

IV. Environmental Impact Analysis

C. Aesthetics/Visual Resources

1. Introduction

This section of the Draft EIR analyzes the Proposed Project's potential impacts on aesthetics and views and is based in part on field surveys, photographic documentation, topographic analysis, and simulated composite photographs showing existing and future conditions at the Project Site. Related issues regarding light, glare and shade/shadow are addressed in Sections IV.D.1, Natural Light (Shading), and IV.D.2, Artificial Light and Glare, of this Draft EIR, although lighting is discussed briefly herein in the context of visual character. To that end, this section also includes information from the Convention and Event Center Project EIR Lighting Technical Report (Lighting Report) prepared by Arup North America, Ltd. and dated February 2012, included as Appendix K of this Draft EIR. In addition, this section incorporates an existing and proposed signage inventory provided in Appendix D of this Draft EIR.

Aesthetics refers to the overall visual character of an area or given field of view, and as such, the analysis of aesthetics focuses on the Proposed Project's visual relationship with existing and planned development within the Project Site and surrounding area. The analysis considers aspects of visual character, such as design, size, shape, the general composition of aesthetic features, including both natural and human-made features, and the relationships between these elements. The potential impacts considered within the analysis include the loss of existing aesthetic features and the introduction of contrasting features that contribute to a decline in overall visual character (e.g., the introduction of contrasting features that overpower familiar features, eliminate context or associations with history, or create visual incompatibility where there may have been apparent efforts to maintain or promote a thematic or consistent character). The analysis of the Proposed Project's potential impacts on aesthetics includes an assessment of consistency with applicable regulations and plans that address visual character.

The analysis of views assesses the Proposed Project's potential impacts on visual access to visual resources (e.g., the Downtown skyline, historic structures, mountain ridgelines, etc.). It considers the Proposed Project's physical characteristics such as building height and massing, the Project's distance from visual resources, the topography of the Project area and the physical characteristics of existing development on-site, including existing view obstructions. The analysis considers focal views (i.e., views of a

particular object, scene, setting or feature of visual interest) and panoramic views or vistas (i.e., views of a large geographic area for which the view may be wide and extend into the distance). Existing views, both of and across the Project site, are identified and considered.

2. Environmental Setting

a. Existing Conditions

(1) Aesthetics/Visual Character

(a) Project Site

The Project Site comprises approximately 68 acres within the southwestern portion of Downtown Los Angeles and is generally bound by the following major roadways: the Caltrans right-of-way adjacent to Interstate/State Route 110 (I-110/SR-110, known as the Harbor Freeway) to the west;¹ Chick Hearn Court to the north; Figueroa Street to the east; and Venice Boulevard to the south. SR-110 provides a buffer between the Project Site and the Pico-Union community to the west, although several arterial streets connect the two areas via freeway underpasses. Interstate 10 (I-10, known as the Santa Monica Freeway) also separates the Project Site from land uses further to the south.

As shown in the existing site plan provided in Figure II-3 in Section II, Project Description, the Project Site is currently developed with the Los Angeles Convention Center (Convention Center) and STAPLES Center, as well as associated parking facilities. The approximately 1.54 million square foot Convention Center consists of three main structures: the South Hall; the West Hall; and the Concourse Building.² The Convention Center is recognized for its architectural façades of paned glass with steel pipe framing and quarter-circular main entry towers at the South and West Halls. The discussion that follows describes the general design/architecture, signage, landscaping, lighting and other notable visible features of existing development within the Project Site. Figures IV.C-2 through IV.C-16 presented later in this section depict existing development within the Project Site from various (primarily off-site) viewpoints and are described in detail in the discussion of existing views (Subsection 2.a.(2)(a)) below.

¹ The Harbor Freeway is designated as I-110 south of I-10 and SR-110 north of I-10, adjacent to the Project Site. Most references herein are to the adjacent portion of SR-110.

² Square footages throughout this EIR refer to Floor Area, except where otherwise noted. Per LAMC Section 12.03, Floor Area is defined as the area in square feet confined within the exterior walls of a building, but not including the area of the following: exterior walls, stairways, shafts, rooms housing building-operating equipment or machinery, parking areas with associated driveways and ramps, space for the landing and storage of helicopters, and basement storage areas.

The South Hall, located south of Pico Boulevard and west of Figueroa Street, was built in 1993 and consists of approximately 619,617 square feet of Floor Area (814,111 square feet of Floor Area when including Kentia Hall). It is a quarter-circular building with white paneled metal façades along Figueroa Street and Pico Boulevard and a teal green metal façade along the rounded southwestern (rear) façade that faces the SR-110/I-10 interchange. The loading dock area, described further below, is also located along the rear of the building and includes canopies with solar panels over the truck docks that are visible from the freeway interchange. The South Hall's glass and steel main entry tower is located at the northeast corner of the building. The exhibit hall portion of the building has a height of approximately 80 feet, while the entry tower reaches a height of approximately 160 feet. The South Hall structure exhibits substantial massing and largely lacks façade variation or articulation, with the exception of the entry tower, a covered walkway with vegetation on top along the Figueroa Street façade and a recessed walkway along Pico Boulevard. Large-scale signage on the South Hall is limited to three-dimensional wall signs identifying the Convention Center/South Hall, located on the eastern and southwestern façades facing Figueroa Street and SR-110, respectively, the latter of which is internally illuminated. (Refer to Photos 6a and 7a in Figures IV.C-7 and IV.C-8 on pages IV.C-18 and IV.C-19, respectively, which are described further below in the discussion of existing views (Subsection 2.a.(2)(a)).)

The West Hall, located north of Pico Boulevard and just east of L.A. Live Way, was built in 1971 and is the oldest of the Convention Center facilities. The rectangular building consists of approximately 440,311 square feet of Floor Area and features blue and white metal façades and a flat roof. The building height is approximately 75 feet above grade, but since the building sits on a raised plaza and service deck above an at-grade parking level it appears elevated relative to the surrounding roadways.³ Like the South Hall, the West Hall lacks façade articulation and appears monolithic and less pedestrian-friendly in comparison to more recent nearby development such as STAPLES Center and the uses at L.A. LIVE (both discussed below). Nonetheless, as discussed in Section IV.I.1, Cultural Resources—Historical Resources, of this Draft EIR, the West Hall and other buildings within the Project Site do not appear eligible for inclusion in the National Register, California Register, or as a local Historic Cultural Monument (HCM). However, it is possible that a commission with jurisdiction, such as the California State Historical

³ Per LAMC §12.03, building height is defined as “the vertical distance above grade measured to the highest point of the roof, structure, or the parapet wall, whichever is highest. Retaining walls shall not be used for the purpose of raising the effective elevation of the finished grade for purposes of measuring the height of a building or structure.” Also per LAMC §12.03, grade or adjacent ground level is defined as “the lowest point of elevation of the finished surface of the ground, paving or sidewalk within the area between the building and the property line, or when the property line is more than 5 feet from the building, between the building and a line 5 feet from the building.”

Resources Commission or the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission, could determine the West Hall eligible for the California Register, the National Register, or as a local HCM. If any such determination were to be made, a significant impact would occur as a result of demolition of the West Hall. Additionally, if any such determination were to be made, the West Hall would conservatively be considered to be a visual resource. Other building features include a more recently constructed main entry tower, located on the eastern side of the West Hall facing STAPLES Center, which is a smaller version of the South Hall entry tower and has a height of approximately 135 feet. Wide outdoor staircases with limited landscaping are located along Chick Hearn Court and Pico Boulevard and lead to outdoor plaza areas that are utilized for emergency egress and back-of-house loading. Prominent signage includes three-dimensional internally illuminated wall signs identifying the Convention Center/West Hall located on the roof overhang on the northern façade facing Chick Hearn Court and the western façade facing SR-110. (Refer to Photos 1a, 1c and 2a in Figures IV.C-2 and IV.C-3 on pages IV.C-13 and IV.C-14, respectively, which are described further below in the discussion of existing views (Subsection 2.a.(2)(a)).

The Concourse Building, built in 1993, connects the West Hall to the South Hall and spans Pico Boulevard. Its architectural style mimics that of the South Hall, consisting of paned glass with limited areas of white paneled metal along Figueroa Street and a white paneled and teal metal façade on the western side of the building. The Concourse Building, which houses the Concourse Hall exhibit space, includes approximately 262,359 square feet of Floor Area and has a height of approximately 90 feet, while the Pico Boulevard tunnel underneath has a maximum clearance of approximately 15 feet. In addition, an approximately 25-foot-wide vehicular bridge extends across Pico Boulevard, just west of the Concourse Building, connecting the South Hall and West Hall loading dock areas (discussed below).

Fronting on Figueroa Street, Gilbert Lindsay Plaza is located east of the Concourse Building and West Hall immediately north of Pico Boulevard, as also shown in Figure II-3 in Section II, Project Description. The plaza is developed as a hard surfaced public open space with limited landscaped areas and serves many functions including, but not limited to, a limousine, bus and taxi drop-off and pick-up location and a public open space area with monuments, trees, and street furniture. The overall visual character of Gilbert Lindsay Plaza, as currently configured, is its role as a component of the Convention Center's transportation infrastructure system rather than as a welcoming open space and public entry to the Convention Center.

In addition to these facilities, the Convention Center includes supporting parking facilities comprised of the following: parking below the South Hall (including Kentia Hall, which can be used for exhibit space or parking); parking below the West Hall; the above-ground Venice Boulevard and Cherry Street Garages; and the Bond Street Parking Lot

(surface parking only). The enclosed Venice Garage is located south of the South Hall, at the northwest corner of Figueroa Street and Venice Boulevard, and consists of six above-ground levels with a maximum height of 77.5 feet. The Cherry Street Garage is a three-level, 15- to 22-foot-high, enclosed parking garage with solar panels covering most of the top parking deck that is located west of the West Hall, adjacent to SR-110 between Pico Boulevard and Chick Hearn Court and fronting on L.A. Live Way. As shown in Figure II-3 in Section II, Project Description, the Bond Street Parking Lot is located west of the South Hall, near SR-110 at Bond Street and Pico Boulevard, fronting L.A. Live Way, and is often used for truck parking and/or as a storage area.

STAPLES Center is located at the southwest corner of Figueroa Street and Chick Hearn Court (i.e., the northeast corner of the Project Site). It includes approximately 950,000 square feet of Gross Area and has capacity for 22,000 seats. The building is nearly circular in shape and has a slanted roof, with a maximum height of 139 feet. The white and silver metal and glass façades incorporate protruding architectural elements such as balconies and overhangs, and the northern side of the building has tiered outdoor seating/dining balconies that overlook a ground level plaza and Chick Hearn Court. Signage consists primarily of illuminated identification signs on the façades and roof, including three building name signs (totaling 3,114 square feet, plus the rooftop sign, which is only visible from above), one electronic message display sign (300 square feet), four entrance sponsor signs (1,189 square feet) and eight retail business signs (42 square feet). (Refer to the signage inventory provided in Appendix D for further details.) In addition, bronze statues of former sports figures are located within Star Plaza, immediately north of STAPLES Center, and cement installations designed to represent hockey pucks are located to the northwest.

Most of the loading dock facilities associated with the Convention Center and STAPLES Center are largely obscured from public view and thus do not influence the aesthetic character of the Project Site to a substantial degree. The South Hall loading dock is located outdoors along the southwestern (rear) side of the building one level above street level, with access provided from Convention Center Drive via a circular ramp. Although not visible from surrounding streets, the loading dock area is visible from I-10/SR-110 Harbor Freeway interchange (specifically from I-10 eastbound to SR-110 northbound). As previously mentioned, canopies with solar panels are located over the truck docks and are visible from the freeway interchange. The West Hall loading area is also outdoors and located above street level, with access from both L.A. Live Way and the bridge from the South Hall loading area. The Concourse Hall loading area is located at street level on the north side of Pico Boulevard. Both the Kentia Hall (within the South Hall) and STAPLES Center loading areas are located below ground within each building and are accessed from Convention Center Drive and Chick Hearn Court at Georgia Street, respectively.

In addition to the aforementioned building identification and wall signs, notable signage within and around the Project Site includes several animated and/or illuminated pole signs used to advertise events and sponsors. Specifically, the Convention Center has five 9-foot tall by 15.5-foot wide changeable message pole signs with total heights of approximately 22 feet above grade located along the Project Site perimeter (at the southeast corner of Chick Hearn Court and L.A. Live Way, the northeast corner of Pico Boulevard and L.A. Live Way, the northwest corner of Pico Boulevard and Figueroa Street, the northwest corner of Venice Boulevard and Figueroa Street, and the northeast corner of Venice Boulevard and Convention Center Drive), while STAPLES Center signage includes two approximately 140-foot tall animated and illuminated freeway marquee pole signs, each comprising 4,414 square feet of signage, located adjacent to I-10 and SR-110 (at the northwest corner of Figueroa Street and Venice Boulevard and the northeast corner of Chick Hearn Court and L.A. Live Way, respectively). In addition to a variety of small wall signs and painted graphics for parking and directional purposes, several informational/directional pole signs are located around the Project Site perimeter along adjacent streets, and temporary signs, banners and other graphics are frequently displayed on both the Convention Center and STAPLES Center building façades to advertise specific events, as permitted. A total of 6,016 square feet of signage currently exists at the Convention Center and 18,591 square feet of signage is located at STAPLES Center (including the rooftop sign and the two freeway marquee pole signs), for a total of 24,607 square feet of existing signage at the Project Site. This compares to total permitted signage under the STAPLES Center Signage Ordinance (City Ordinance No. 172,465) of 35,576 square feet, plus additional LAMC-permitted signage.⁴ Refer to the signage inventory provided in Appendix D for further details regarding existing signage.

