent of existing intrusion and the location of the bike path on the east bank of the channel.	1.00	The elevated bike path on the west bank of the river channel would partially obscure views of the LA River and the 1st Street Bridge; however, the change is negligible due to the extent of existing intrusion.	1.00	No change.	1.00		
Total		1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00		#DIV/0!

Unity (elements join together, coherent pattern, compositional harmony)

Component	Existing Description (form, line, color, and texture)	Existing Score*	Description with Proposed Project (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 1 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 2 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Design Option (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*
Compositional Harmony	The horizontal railroad tracks and row of lattice towers somewhat tie the left and right sides of the view together, but the staggered placement of the parked railroad cars and rows of transmission towers offset any compositional harmony.	1.25	The bike path runs parallel to several other features in the view, including the railroad tracks and the river channel. Impacts on compositional harmony would be negligible.	1.25	Same as Proposed Project.	1.25	No change.	1.25		
Total		1.25		1.25		1.25		1.25		0.00

Overall Visual Quality Score

Overall Existing Visual Quality Score **1.17**

Proposed Project Score **1.17**

Option 1 Score **1.13**

Option 2 Score **1.17**

Design Option Score **#DIV/0!**

*Scores/Rating are based on the following scale:
7 = Very High, 6 = Moderately High, 5 = High, 4 = Medium, 3 = Moderately Low, 2 = Low, 1 = Very Low, 0 = None

**Distance Zones are described as: Foreground (0 to 0.25 mile), Middleground (0.25 to 0.75 mile), and Background (0.75 mile and beyond)

FHWA Visual Quality Evaluation				
Project :	LA River Path			
Key View:	7			
Location:	34° 1'2.27"N / 118°13'22.08"W: Washington Boulevard Bridge			
Orientation:	West			
Date:	June 2, 2021			
Viewers:	Activity:	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreational	<input type="checkbox"/> Residential	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Business/Commuter
	Number:	Several	Duration of View:	Short-term (<10 mins)
Sensitive viewers include drivers and vehicle passengers, and pedestrians crossing the Washington Boulevard Bridge				

Visual Quality										
Vividness (memorability, striking and distinctive visual pattern)										
Component	Existing Description (form, line, color, and texture)	Existing Score*	Description with Proposed Project (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 1 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 2 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Design Option (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*
Landform	Landform is flat except for difference between channel depth and ground level.	2.50	No change.	2.50	Same as Proposed Project.	2.50	Same as Proposed Project.	2.50		
Vegetation	Vegetation consists of sporadic clumps of dry or dead weeds at the top of the river embankment and a lone palm tree that appears small due to distance in the center of the view.	1.00	No change.	1.00	Same as Proposed Project.	1.00	Same as Proposed Project.	1.00		
Water	A thin, olive green layer of water is visible to the south (left) side of the view in the bottom of the channel. Its thick, soupy appearance implies algae buildup.	2.00	No change.	2.00	Same as Proposed Project.	2.00	Same as Proposed Project.	2.00		
Human-Made	The pavement, sidewalk, railing, and light posts of the Washington Boulevard bridge occupy most of the scene. The bridge's historic-style ornamentation, particularly the light posts, contrasts with the utilitarian design of the rest of the scene. An overhead railroad bridge cuts a dark, heavy swath across the view. This bridge is supported by multiple thick, dark brown horizontal and diagonal trusses to the south (left), creating a visually dominant crisscross pattern of substantial girth supported by heavy concrete piers. Much of this bridge is covered with graffiti. The size and proximity of this bridge make it a striking, but not necessarily memorable, element. The channel is reinforced with a dark metal corrugated wall that creates a repeating vertical pattern. Another gray truss bridge is visible in the center of the view below the overhead railroad. A lattice transmission tower is a prominent vertical element, and utility lines connect to it and adjacent utility poles. The skyline of Downtown Los Angeles is partially visible to the right but is not particularly noticeable.	3.00	The new elevated bike path creates an additional prominent horizontal line across the scene almost parallel to the railroad bridge. The bright white color of its vertical posts and horizontal deck contrast against the dark railroad bridge and blue sky, introducing a vivid, slightly memorable feature into the view. However, the elevated path obscures views of the Downtown Los Angeles skyline.	3.25	Same as Proposed Project.	3.25	Same as Proposed Project.	3.25		
Total		2.13		2.19		2.19		2.19		#DIV/0!