Although described in more detail in Section IV.D.2, Artificial Light and Glare, of this Draft EIR, lighting is discussed briefly herein as it contributes to visual character. Exterior lighting is used throughout the Project Site to illuminate buildings, parking facilities, pedestrian walkways, roadways and signage, resulting in low to high ambient nighttime light levels, depending on the specific location on-site. Consistent with its use as a major sports and entertainment complex, existing sources of light on the Project Site include moderately to brightly illuminated façades and a mixture of illuminated changeable light-emitting diode (LED) signage and static illuminated signage. These types of light sources are associated with the Convention Center, STAPLES Center and on-site plaza areas and are consistent with the urban nature of the Project area. The highest illuminance areas

⁴ The STAPLES Center Signage Ordinance also permits the following: 10,000 square feet of aerial signs, and informational signs as approved by the City; and the following with regard to the Convention Center: parking area signs pursuant to the Los Angeles Municipal Code. In addition, the total signage identified above assumes that the maximum amount of retail business signage is currently installed.

occur near the entrances of the Convention Center and STAPLES Center to direct visitors to lit gathering areas and serve as a means of wayfinding. STAPLES Center also includes distinguishing façade lighting to illuminate the architecture. The Convention Center has minimal façade lighting, but substantial lighting within plazas such as Gilbert Lindsay Plaza, loading areas, pedestrian ways, and entrances. In addition, there is a large curving translucent canopy over the entrance to the South Hall, below which bright lighting is apparent. Low-level light sources are also present on-site and include tall street lights, shorter closely spaced pedestrian-oriented lights, and parking, accent, wayfinding and security lighting. In addition to the exterior light sources, bright interior lighting from a bank of windows on the mid-level floors of STAPLES Center shines out over Figueroa Street. Bright luminaries and surfaces from within the Project Site and the adjacent L.A. LIVE (described below) can be viewed from a considerable distance. Collectively, such exterior and visible interior lighting contributes to the visual character of the Project Site and the surrounding area, as well as Downtown as a whole, as discussed further in Section IV.D.2, Artificial Light and Glare, of this Draft EIR. While the direct effects of lighting are addressed therein, the analysis that follows includes some discussion of lighting given its influence on the nighttime visual environment within the Project Site and the surrounding area.

Street trees and limited landscaping are provided primarily along the perimeter of the Project Site and add to its visual character, but, with few exceptions, are not so extensive as to represent a prominent visual component of the streetscapes. Street trees including Chinese flame tree (*Koelreuteria bipinnata*), Moreton bay fig (*Ficus macrocarpa*), fern pine (*podocarpus gracilior*), Canary Island pine (*Pinus canariensis*), Mexican fan palm (*Washingtonia robusta*) and queen palm (*Syagrus romanzoffiana*) are provided intermittently along Chick Hearn Court, Pico Boulevard, Venice Boulevard and most heavily along Figueroa Street. Portions of these streets were improved with new street trees and other streetscape features in 1999 consistent with the previously approved Los Angeles Sports and Entertainment District (LASED) Streetscape Plan. Adjacent to the Project Site, the segments where such improvements occurred include the west side of Figueroa Street between Chick Hearn Court and Pico Boulevard, both sides of Chick Hearn Court between Figueroa Street and Georgia Street, and the north side of Chick Hearn Court between Georgia Street and L.A. Live Way, and as such the streetscape appears more cohesive along these segments. Gilbert Lindsay Plaza, which fronts Figueroa Street, contains small areas of grass, as well as Mexican fan palm, Moreton bay fig, Canary Island date palm (*Phoenix canariensis*) and flame coral tree (*Erythrina coralloides*). Regularly spaced concrete planters also line segments of Figueroa Street and Chick Hearn Court adjacent to STAPLES Center, while the West Hall's northern and southern emergency egress plazas include small areas of shrubbery. In addition, a variety of trees and shrubs are located west of the Cherry Street Garage and Bond Street Parking Lot, adjacent to SR-110, as well as around some of the other small parking areas and access roads within the Project Site. None of the street trees or trees located on-site is considered a protected specimen.

(b) Surrounding Uses

The area surrounding the Project Site is highly urbanized and includes a diverse mix of commercial/retail, office, hotel, entertainment, restaurant, auto-related, residential, hospital, educational, manufacturing, and parking uses. In terms of visual prominence, the most notable surrounding uses are located at L.A. LIVE, an entertainment, hotel, and residential complex located immediately north of the Project Site. L.A. LIVE includes the Nokia Theater L.A. LIVE (Nokia Theater), JW Marriott Los Angeles at L.A. LIVE (Marriott Hotel), Ritz-Carlton Los Angeles at L.A. LIVE (Ritz Hotel), Ritz-Carlton Residences at L.A. LIVE (Ritz Residences), ESPN Broadcast Facility, Regal Cinemas, the GRAMMY Museum, various restaurants and offices, Nokia Plaza L.A. LIVE (Nokia Plaza), and the East and West Garages. These uses feature pedestrian-oriented ground level uses, substantial and large-scale signage including illuminated and animated signage, moderate to bright lighting on buildings and particularly within Nokia Plaza, and a high-rise tower, all of which foster an active, urban, pedestrian environment. The 54-story, approximately 642-foot-high tower houses the Marriott Hotel, Ritz Hotel and Ritz Residences, with the residential units located on floors 27 through 52 (the top two floors contain mechanical equipment). Further to the north are a variety of commercial uses, including the 7+Fig shopping center, as well as high-rise office towers that become visually more dominant within the Financial District and largely define the Downtown skyline.

A dominant visual element in the immediate Project area is the large-scale signage located throughout L.A. LIVE, which gives the development an animated, high-tech character, but with substantial pedestrian-scaled elements such as outdoor seating, canopies, street lights and façade articulation at street level. Nighttime lighting from L.A. LIVE also strongly influences the Project area given its moderate to bright light levels, particularly within Nokia Plaza. Ornamental lighting in the street trees and large LED signs announce the gateway into the LASED area, and at times large rotating klieg lights (spotlights) beam up towards the night sky. The uses at L.A. LIVE also feature lighting from storefront windows, interior lighting associated with the hotel and residential uses, illuminated and animated signage, architectural lighting on buildings and security lighting.

To the east, the Figueroa Street corridor is primarily characterized by surface parking lots and auto-related uses between Chick Hearn Court/11th Street and Venice Boulevard, with the exception of the City Lights multi-family housing development at the corner of Pico Boulevard and Figueroa Street. Further to the east is the South Park district, where development includes new and recently rehabilitated high-rise residential and mixed-use towers visible from Figueroa Street. Also to the east are the Metro Rail Blue Line Pico Station (Pico Station), the California Hospital Medical Center, and the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising. The Figueroa Corridor between 7th Street to the north and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (to the south, near the Los Angeles Coliseum) is currently the focus of a planning study (discussed further below) by the Community Redevelopment

Agency of Los Angeles (CRA/LA) to explore potential pedestrian and bicycle enhancements in the area, which could eventually transform the aesthetic quality of the corridor.⁵

Venice Boulevard forms a portion of the Project Site's southern boundary and is characterized by auto-related uses. The I-110/SR-110 Harbor Freeway and I-10 Santa Monica Freeway interchange is located southwest of the South Hall, flanking the Convention Center's southern perimeter and forming a strong visual barrier that separates the Project Site from areas to the south. Further south along major roadways such as Figueroa Street and Vermont Avenue, a variety of auto-oriented commercial and retail uses, including fast food restaurants, take on an expansive linear retail character. The environment becomes more pedestrian-friendly within the USC campus, south of Jefferson Boulevard, due to changes in building scale, architectural style and articulation, and the provision of outdoor amenities and substantial landscaping.

SR-110 and its associated landscape berm serve as the Project Site's western boundary and provide an important physical and visual buffer that separates the Project Site from the Pico-Union area to the west. However, physical connections to the Pico-Union area are provided by several streets, including Venice Boulevard, Pico Boulevard, as well as 11th and 12th Streets. The Pico-Union area includes a wide variety of uses, including residential, manufacturing, related industrial and commercial uses. Pico-Union is also one of the densest neighborhoods in the City of Los Angeles and is characterized by mostly four- to six-story brick buildings dating back to the 1920s combined with some single-story structures. Along the area's east-west and north-south arterial streets, vertical mixed-use buildings are common (i.e., commercial uses at street level with residential above), and numerous manufacturing and merchandising facilities remain. Portions of this area have a somewhat visually cluttered appearance due to the variety of auto-oriented and linear commercial uses, fast-food restaurants, considerable billboards and pole signage, storefront wall signs, and the general lack of coordinated streetscape improvements. On the other hand, segments of certain streets such as Alvarado Street south of Olympic Boulevard feature mature street trees, and some of the side streets include potentially historic residential structures, although many exhibit dilapidated conditions.

⁵ CRA/LA is the Designated Local Authority (DLA) and successor to the Community Redevelopment Agency in response to Assembly Bill (AB) x1-26, which became effective on February 1, 2012.

Please refer to Section IV.A, Land Use, for further discussion of the surrounding land uses; Section IV.D.2, Artificial Light and Glare, regarding lighting conditions; and Section IV.D.1, Natural Light (Shading), regarding shading conditions.

(c) Visual Resources

Visual resources typically consist of unique features of the natural and built environments such as mountain ridgelines, important historic structures, public art or the urban skyline. The *City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide* (*L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide*) specifically lists a variety of urban features that may contribute to the aesthetic character of an area, including historic or architecturally significant structures, public plazas and parks, public art, consistent design elements (e.g., setbacks, massing, height, and signage) along a street or district, pedestrian amenities, landscaped medians and protected trees.⁶ The *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide* goes on to acknowledge that a degree of discretionary judgment may be required to determine the importance of an aesthetic resource (and, consequently, potential impacts associated with it). Within the Project Site, a number of elements contribute to the aesthetic character of the area. Such elements include the South Hall and West Hall main entry towers, with their distinctive architectural façades of paned glass with steel pipe framing, as well as STAPLES Center with its notable architectural style. Similarly, given the largely transportation-oriented functionality of Gilbert Lindsay Plaza, its merit as a visual resource is limited despite any visual relief it may provide as an open space located within a highly urbanized area.

As described above, it is possible that a commission with jurisdiction, such as the California State Historical Resources Commission or the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission, could determine the West Hall eligible for the California Register, the National Register or as a local HCM. If any such determination were to be made, a significant impact would occur as a result of demolition of the West Hall because under the *City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide* historic resources are considered to be visual resources. Therefore, for purposes of a conservative analysis herein, demolition of the West Hall is considered to represent the loss of a visual resource in the event that the West Hall were to be determined eligible as a historic resource. The statues/art installations located in and around Gilbert Lindsay Plaza and Star Plaza are also considered visual resources. Additionally, the 54-story Marriott/Ritz tower located at L.A. LIVE is considered a visual resource based on its prominent size and visibility and its resulting contribution to the Downtown skyline. Other existing resources of merit in the area include the Downtown Los Angeles skyline and the San Gabriel Mountains to the north (views of which are described

⁶ *City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide, Section A.1, Aesthetics, Subsection 1.B, City of Los Angeles, 2006.*

further below), which are visible from portions of the Project Site and several adjacent street corridors. Although the Downtown area contains many architecturally significant buildings, including many historic resources and two nationally recognized historic districts, none occur adjacent to the Project Site or within important short-range viewsheds that include the Project Site. In addition, the Central City Community Plan (discussed below) designates SR-110 as a scenic freeway, as it offers northbound views of the Downtown skyline and San Gabriel Mountains in the distance.^{7,8} This freeway, however, is not a state-designated scenic highway nor is it designated on a Citywide level within the General Plan Transportation Element; it is only mapped as a scenic freeway on the Land Use Map for the Central City Community Plan.

(2) Views

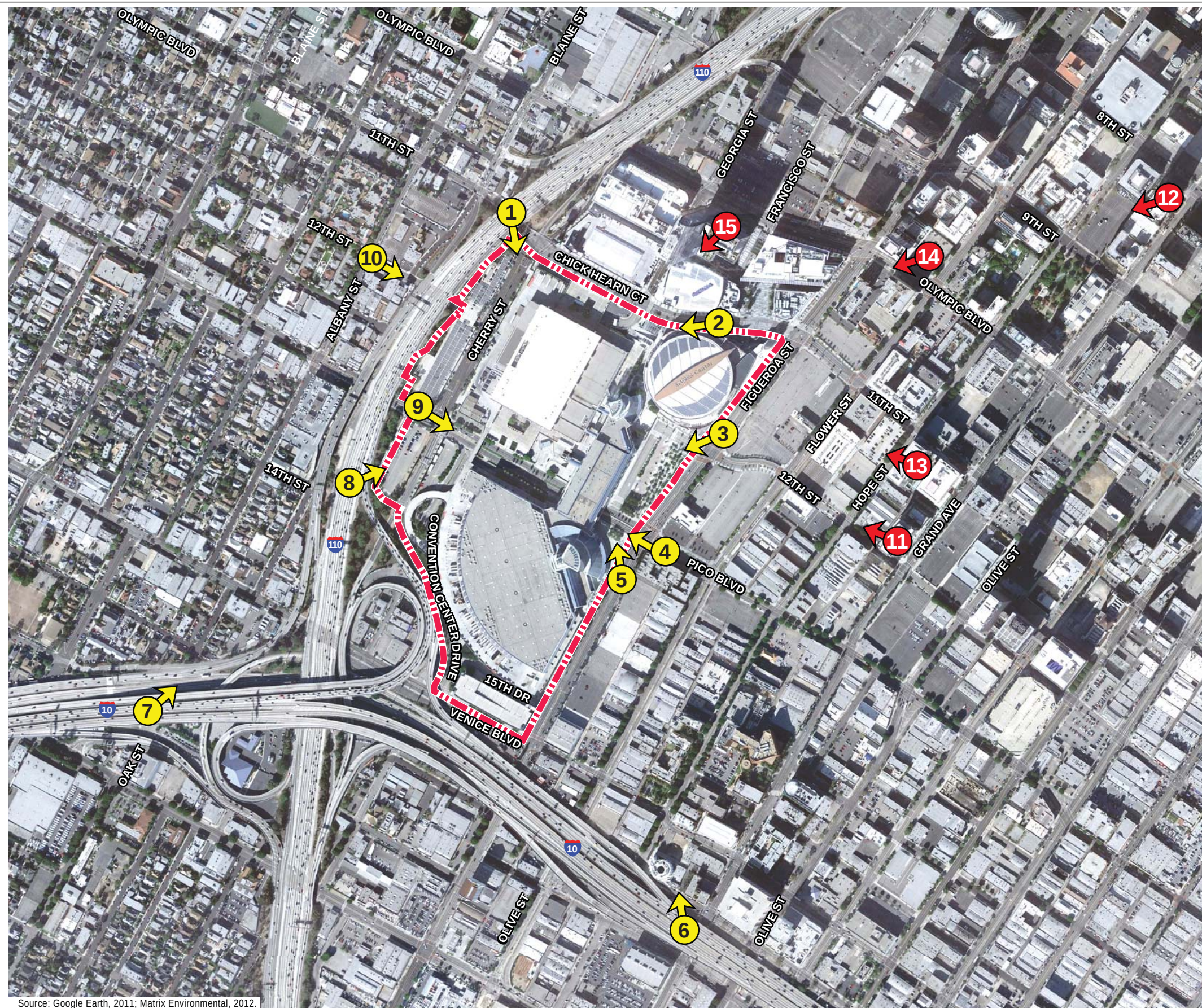
(a) Public Views

The Project Site is situated in a highly urbanized area of Downtown Los Angeles and is relatively flat with approximately 10 feet of elevation change. Public vantage points available in the Project vicinity are primarily limited to public street and freeway corridors. These include Figueroa Street, Pico Boulevard, Venice Boulevard and the elevated SR-110 Harbor Freeway, which is designated as a scenic freeway within the Central City Community Plan. Views along Olympic Boulevard and Chick Hearn Court are limited near the Project Site due to the curved alignments of those roadways between SR-110 and Figueroa Street. Due to the flat topography and developed nature of the Project area, public views from many street level locations are generally short in range and limited to the immediately surrounding urban landscape (i.e., buildings, signage, roadways, and street trees). Longer range views are available from the elevated freeways and up and down many of the roadway corridors, particularly those streets that are particularly wide, although street trees and landscaping obscure some distant views.

Based on the photo location map provided in Figure IV.C-1 on page IV.C-12, photographs of representative public views of and across the Project Site from a variety of view locations are provided in Figure IV.C-2 through Figure IV.C-11 on pages IV.C-13 through IV.C-22. Images of both daytime and nighttime views are provided from a few viewpoints, as described below.

⁷ City of Los Angeles, *Central City Community Plan, General Plan Land Use Map*, July 7, 2009.

⁸ In addition, the South Los Angeles and Southeast Los Angeles Community Plans designate I-110, from I-10 south to Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, as a scenic freeway.



Source: Google Earth, 2011; Matrix Environmental, 2012.

LEGEND

 Project Site Boundary

PUBLIC VIEWPOINTS

- 1** SR-110 Freeway Northbound On-Ramp (Looking South)
- 2** Chick Hearn Court Looking West
- 3** Figueroa Street Looking South
- 4** Pico Boulevard Looking West Through Tunnel
- 5** Figueroa Street Looking North
- 6** I-10 Freeway Westbound at Olive Street
- 7** I-10 Freeway Eastbound at Oak Street
- 8** SR-110 Freeway Northbound at 14th Street
- 9** Pico Boulevard Looking East Through Tunnel
- 10** Intersection of 12th Street and Albany Street

PRIVATE VIEWPOINTS

- 11** Evo Condominiums, 1155 Grand Avenue
- 12** Sky Lofts, 801 Grand Avenue
- 13** Luma Condominiums, 408 11th Street
- 14** Olympic Luxury Apartments, 717 Olympic Boulevard
- 15** Ritz Carlton Residences, 900 Olympic Boulevard





Photo 1a Existing Conditions (Daytime)



Photo 1c Existing Conditions (Nighttime)

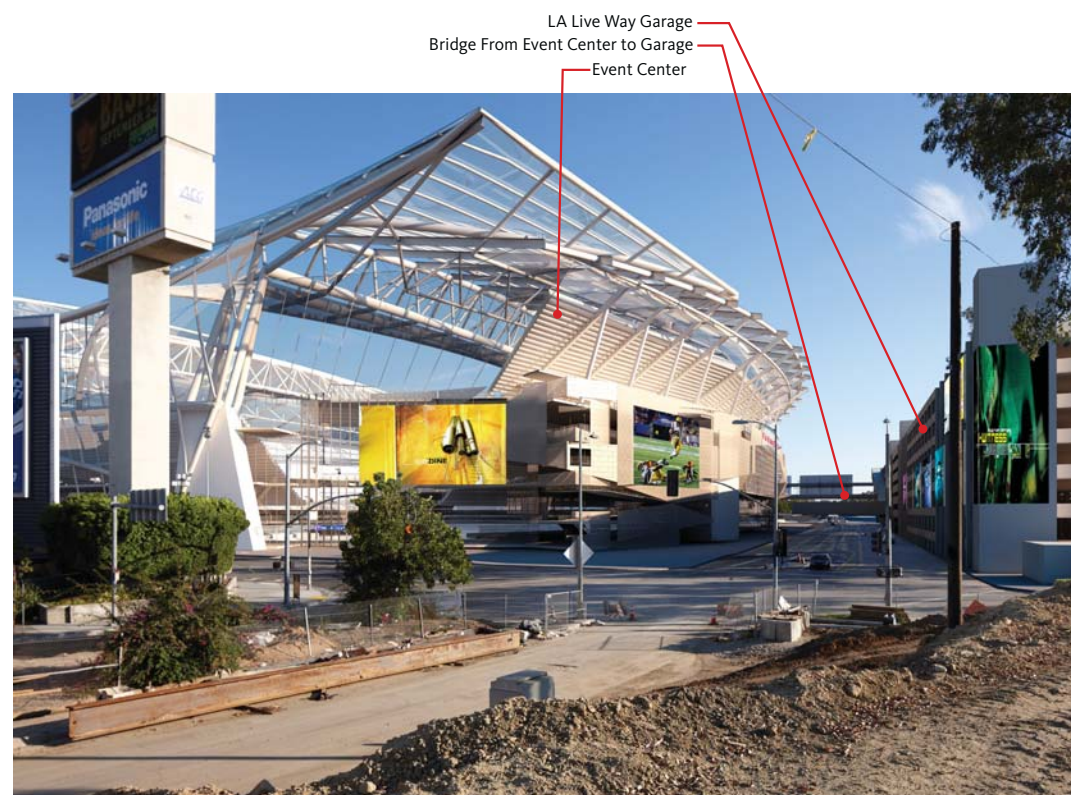
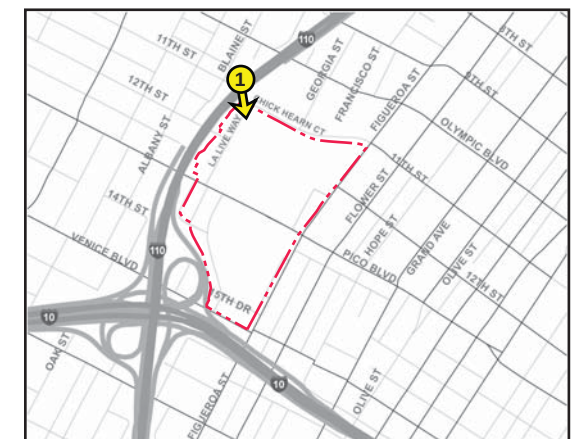


Photo 1b Proposed Conditions (Daytime)



Photo 1d Proposed Conditions (Nighttime)



Source: Gensler, 2012.



Photo 2a Existing Conditions (Daytime)

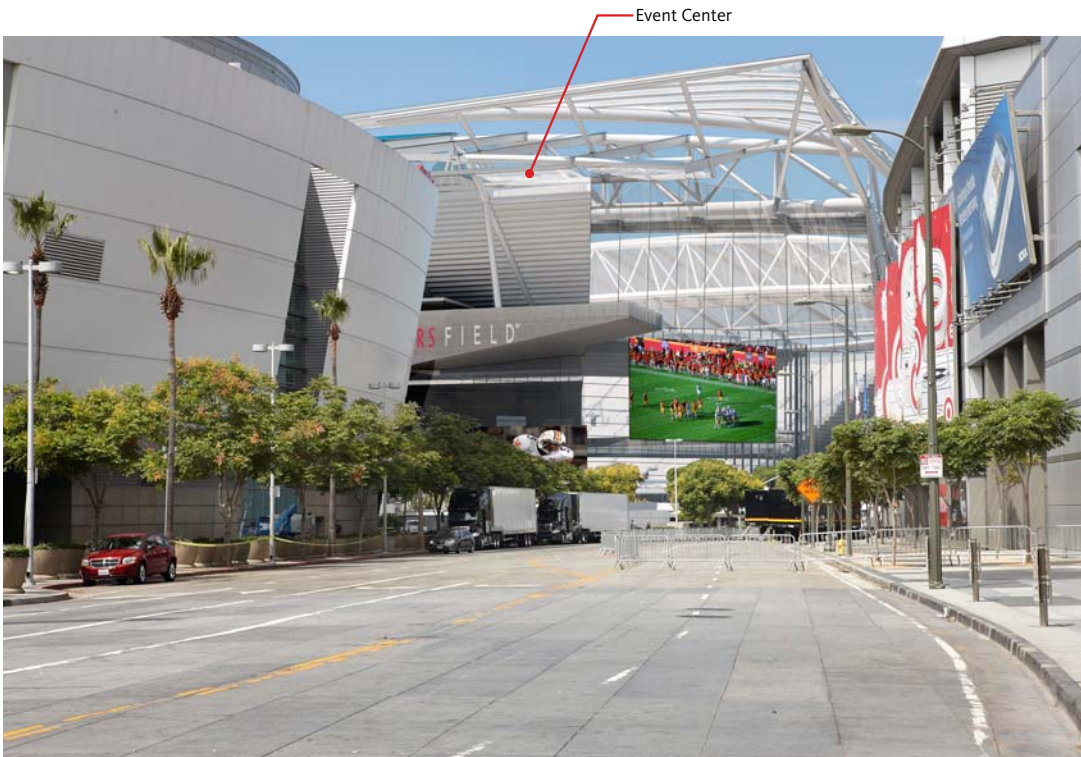
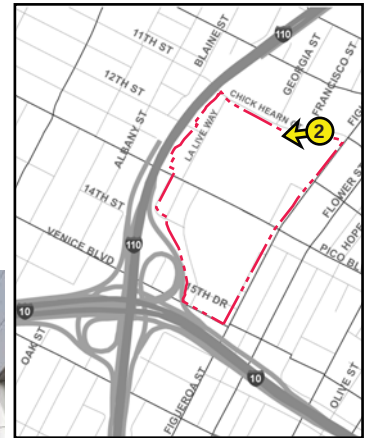


Photo 2b Proposed Conditions (Daytime)

Source: Gensler, 2012.



Photo 3a Existing Conditions (Daytime)

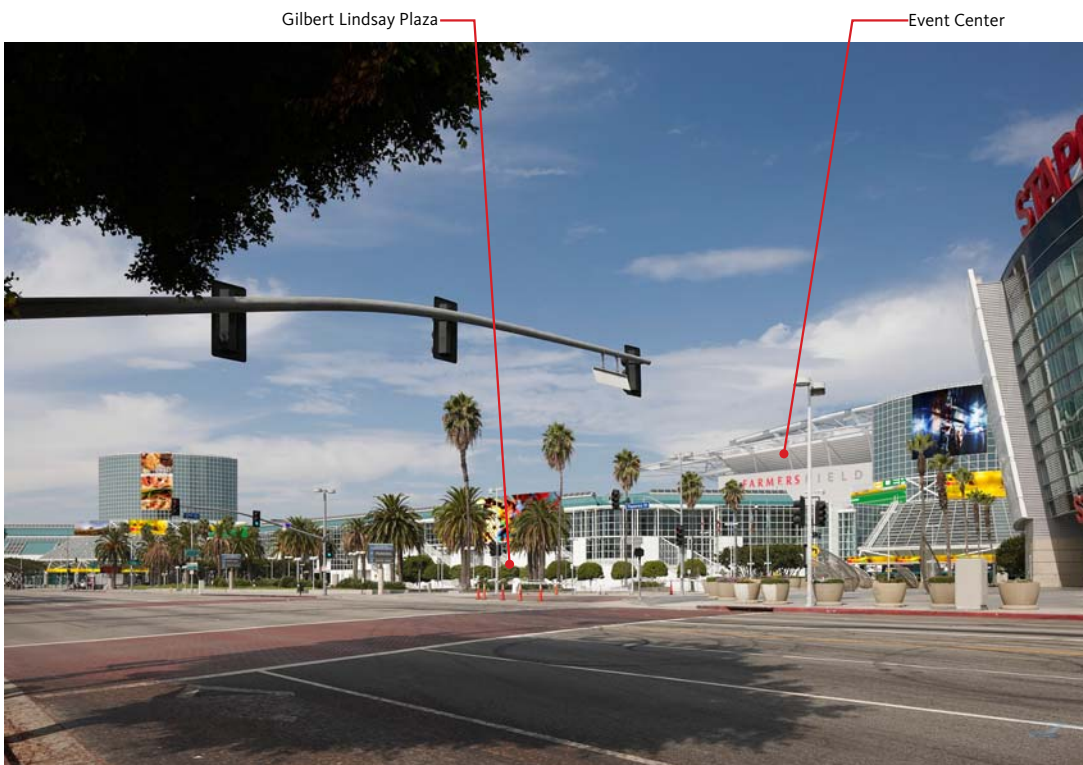
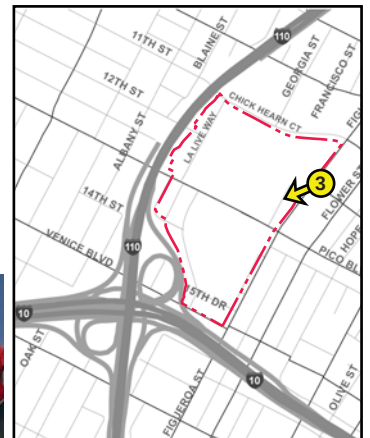


Photo 3b Proposed Conditions (Daytime)

Source: Gensler, 2012.