Intactness (integrity of visual order, free from encroachment)										
Component	Existing Description (form, line, color, and texture)	Existing Score*	Description with Proposed Project (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 1 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 2 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Design Option (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*
Integrity of Visual Order (Inter-relationships of Visual Patterns)	The contrasting color, pattern design, and style, particularly of the truss bridges and Washington Boulevard bridge, lack an integral visual relationship. The strong horizontal, vertical, and crisscrossing elements in this view are not integrated.	2.00	The components of the new path do not share similar visual patterns with the existing structures, such as the railroad bridge, reinforced channel wall, and lattice tower.	1.75	Same as Proposed Project.	1.75	Same as Proposed Project.	1.75		
Lack of Encroachment	The overhead railroad bridge, farther truss bridge, corrugated metal wall, and imposing transmission tower encroach upon the historic character and design of the Washington Boulevard bridge.	1.75	Like the existing developed elements, the new elevated bike path encroaches upon the historic character and design of the Washington Boulevard bridge.	1.50	Same as Proposed Project.	1.50	Same as Proposed Project.	1.50		
Total		1.88		1.63		1.63		1.63		#DIV/0!

Unity (elements join together, coherent pattern, compositional harmony)										
Component	Existing Description (form, line, color, and texture)	Existing Score*	Description with Proposed Project (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 1 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Option 2 (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with Design Option (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*
Compositional Harmony	The multiple crisscrossing and corrugated patterns compete for the eye's attention. These dark, disparate visual elements create an unbalanced composition that is heavy to the south (left) side of the view and do not join together to create a coherent scene.	2.50	The new bridge somewhat mirrors the horizontal line of the existing railroad bridge, creating a more symmetrical balance on the right and left sides of the view.	2.75	Same as Proposed Project.	2.75	Same as Proposed Project.	2.75		
Total		2.50		2.75		2.75		2.75		0.00

Overall Visual Quality Score														
Overall Existing Visual Quality Score		2.17	Proposed Project Score		2.19	Option 1 Score		2.19	Option 2 Score		2.19	Design Option Score		#DIV/0!

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**Distance Zones are described as: Foreground (0 to 0.25 mile), Middleground (0.25 to 0.75 mile), and Background (0.75 mile and beyond)

FHWA Visual Quality Evaluation

Project :	LA River Path		
Key View:	8		
Location:	34° 0'33.92"N / 118°13'9.73"W: Commercial area at NE corner of Bandini Boulevard and Soto Street		
Orientation:	Southeast		
Date:	May 17, 2021		
Viewers:	Activity:	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreational	<input type="checkbox"/> Residential
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Business/Commuter	
	Number:	Several	Duration of View: Medium-Term (10 mins-1 hr)
Sensitive viewers are patrons of this small commercial area that includes fast-food establishments.			

Visual Quality

Vividness (memorability, striking and distinctive visual pattern)