Photo 4a Existing Conditions (Daytime)

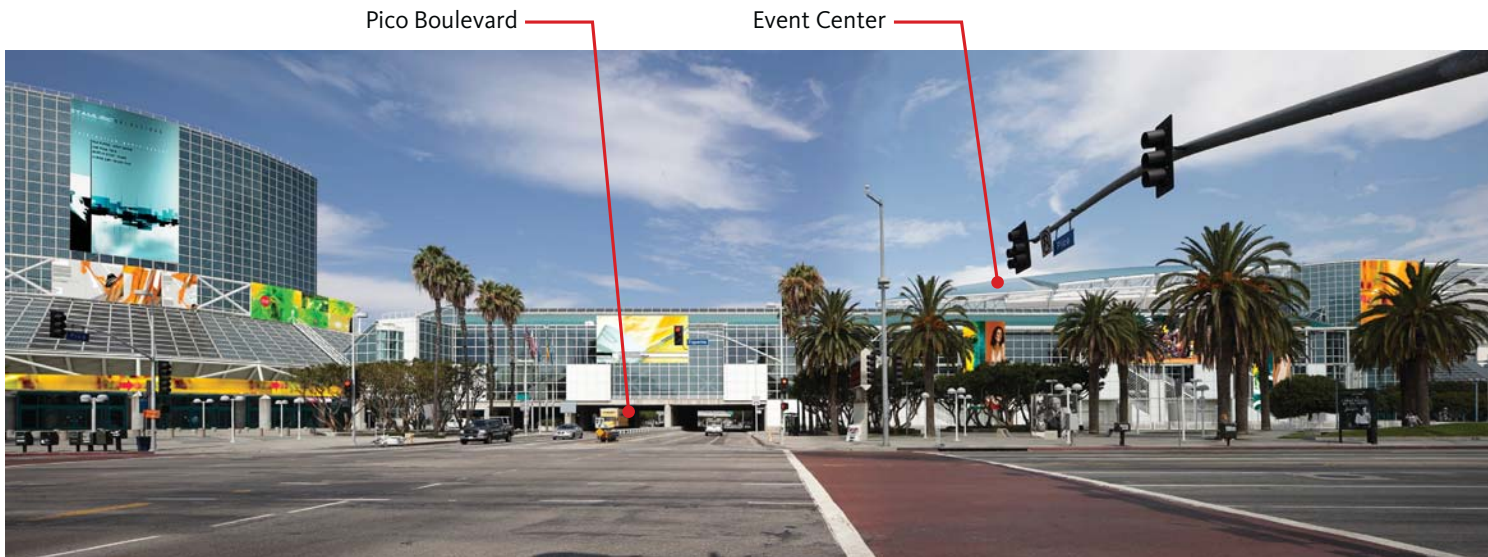
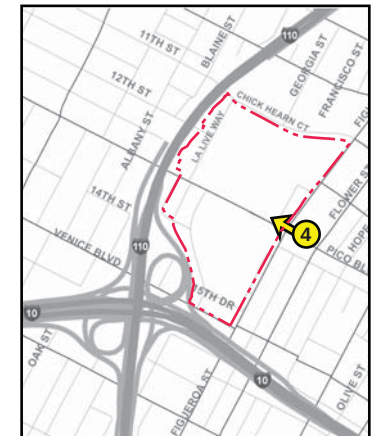


Photo 4b Proposed Conditions (Daytime)



Source: Gensler, 2012.



Photo 5a Existing Conditions (Daytime)

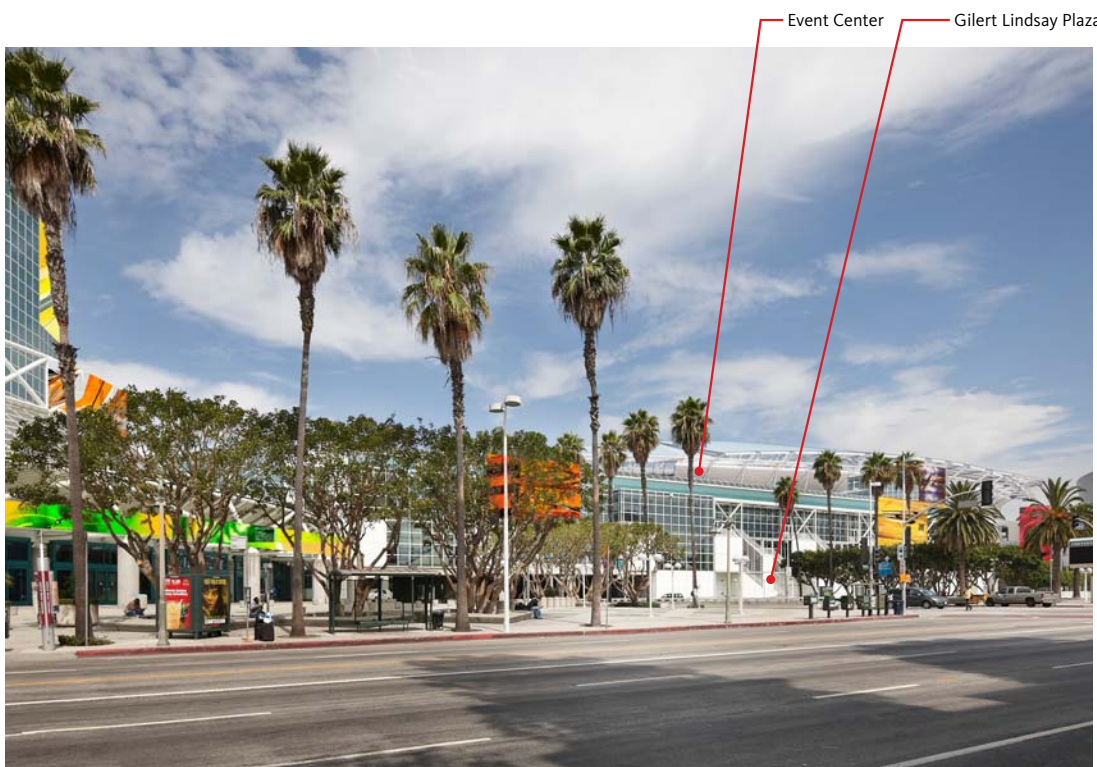


Photo 5b Proposed Conditions (Daytime)

Source: Gensler, 2012.



Figure IV.C-6
View along Figueroa Street Looking North



Photo 6a Existing Conditions (Daytime)

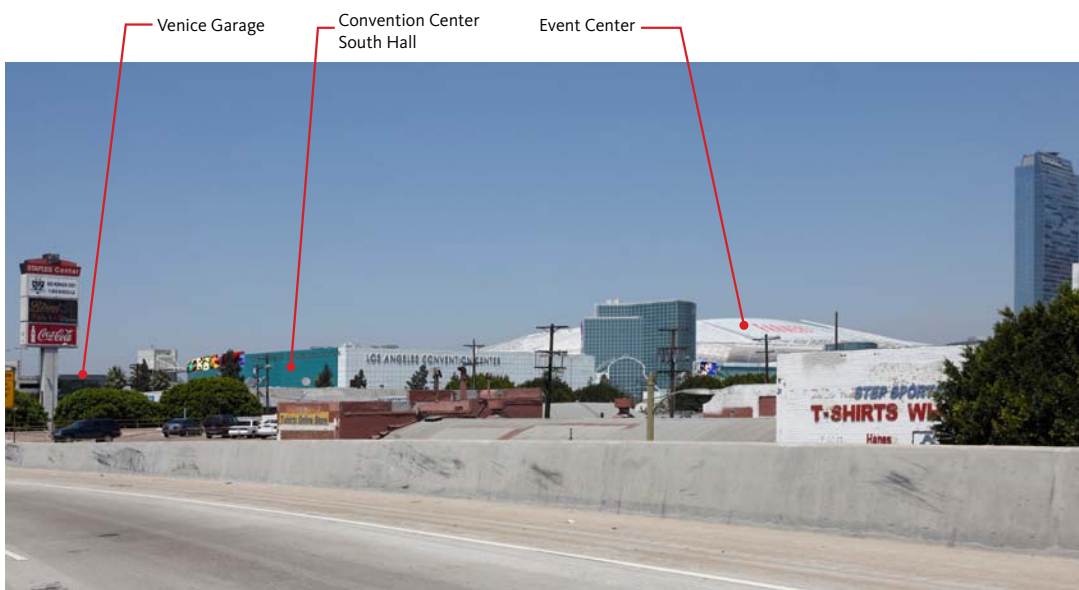


Photo 6b Proposed Conditions (Daytime)

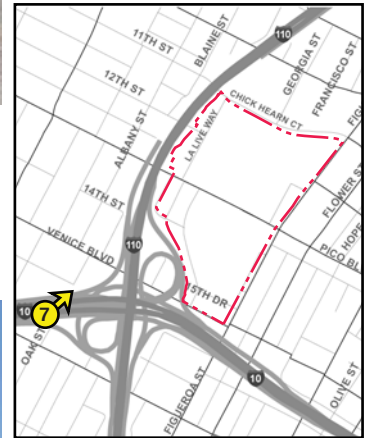
Source: Gensler, 2012.



Photo 7a Existing Conditions (Daytime)



Photo 7b Proposed Conditions (Daytime)



Source: Gensler, 2012.



Figure IV.C-8
View from I-10 Freeway Eastbound



Photo 8a Existing Conditions (Daytime)

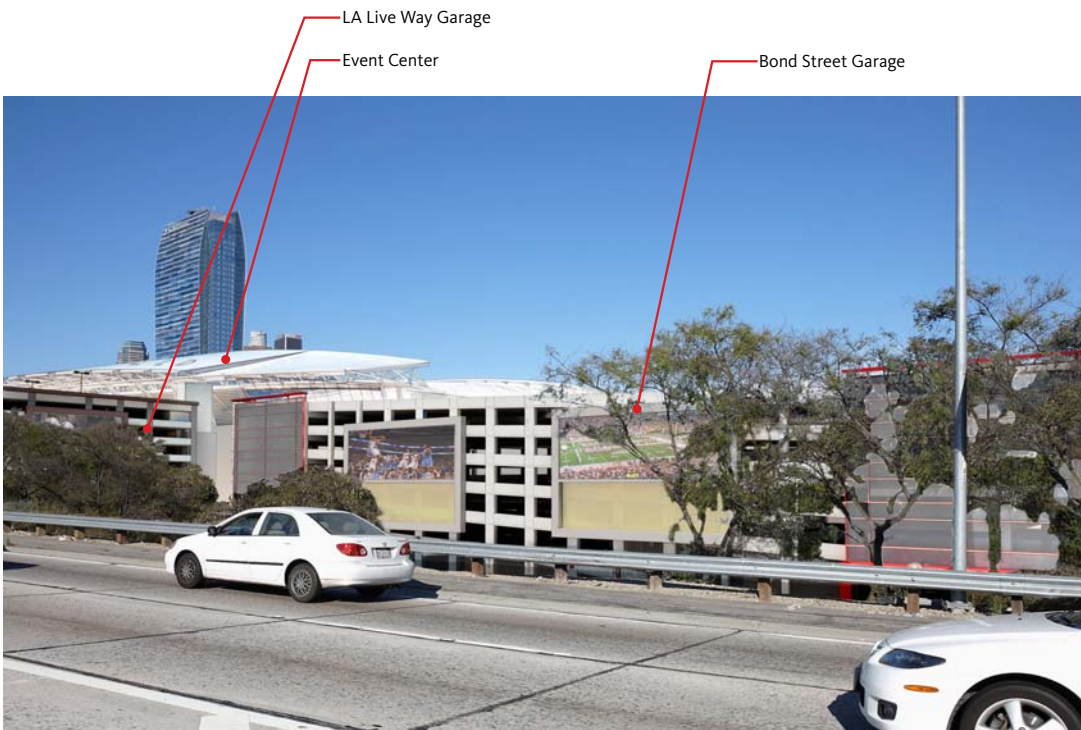
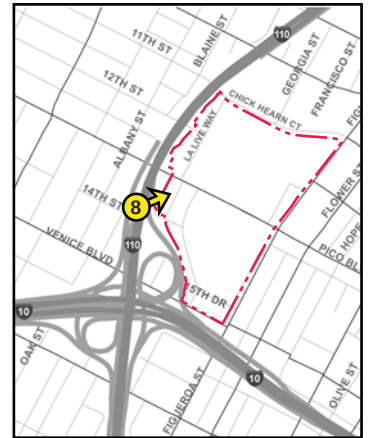


Photo 8b Proposed Conditions (Daytime)

Source: Gensler, 2012.



Photo 9a Existing Conditions (Daytime)



Photo 9c Existing Conditions (Nighttime)

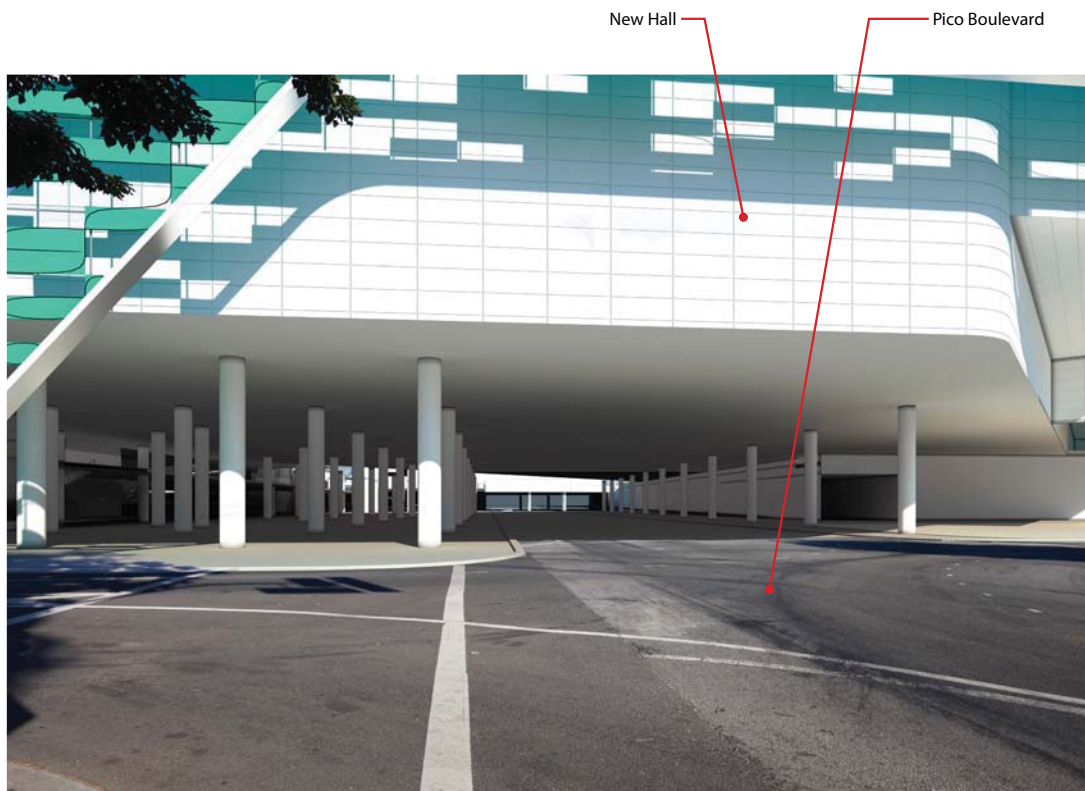
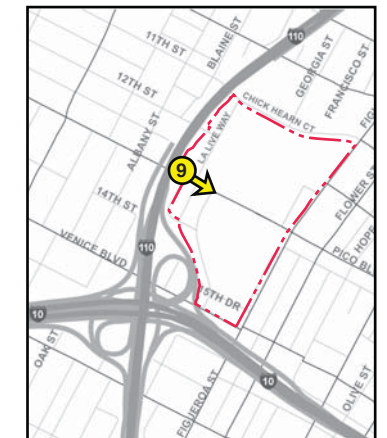


Photo 9b Proposed Conditions (Daytime)



Photo 9d Proposed Conditions (Nighttime)



Source: Gensler, 2012.



Photo10a Existing Conditions (Daytime)



Photo 10c Existing Conditions (Nighttime)

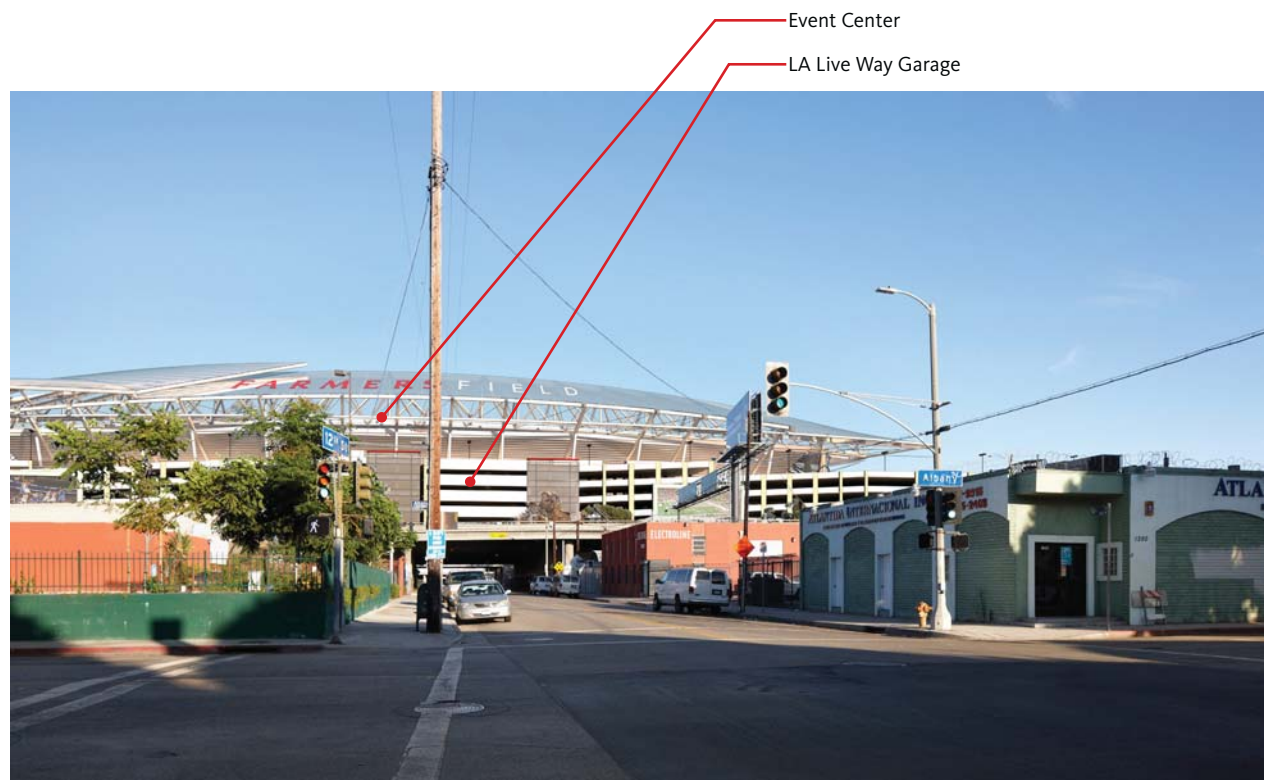
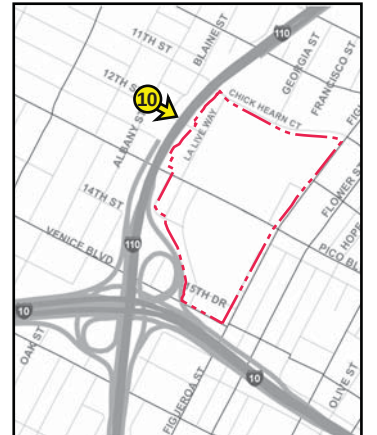


Photo 10b Proposed Conditions (Daytime)



Photo 10d Proposed Conditions (Nighttime)



Source: Gensler, 2012.

As shown in Photo 1a in Figure IV.C-2 on page IV.C-13, taken from the SR-110 on-ramp at 11th Street and looking south (so as to represent southbound freeway views), the West Hall figures prominently in the view, and the STAPLES Center pole sign is visible in the foreground. In the nighttime view provided in Photo 1c, illuminated signage and streetlights become obvious, and the Cherry Street Garage (on the right side of the photo) is more noticeable due to the visibility of its interior lighting.

In Photo 2a in Figure IV.C-3 on page IV.C-14, taken from Chick Hearn Court just west of Figueroa Street and looking west, views are limited and short range in nature and do not extend past the West Hall (center of the photo) due to the curve in the roadway. STAPLES Center is evident to the south (left side of photo) and the NOKIA Theatre with its associated billboard signage to the north (right side of photo). Light posts and street trees line the roadway, and the view is open to the sky, which is visible above the existing buildings. Although located outside the frame of Photo 2a, views of other visual resources in the Project area are also available from this location and include the statues in Star Plaza (located further left of the frame) and the Marriott/Ritz tower (located further right of the frame).

Photo 3a in Figure IV.C-4 on page IV.C-15 depicts the view from Figueroa Street just north of 12th Street and looking south/southwest towards the Convention Center. Most evident in this view are the West Hall and South Hall main entry towers, portions of the Concourse intermittently visible between street trees and STAPLES Center to the north. While Gilbert Lindsay Plaza is visible, it is difficult to distinguish among the street trees along Figueroa Street. Expansive sky views are also available above the buildings.

A westerly view down Pico Boulevard from Figueroa Street is depicted in Photo 4a in Figure IV.C-5 on page IV.C-16. The South Hall main entry tower (left side of photo) and a portion of the Concourse Building (center of photo) dominate the view, while street trees and landscaping along Figueroa Street obscure the northern portion of the Concourse Building and the West Hall main entry tower. The Pico Boulevard tunnel is also clearly visible beneath the Concourse Building.

Also along Figueroa Street, Photo 5a in Figure IV.C-6 on page IV.C-17 shows the view to the northwest from just south of Pico Boulevard. Similar to Photo 4a, portions of the South Hall main entry tower and Concourse Building are obscured by street trees and landscaping.

Taken from I-10 westbound at Olive Street and looking northwesterly, Photo 6a in Figure IV.C-7 on page IV.C-18 depicts the South Hall and its main entry tower in the distance (center of photo). The STAPLES Center pole sign is visible adjacent to the freeway

(left side of photo), as is the Marriott/Ritz tower, identified as a visual resource in the Project area, to the north (right side of photo).

Photo 7a in Figure IV.C-8 on page IV.C-19 shows the view from I-10 eastbound at Oak Street looking to the northeast. The Downtown skyline is distinctive and includes the Marriott/Ritz tower (left side of photo), both of which are considered visual resources. The upper portions of the West Hall and the South Hall main entry tower are discernible, as is and the rear of the South Hall due to its bright teal green color (center of photo).

Photo 8a in Figure IV.C-9 on page IV.C-20, taken from SR-110 northbound at 14th Street, shows the Downtown skyline from another vantage point, with the Marriott/Ritz tower figuring more prominently due to its proximity (left side of photo). Much of the West Hall structure is visible, although landscaping along the freeway edge partially obscures the view (center of photo).

Within the interior of the Project Site, Photos 9a and 9c in Figure IV.C-10 on page IV.C-21 depict the South Hall to the south (right side of photo), the Concourse Building straight ahead to the east, and the West Hall to the north (left side of photo). Taken from Pico Boulevard at L.A. Live Way, the existing street trees, landscaping, and signage are also evident.

The easterly view in Photo 10a provided in Figure IV.C-11 on page IV.C-22 taken from just west of SR-110 at the intersection of 12th Street and Albany Street in the Pico-Union area, demonstrates the extent to which the elevated freeway blocks views of the Project Site from the west. Only the uppermost portions of the West Hall and its main entry tower are visible, along with an off-site high-rise tower in the distance.

The northbound I-110 Harbor Freeway offers views of the Downtown skyline from just south of I-10. As previously indicated, this freeway segment is designated as a scenic freeway within the South Los Angeles and Southwest Los Angeles Community Plans, and such views cross over the Project Site from certain vantage points. As distance increases to the south, the views become more obscured by intervening development.

Overall, with the exception of views from the elevated freeways, few publicly accessible locations offer long-range or panoramic vistas in the Project vicinity due to the topography of the area and intervening development. Motorists traveling along the freeways have some of the most unobstructed long-range views of the Project Site and the Downtown skyline, but such views change quickly given travel speeds, adjacent landscaping, and intervening development.

(b) Private Views

Private viewing locations in the Project vicinity include many of the nearby residential and commercial properties. Similar to the public vantage locations in the Project area, street-level private views are largely short-range in nature and limited to the immediately surrounding areas. Distance from the I-10 Santa Monica and I-110/SR-110 Harbor Freeways affect the views from lower elevations as the freeways block many near-range views, in particular easterly views towards the Project vicinity. However, private long-range views are available from numerous mid- to high-rise buildings within the Project area and, depending on the viewing location and angle, include views of the Downtown skyline and/or panoramic views across the Project Site and the entire Los Angeles Basin. In general, such views are dependent on elevation, with higher elevation locations offering more expansive views. From locations north and east of the Project Site, southerly and westerly views of the urban landscape cross over the Project Site and, on a clear day, such views may extend southwest to the Pacific Ocean. Generally speaking, individual buildings do not exert a strong influence on long-range views, as they are typically subordinate to broader panoramic views of the urban landscape.

The photo location map in Figure IV.C-1 on page IV.C-12 indicates the locations from which representative private views were photographed, as depicted in Figure IV.C-12 through Figure IV.C-16 on pages IV.C-26 through IV.C-30. Images of daytime and nighttime views are provided, as described below.

As shown in Photo 11a in Figure IV.C-12 on page IV.C-26, taken from the rooftop of a 24-story residential building located three blocks east of the Project Site on Grand Avenue, an expansive panoramic view is available that shows the entire Project Site in the mid-ground and much of the Los Angeles basin to the west in the background. The 54-story Marriott/Ritz tower, which is considered a visual resource, clearly punctuates the horizon, and mountains are visible in the distance. In the nighttime view depicted in Photo 11c, the Project Site and L.A. LIVE appear brightly lit, particularly in comparison to some of the residential development in the foreground.

In Photo 12a in Figure IV.C-13 on page IV.C-27, also taken on Grand Avenue from a 14th-story residential building to the northeast, the urban nature of the area is evidenced by the largely mid- to high-rise surrounding development. While the view extends into the distance, the horizon is punctuated by several buildings, a few of which have a cumulative effect of blocking entire portions of the horizon. The Project Site is somewhat difficult to discern, but the South Hall, the upper part of the South Hall main entry tower, and a small portion of STAPLES Center are visible behind intervening buildings (center of photo).



Photo 11a Existing Conditions (Daytime)



Photo 11c Existing Conditions (Nighttime)



Photo 11b Proposed Conditions (Daytime)

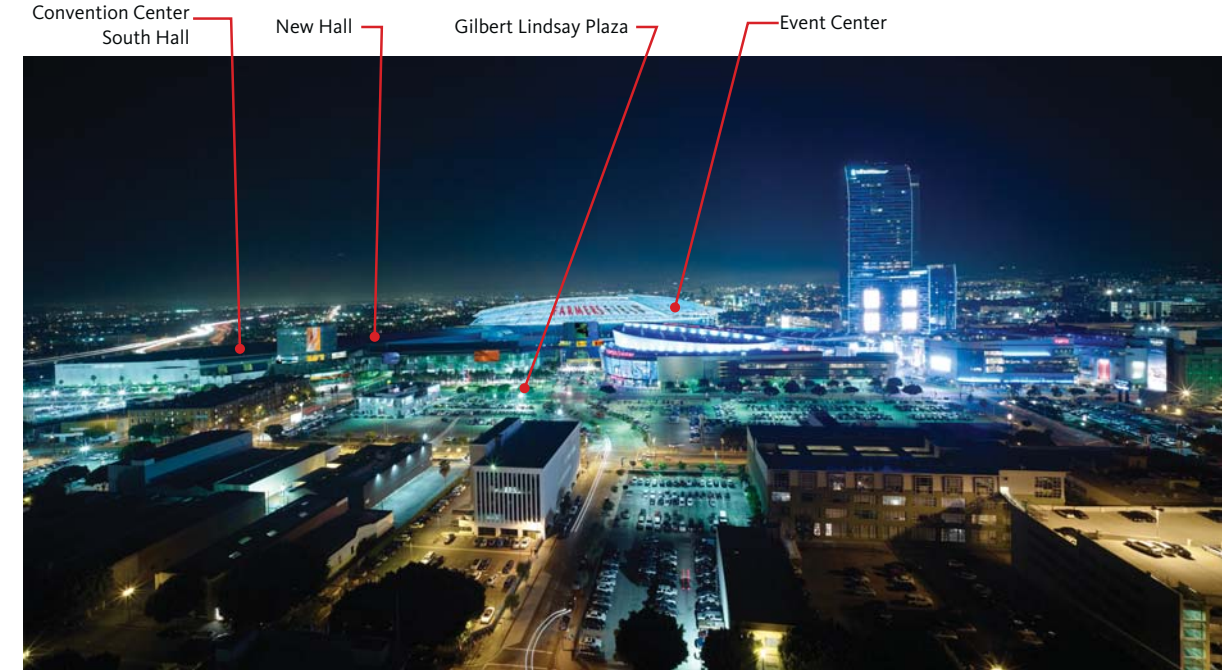


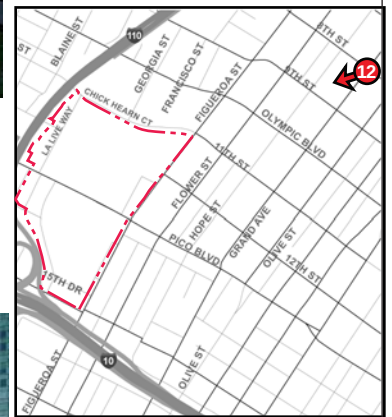
Photo 11d Proposed Conditions (Nighttime)



Source: Gensler, 2012.