Component	Existing Description (form, line, color, and texture)	Existing Score*	Description with All Alternatives: Truss (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with All Alternatives: Arch (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Score with Alt*	Score with Alt*
Landform	Landform is flat except for difference between channel depth and ground level.	2.00	No change.	2.00	No change.	2.00		
Vegetation	The tops of some slim deciduous trees are visible to the south (right); the southernmost trees partially block farther views. The green color and varied texture interject a contrasting, natural element to the view but are not distinctive or memorable. Brown dormant or dead grass lines the top of the river channel wall.	3.00	No change.	3.00	No change.	3.00		
Water	A thin, dark swath of water is barely discernable in the bottom of the river channel below the transmission tower.	1.50	No change.	1.50	No change.	1.50		
Human-Made	An asphalt parking lot, bordered by a chain-link fence, and parked motor vehicles occupy the immediate foreground and majority of the view. The concrete wall of the opposite bank of the river channel is visible beyond the fence. Low, pale-hued, mostly windowless warehouses, parked freight trucks, and the conical, vertical shapes of what appears to be a refinery occupy the horizon line and are in close proximity to the viewer. Tall lattice transmission towers are dominant features, and their connecting lines occupy most of the sky. None of these elements are memorable.	1.50	The bright white, diagonal patterns of the truss bridge are a prominent horizontal feature just beyond the foreground parking lot, because the bridge occupies a large area of the view. The bridge is no taller than the trees, and is of similar height to the background buildings. A slender white ramp and supporting columns rise from the bridge on the opposite side of the river channel bank. The bright color and triangular shapes of the bridge introduce a somewhat memorable element into the view.	2.50	The bridge's bright white, gracefully curving arch and fine cross-diagonal patterns created by the cables are a prominent visual feature just beyond the foreground parking lot, and occupy a large area of the view. The tall arch rises to the tops of the background transmission lines and stands out against the sky. The same slender white ramp seen with the truss option is also visible. The bright color and high curve of the bridge are a surprising, striking element in this view	3.75		
Total		2.00		2.25		2.56	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!

Intactness (integrity of visual order, free from encroachment)

Component	Existing Description (form, line, color, and texture)	Existing Score*	Description with All Alternatives: Truss (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with All Alternatives: Arch (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Score with Alt*	Score with Alt*
Integrity of Visual Order (Inter-relationships of Visual Patterns)	The patterns created by the asphalt paving, chain-link fence, and transmission towers lack an integral visual relationship. The few natural elements are not integrated with the development.	2.00	The triangular patterns slightly mimic those of the adjacent transmission lattice towers. The bridge's straight, white lines somewhat mimic those of the parking lot striping.	2.25	The curve of the arch slightly mimics the subtle curve of the parking lot, and the triangular patterns in the cables are somewhat similar to those of the transmission lattice towers.	2.50		
Lack of Encroachment	The industrial buildings, parked freight trucks, and transmission towers and lines encroach upon the distant view, particularly the forms and lines created by the overhead utilities that fill most of the gray sky. Parked cars encroach upon views of the river.	2.00	Although a new element, the bridge does not necessarily encroach upon the scene due to the landscape's highly developed setting. The view also blocks some views of the discordant visual elements in the background.	2.25	Although a new element, the bridge does not necessarily encroach upon the scene due to its open, airy design in a highly developed setting.	2.50		
Total		2.00		2.25		2.50	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!

Unity (elements join together, coherent pattern, compositional harmony)

Component	Existing Description (form, line, color, and texture)	Existing Score*	Description with All Alternatives: Truss (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Description with All Alternatives: Arch (form, line, color, and texture)	Score with Alt*	Score with Alt*	Score with Alt*
Compositional Harmony	The scene is primarily unbalanced. The cars in the immediate foreground appear large relative to other features, trees are present only to the south (right), and the varying heights and girths of the lattice towers and refinery intrude vertically and haphazardly.	1.50	The bridge's horizontal top and bottom lines are roughly parallel with the top of the chain-link fence, and create a unifying element from left to right. The ramp to the north (left) visually leads the eye to the bridge, creating a sinuous line across the view that slightly balances it.	1.75	Same as the truss option. In addition, the symmetrical curve of the arch helps balance the right and left sides of the view. The soaring arch noticeably connects both sides of the channel.	2.50		
Total		1.50		1.75		2.50	0.00	0.00

Overall Visual Quality Score

Overall Existing Visual Quality Score **1.83**

Truss Alternative Score **2.08**

Arch Alternative Score **2.52**

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