Photo 12a Existing Conditions (Daytime)



Event Center
New Hall

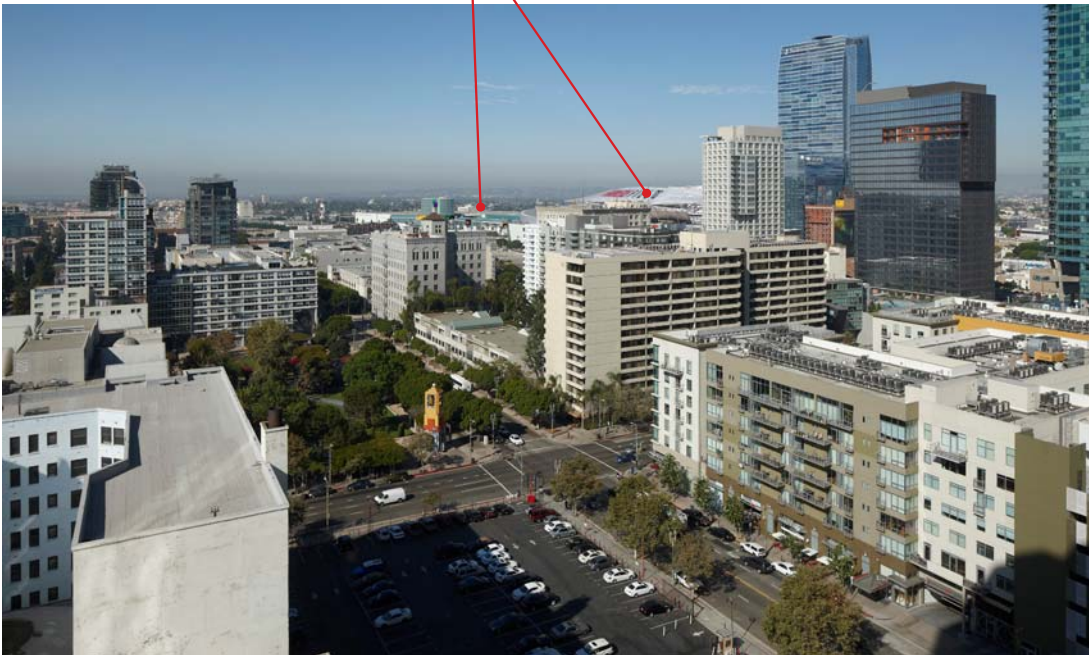


Photo 12b Proposed Conditions (Daytime)

Source: Gensler, 2012.



Figure IV.C-13
View from Grand Avenue near 8th Street Looking Southwest



Photo 13a Existing Conditions (Daytime)



Photo 13c Existing Conditions (Nighttime)

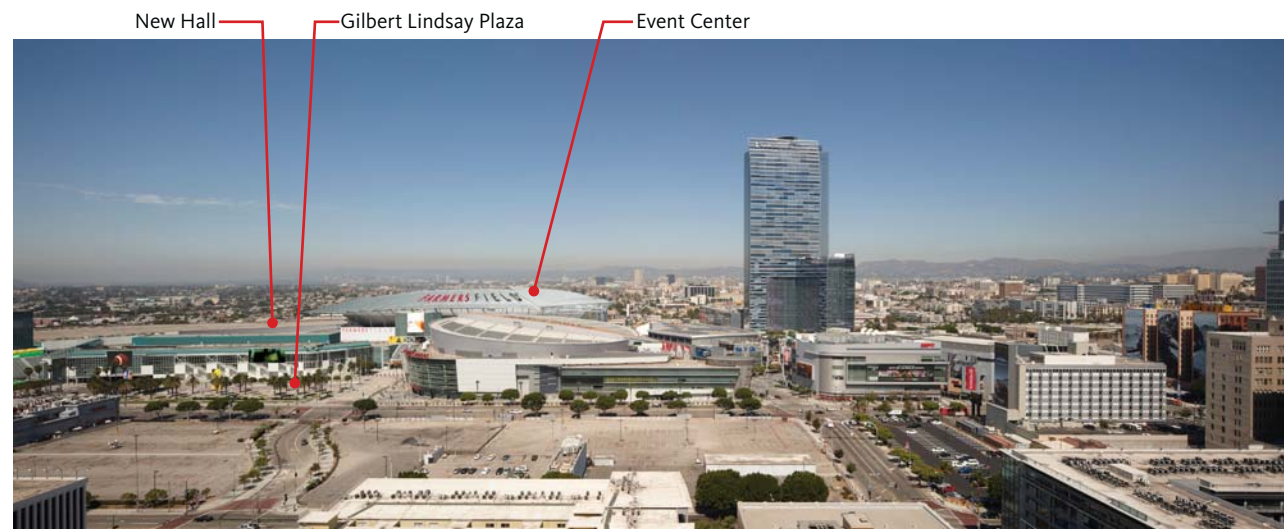


Photo 13b Proposed Conditions (Daytime)

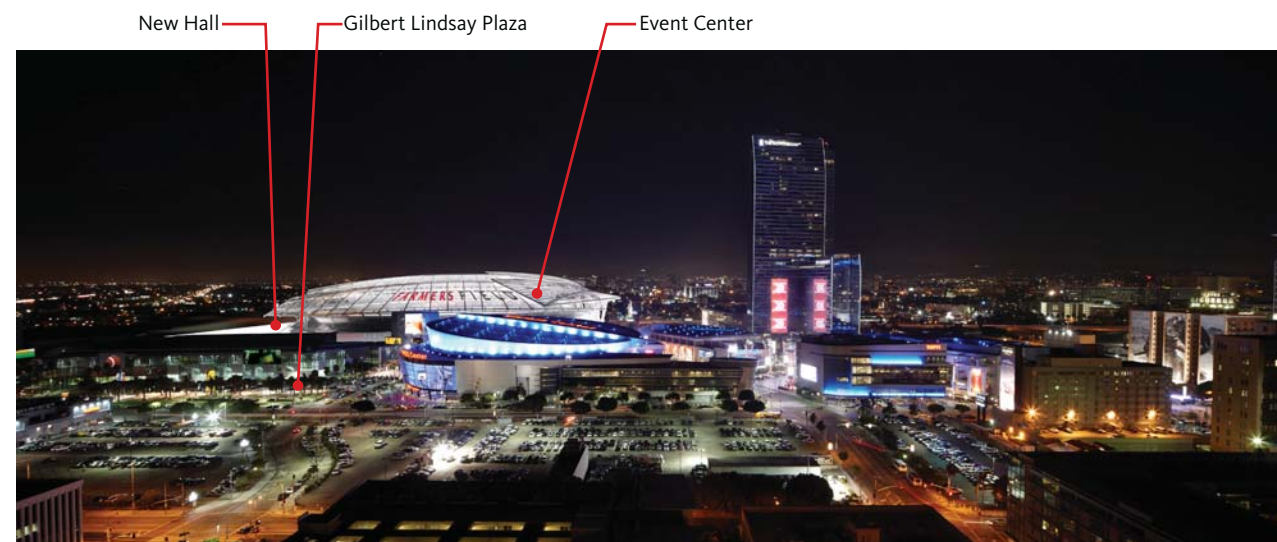


Photo 13d Proposed Conditions (Nighttime)



Source: Gensler, 2012.



Photo 14a Existing Conditions (Daytime)



Photo 14c Existing Conditions (Nighttime)

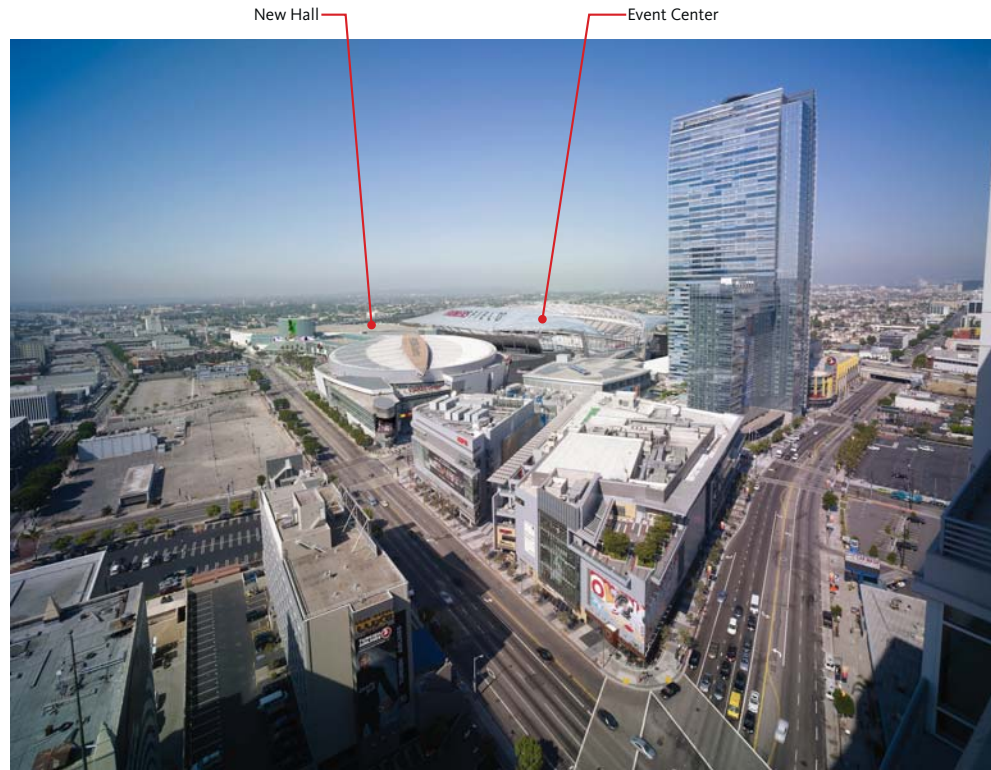


Photo 14b Proposed Conditions (Daytime)

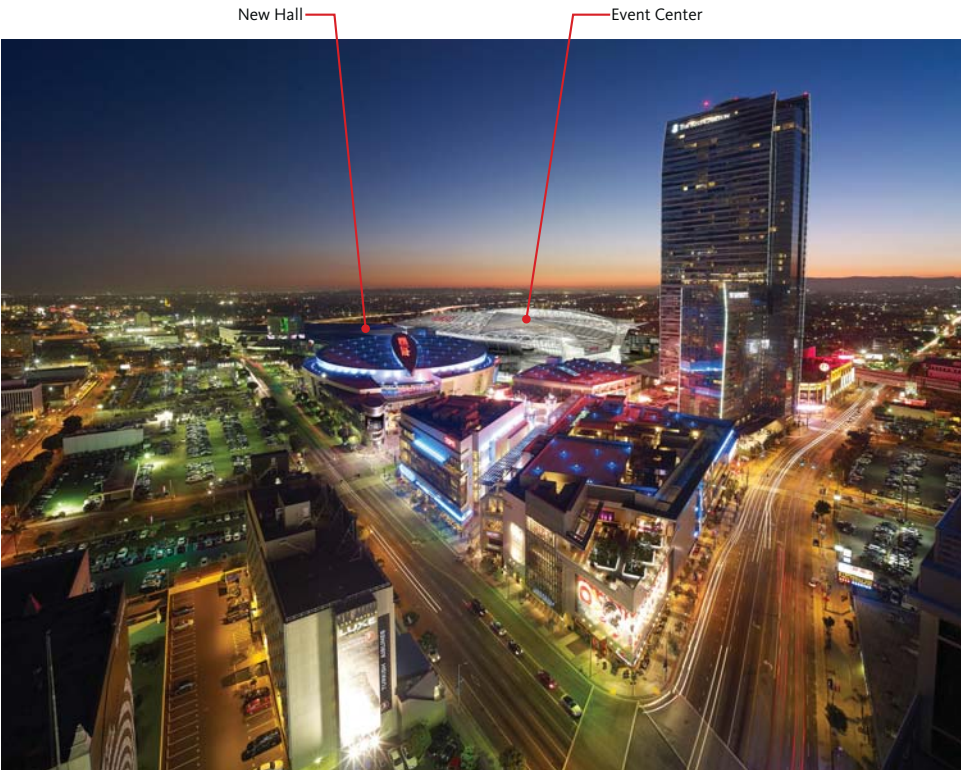


Photo 14d Proposed Conditions (Nighttime)



Source: Gensler, 2012.



Photo 15a Existing Conditions (Daytime)



Photo 15c Existing Conditions (Nighttime)

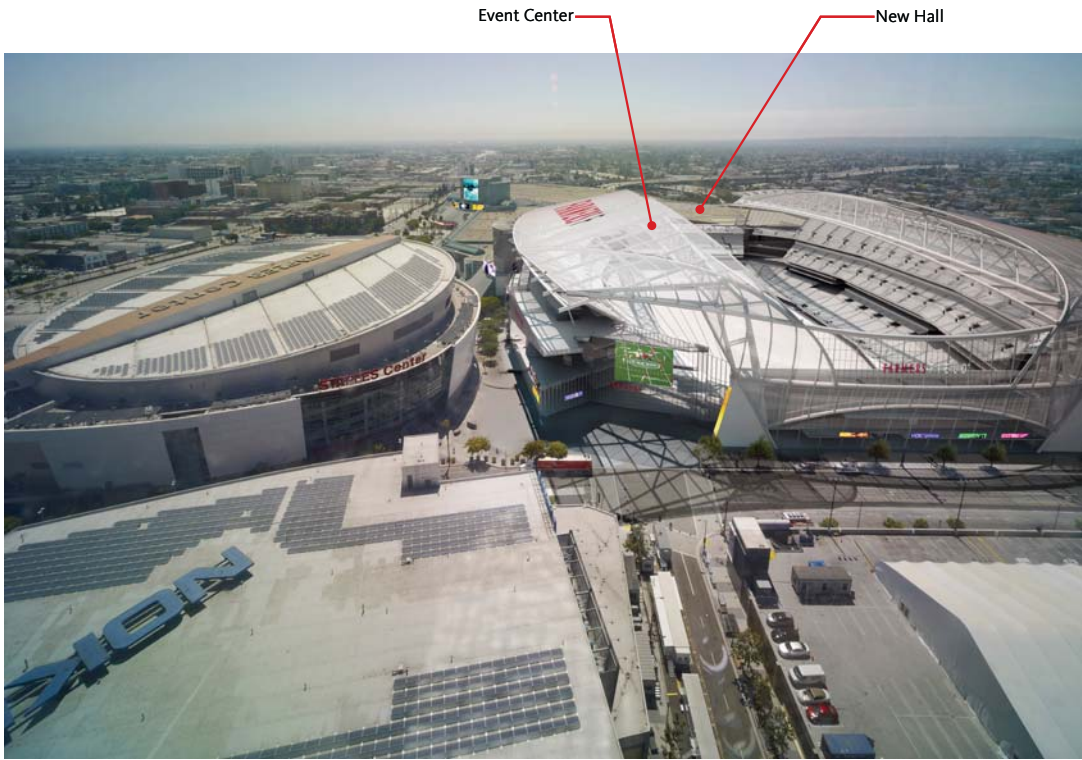
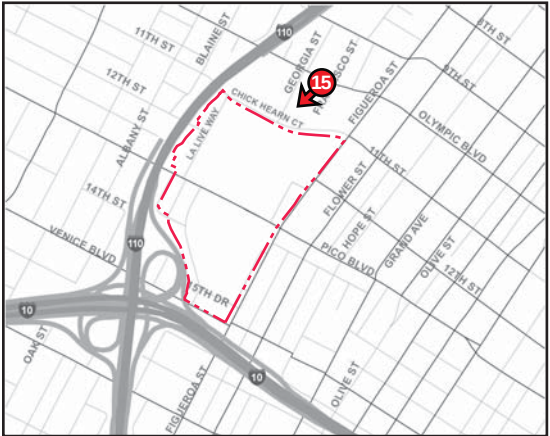


Photo 15b Proposed Conditions (Daytime)

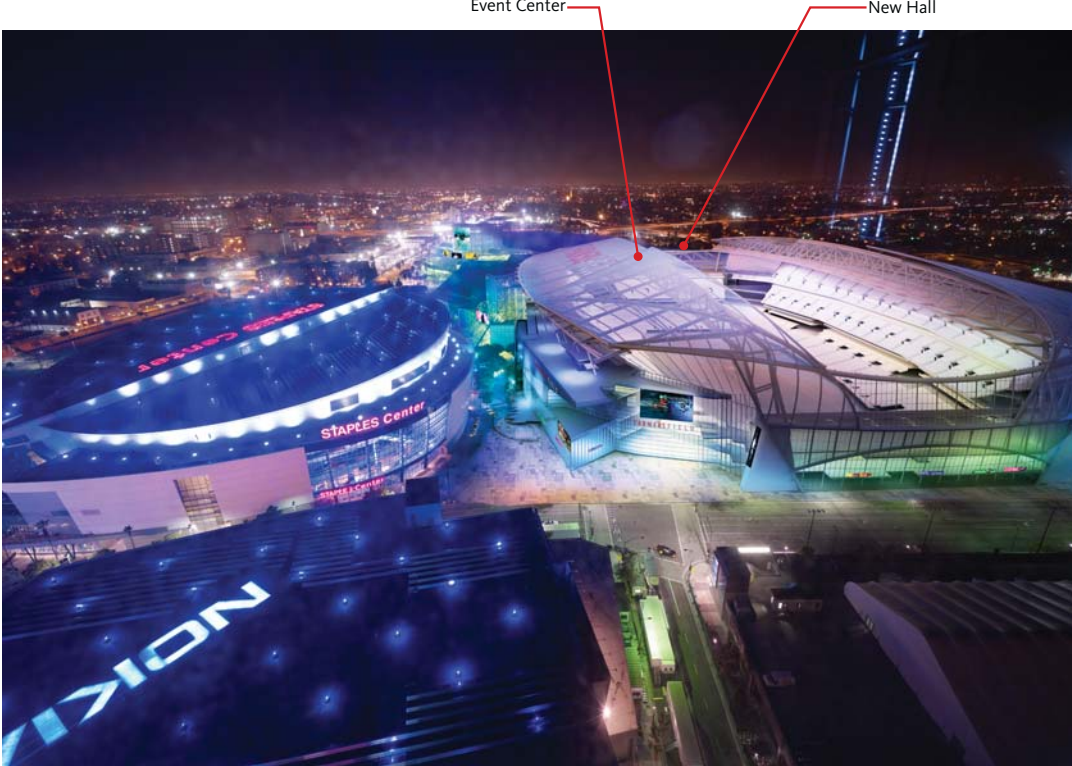


Photo 15d Proposed Conditions (Nighttime)

Source: Gensler, 2012.

Photo 13a in Figure IV.C-14 on page IV.C-28 is taken from the 19-story penthouse in a residential building three blocks to the east on 11th Street. The expansive panoramic view includes a direct line of sight towards existing development within the Project Site, with the South Hall main entry tower as the tallest visible element (left side of photo). The horizon appears unbroken (although the Marriott/Ritz tower directly to the north would also be visible and would interrupt the horizon).

The southwesterly view from northeast of the Project Site, as shown in Photo 14a in Figure IV.C-15 on page IV.C-29 and taken from the rooftop of a 26-story residential building on Olympic Boulevard, prominently shows existing development at L.A. LIVE in the foreground and STAPLES Center, with the West Hall and South Hall visible in the background. Again, the view extends into the distance, but the horizon is punctuated by the Marriott/Ritz tower.

Photo 15a in Figure IV.C-16 on page IV.C-30 depicts the southerly view from the 27th story of the Ritz-Carlton Residences, approximately 450 feet north of the Project Site boundary at Chick Hearn Court and Georgia Street. From this location, one can look directly down onto the Nokia Theatre and the West Garage, as well as the West Hall and STAPLES Center. The South Hall is visible in the background, and the horizon line appears unbroken from this elevation. In the nighttime view shown in Photo 15c, lighting on the roof of the Nokia Theatre and especially STAPLES Center are strong visual elements, as is moderate to bright lighting along roadways such as Chick Hearn Court and a portion of Figueroa Street, and the West Hall is still clearly discernible due to surrounding lighting.

b. Regulatory Framework

The Proposed Project would be subject to a number of local plans, policies and regulations related to visual character, including the Citywide General Plan Framework Element (General Plan Framework), the Central City Community Plan (Community Plan), the City of Los Angeles Walkability Checklist (Walkability Checklist), the Citywide Urban Design Guidelines, the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC), the proposed Figueroa Corridor Streetscape Project, and guidelines established by the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Commission. These regulations are summarized in Appendix G of this Draft EIR, and a regulatory consistency analysis is provided in Section IV.A, Land Use, of this Draft EIR.

3. Environmental Impacts

a. Methodology

(1) Aesthetics/Visual Character

The analysis of visual character/aesthetics considers the visual character of the area immediately surrounding the Project Site and the impacts of the Proposed Project with respect to the aesthetic environment. The analysis considers the physical aspects of the Proposed Project and its associated project design features (described below), as well as an evaluation of simulated composite photographs showing existing and future conditions at representative locations. The analysis is based on the following three-step process:

- Step 1: Describe the massing and general scale of Proposed Project buildings. Consider other factors such as setbacks and open space, which may be anticipated on the basis of the Project Design Features. The maximum building heights and mass are assumed in the evaluation.
- Step 2: Compare the expected appearance of the Project Site after Project implementation to the existing site appearance and character of adjacent uses and determine whether and/or to what extent a change of the visual character of the area could occur (considering factors such as the blending/contrasting of new and existing buildings given the proposed uses, density, height, bulk, setbacks, signage, etc.); and
- Step 3: Compare the anticipated appearance of the Proposed Project to standards within existing plans and policies that are applicable to the Proposed Project and the Project Site (regulatory analysis).

(2) Views

The analysis of views evaluates the changes to existing views that may result from development of the Proposed Project. The intent of the analysis is to determine if view resources are visible in the Project area and whether visual access to such resources would be blocked or diminished as a result of the Proposed Project. The analysis further considers whether the Proposed Project would enhance viewing conditions through the creation of new resources. In general, views are closely tied to topography and distance from a view resource. The identification of available views within the Project area was accomplished through field surveys, photographic documentation, and topographic analysis. The analysis is based on the Proposed Project's characteristics, particularly building heights and massing, and an evaluation of simulated composite photographs showing existing and future conditions at representative locations, as viewed from a range of distances and variety of directions relative to the Project Site.

The *City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide* provides that the analysis of project impacts to visual resources must address views from public places such as designated scenic highways, corridors, parkways, roadways, bike paths, and trails. To determine whether a potential view impact would occur, a five-step process is used to weigh several considerations, as follows:

- Step 1: Define the view resources that could be affected by Proposed Project development.
- Step 2: Identify the potential obstruction of view resources as a result of development of the Project Site.
- Step 3: Evaluate whether a potential obstruction would substantially alter the view. The “substantiality” of an alteration in views is somewhat subjective and dependent on many factors. In this case, an obstruction in the view of a particular view resource is considered substantial if it exhibits all of the following traits: (1) the area viewed contains a view resource; (2) the obstruction of the resource covers more than an incidental/small portion of the resource; and (3) the obstruction would occur from a public vantage point.
- Step 4: Consider whether the Proposed Project includes design features that offset the potential alteration or loss of views of a particular view resource.
- Step 5: Consider whether the view blockage is permanent, as viewed from a scenic vantage point; or whether the blockage would be of limited duration, such as when viewed from a moving vehicle or temporary blockages associated with construction activities.

In addition, although not protected under CEQA, this impact analysis addresses private views from residential buildings due to the proximity of various high-rise residential uses to the north and east of the Project Site. This evaluation is provided for informational purposes only and addresses private view impacts on near-range and panoramic views of the urban landscape from nearby private residences.

b. Thresholds of Significance

Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines provides a set of sample questions that address impacts with regard to aesthetics. These questions are as follows:

Would the project:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

- Substantially damage scenic resources including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?
- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?
- Create a new source of substantial light and glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

In the context of these questions from Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the *City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide* states that the determination of significance shall be made on a case-by case- basis, considering the following factors:

(1) Aesthetics/Visual Character

- The amount or relative proportion of existing features or elements that substantially contribute to the visual character or image of a neighborhood, community, or localized area, which would be removed, altered, or demolished;
- The amount of natural open space to be graded or developed;
- The degree to which proposed structures in natural open space areas would be effectively integrated into the aesthetics of the site, through appropriate design, etc;
- The degree of contrast between proposed features and existing features that represent the area's aesthetic image;
- The degree to which a proposed zone change would result in buildings that would detract from the existing style or image of the area due to density, height, bulk, setbacks, signage, or other physical elements;
- The degree to which the project would contribute to the area's aesthetic character; and
- Applicable guidelines and regulations.

Based on these factors, the Project would have potentially significant impacts if it were to substantially and adversely alter or degrade the existing visual character of an area, including through the alteration, degradation or elimination of existing features or resources; or if the Project were to introduce elements that substantially detract from the visual character of an area.

(2) Views

- The nature and quality of recognized views (such as natural topography, settings, manmade or natural features of visual interest, and resources such as mountains or the ocean);
- Whether the project affects views from a designated scenic highway, corridor, or parkway;
- The extent of obstruction (e.g., total blockage, partial interruption, or minor diminishment); and
- The extent to which the project affects recognized views available from a length of a public roadway, bike path, or trail as opposed to a single, fixed vantage point.

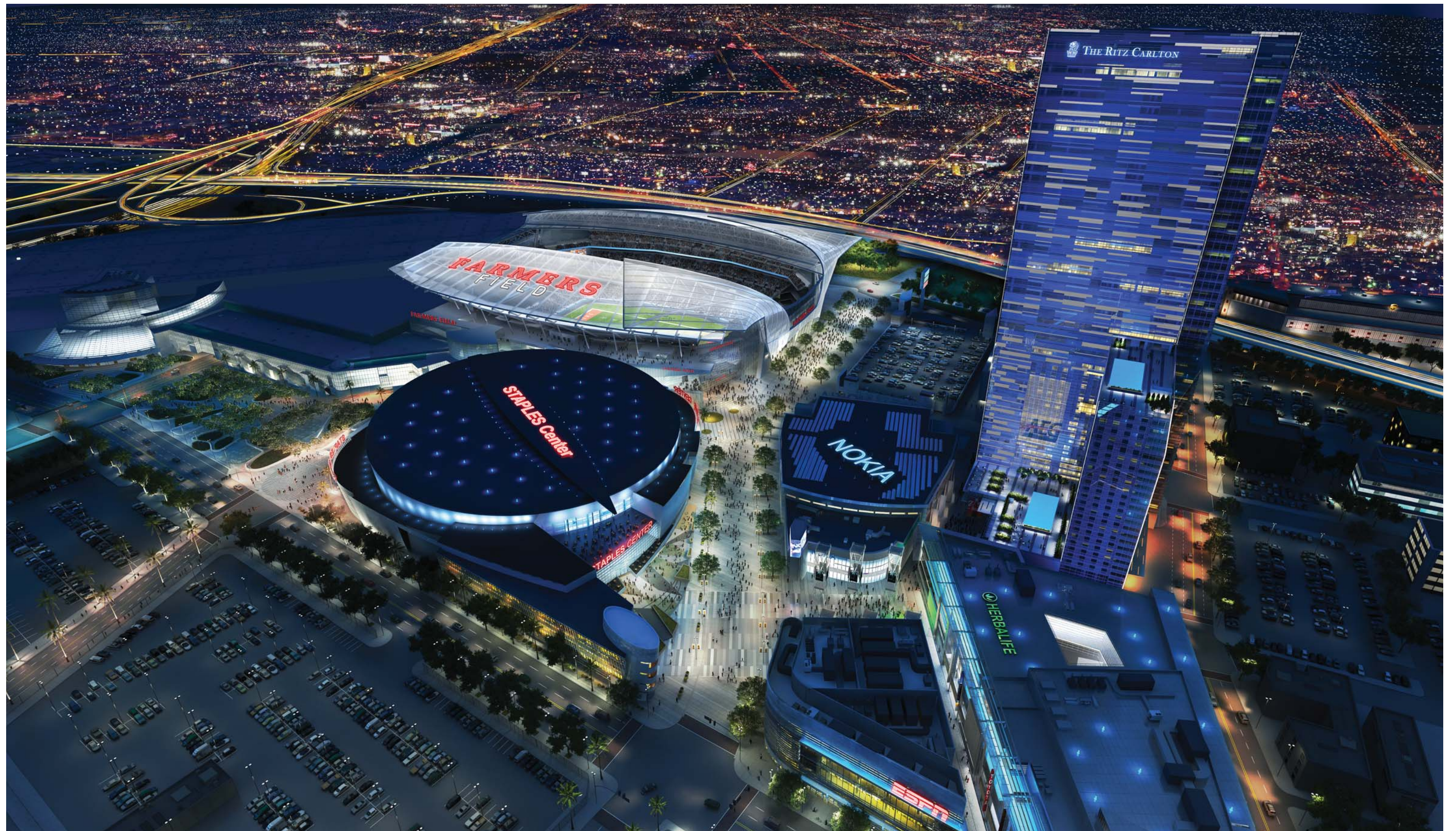
Based on these factors, the Project would have potentially significant impacts with respect to views if its development were to obstruct an existing, publicly-available recognized view resource.

c. Project Design Features

The Proposed Project involves the modernization and expansion of the existing Los Angeles Convention Center and the creation of a new multi-purpose event center (the Event Center). A detailed description of the Proposed Project is provided in Section II, Project Description. Provided below is a summary of those Proposed Project characteristics that would influence the Project's impacts on visual character and views and are most relevant to this analysis. Figure IV.C-17 on page IV.C-36 depicts a simulated aerial view of the Proposed Project in the context of the Project Site and surrounding uses.

During construction, temporary construction fencing would be placed along the periphery of active construction areas to screen much of the construction activity from view at the street level. Additionally, the Applicants would monitor the Project Site for graffiti and contract with a graffiti removal company, as needed to ensure the prompt removal of graffiti.

Development of the Proposed Project would be implemented via the proposed Convention and Event Center Specific Plan (Proposed Specific Plan), which would establish maximum building heights, as follows: Event Center—220 feet; New Hall—90 feet; and parking garages—90 feet. In terms of architectural design, the Event Center would have a varied roofline and façade articulation to reduce building massing and create visual interest. More specifically, the Event Center would have a deployable roof, which would allow it to function as an open-air facility during Spectator Events. The building façades



Source: Gensler, 2012.

may include a composition of materials including glazed curtain walls, ETFE (ethylene tetrafluoroethylene, a durable plastic) and/or PTFE (polytetrafluoroethylene) panels, metal wall panels, glass fiber reinforced concrete (GFRC), and concrete and steel support piers. Portions of the precast seating platforms with structural steel framing supports would also be visible just below the roof. Illustrations of each façade of the Event Center, based on current conceptual designs, are presented in Figures II-11 through II-14 in Section II, Project Description. As for the other major structural components of the Project, the New Hall building would feature an architectural style, building materials and colors that are similar to and/or complement those of the existing South Hall and Concourse Building, as shown in Figure IV.C-10 and in accordance with applicable policies/guidelines of the Citywide Urban Design Guidelines and the Downtown Design Guide.

The L.A. Live Way and Bond Street Garages would consist of eight and seven above-grade parking levels, respectively, each with a Pedestrian Bridge connecting to the Event Center and the New Hall, respectively. Both garages would feature signage (discussed further below) along the west façade facing SR-110. Additionally, the L.A. Live Way Garage's east façade may include an exterior pedestrian vertical circulation element (e.g., escalator/staircase), and the west façade would have express ramps for vehicular access between multiple levels.

As part of the proposed improvements, the loading docks and associated truck circulation systems serving the main facilities on-site would be reconfigured. Similar to existing conditions, most of the Project loading areas would be hidden from public view. The most visible loading area would continue to be that serving the South Hall, located along the rear of the building, one level above street level adjacent to I-10/SR-110 Harbor Freeway interchange. This loading dock would be physically extended to serve the New Hall, and the existing truck ramp would remain in place and in service throughout construction. The canopies with solar panels located over the truck docks would continue to be visible from the freeway interchange, as would new signage (described below) placed on the upper portion of the South Hall's rear façade. In addition, a new central plant and storage area would be located at street level on the east side of L.A. Live Way. The cooling towers for the new central plant would be located in the area of the existing circular truck ramp at street level and would not be visible except from adjacent vantage points.

An important component of the overall Project is the signage program, which would be implemented via the Proposed Specific Plan or a Sign District (SD), hereafter referred to as the Proposed Project's Signage Regulations. The Signage Regulations would create three sign zones (Zones A, A1 and B) throughout the Project Site, with each zone further divided into two or three vertical sign levels (Levels 1 through 3), as shown in Figure II-23 in Section II, Project Description, of this Draft EIR, and discussed in further detail therein. These zones and height levels overlap with the Specific Plan's Subareas. The Sign

Regulations would be in addition to City Ordinance No. 172,465, which would remain in effect and continue to regulate certain existing and permitted signage for STAPLES Center and the Convention Center.

On an overall basis, except as permitted by City Ordinance No. 172,465, the following general standards are proposed to apply to signage within the Project site: (1) individual signs could vary from 500 to 5,000 square feet in size, depending on the sign zone and vertical sign level; (2) heights could vary from 3 to 80 feet, with total signage comprising between 5 and 60 percent of building façades, depending on location; and (3) operating hours for certain signs would be from dawn to 2:00 A.M., although some locations would have no restrictions on operating hours.

The following are the proposed limitations on signage area:⁹

- Maximum amount of signage permitted: 110,000 square feet of permanent signs, excluding wayfinding signage, 10,000 square feet of temporary signage, and 59,200 square feet of on-site aerial view signage;
- Maximum amount of off-site signage: 70,000 square feet.

Figure II-24 in Section II, Project Description, of this Draft EIR depicts the locations and types of all potential signage throughout the Project Site. As shown therein, the majority of signage would be focused on the building façades along the perimeter of the Project Site, including along Figueroa Street, SR-110 and the freeway interchange. Other locations that emphasize the placement of signage are along Chick Hearn Court and L.A. Live Way, although these roadways have limited visibility from outside of the Project Site since they do not function as major thoroughfares in the Project area.

Smaller-scale directional, pedestrian and vehicular signage would be placed throughout the Project Site as necessary to facilitate access and safety. The types and extent of permitted signage would emphasize the event- and entertainment-oriented aspect of the Project Site. Specifically, signage types could include Convention Center identity signs, temporary event signs, changeable message LED boards, static wall signs, identity signs and retail/tenant identity signs.

The Central City Community Plan recognizes that the Community Plan area consists of a collection of unique districts each with a very clear and discernible identity. A few

⁹ Totals exclude wayfinding and temporary signage.

examples include the Civic Center, Financial Core, Little Tokyo, and the Convention Center/Arena (which includes the Project Site). The Convention Center/Arena district is an area in transition that started with the development of STAPLES Center in 1999. Specifically, STAPLES Center has hosted over 2,500 events and accommodated over 38 million fans since its opening, playing a key role in the revitalization of this portion of Downtown Los Angeles. Although not technically located within the Convention Center/Arena district, the emergence of the adjacent L.A. LIVE development has further defined the unique identity of the Convention Center/Arena district. The Project area's current identity is now one of a sports- and entertainment-oriented urban destination unlike any other in the City, in that it is defined by its entertainment, sports and Convention Center venues and, in part, by the L.A. LIVE signage program.

Central to this concept is the goal of establishing a unique visual identity for the Project Site, which would be achieved in part through dynamic signage. The creation of a distinctive visual identity for the district would also support the City's adopted Downtown Strategic Plan (discussed in Section IV.A, Land Use), whose objectives for the Convention Center District include the desire "to maintain the Convention Center as the region's preeminent, state-of-the-art facility."¹⁰ The importance of signage to this area was acknowledged by the recitals to Ordinance No. 172,465 which include statements regarding the need for effective and communicative signage, the economic necessity of selling advertising space(i.e., signage rights) at large-scale sports and entertainment venues, and the recognition that "the sports and entertainment complex [i.e., STAPLES Center] is a unique venue and requires a signage program appropriate to the location, size, scale and purpose of the facility."

Building on this long-standing recognition of the importance of signage in this form of development, the Proposed Project would feature signage as a central element, serving to both activate the public realm and support the on-site facilities economically. The signage program would also be designed to build on existing signage at L.A. LIVE, thus visually integrating the Project Site with L.A. LIVE and creating a cohesive destination within Downtown Los Angeles. In addition, the Signage Regulations would: take into account critical safety issues such as the minimization of potential traffic hazards; ensure that street views and views of scenic vistas are protected; and ensure that visual clutter is limited so as to protect and enhance the visual character of major commercial corridors and properties throughout the Project area. Further, the signage program would support advertising and the naming rights to the Event Center. In addition to signage, lighting would influence the Proposed Project's visual character. Lighting within the Project Site

¹⁰ *Downtown Strategic Plan Los Angeles, Downtown Strategic Plan Advisory Committee, page 47.*

would be regulated via the Proposed Specific Plan. Exterior lighting would be used to illuminate the buildings, plazas, landscaping, roadways, pedestrian and bicycle pathways, and signage within the Project Site and would provide for public safety and security. Lighting required for public safety, such as roadway and pathway lights, would be controlled separately from ornamental and environmental lighting. In support of the Event Center, klieg/xenon lights (spotlights) would be used from time to time, similar to that within L.A. LIVE, and pyrotechnics shows may be provided in connection with certain events. The lighting plan would be coordinated with ongoing City improvements along the Figueroa Corridor and would be consistent with the Los Angeles Green Building Code and the California Energy Code. Illuminated signage would include front-lit billboard style signs, luminous channel letter signs, and changeable or animated LED signs, including moving, programming, flashing, neon, LCD, or similar lighting displays or installations. Further discussion of proposed lighting is provided in Section IV.D.2, Artificial Light and Glare.

As pedestrian access and circulation comprise a critical element of the Proposed Project, the Proposed Specific Plan would provide conceptual design guidance for the arrival areas and open spaces within the Project Site. A series of plazas would be created to provide places for gathering and passive recreation, networked by safe, pedestrian-friendly pathways and streetscapes designed to serve the varied users of the Project Site and the associated uses. In total, the proposed open space areas including plazas, sidewalks and permeable areas (i.e., landscaping), would comprise approximately 24 percent of the Project Site. The major open space components, which would represent new and enhanced existing visual resources, would include the following:

- Event Center Plaza would be located along Chick Hearn Court between STAPLES Center's Star Plaza and L.A. Live Way and would connect to Gilbert Lindsay Plaza at the south side of STAPLES Center. As the Event Center Plaza would adjoin a main entry and VIP entry to the Event Center and a main entry and VIP entry to STAPLES Center, this particular plaza would be an important event day gathering space, which may include kiosks and temporary event tents, and as such would offer a sense of arrival as visitors enter the Project Site. Pedestrian movement would be enhanced through a number of means, including: widening the sidewalk on the south side of Chick Hearn Court, west of Georgia Street; creating an open hardscape area of sufficient size to accommodate large crowds coming to and leaving events as well as for non-event day activities; programming public spaces with a wide variety of open air events; and providing pedestrian-scale amenities at the ground floor of the Event Center to enhance walkability and increase public activity on non-event days. Within this area, the existing hockey puck installations just northwest of STAPLES Center could be relocated or recreated by the same artist.
- Gilbert Lindsay Plaza, fronting on Figueroa Street between Pico Boulevard and 12th Street, would be completely redesigned, as illustrated in Figure II-17 in

Section II, Project Description. With the new design, the plaza would function as a major gathering space within the Project Site, with a flexible balance of hardscaped area and softscape open space to address the year-round needs of the on-site uses, which would range from accommodating large numbers of patrons on event days to offering activities and amenities for local residents, visitors and other users on non-event days.¹¹ The northern portion of the plaza would also function as an important meeting place for event-day visitors as well as locals and would be framed by entrances to the Event Center and STAPLES Center. A predominantly hardscaped area would be provided and could include an important physical focal point to create a clear wayfinding navigation point for the Project Site. A portion of Gilbert Lindsay Plaza would be transformed into a community green space with turf and plantings, which would serve the Convention Center, Event Center and STAPLES Center on event days and function as a green space for the greater surrounding community on non-event days. A water feature, potentially coupled with a public art piece, may be provided to define the experience of the plaza area. Other amenities that may be located within Gilbert Lindsay Plaza include a café, as well as kiosks and temporary tents, in support of activities at the Convention Center, as well as at the Event Center. In addition, the existing statue of Gilbert Lindsay would remain, but may be relocated within the plaza. Such improvements would increase the importance of Gilbert Lindsay Plaza as a visual resource and focal point within the Project Site. The overall plan also involves the relocation of the key functions presently provided at Gilbert Lindsay Plaza (e.g., bus loading/unloading) to a reconfigured facility along Pico Boulevard near the South Hall (within the Pico Passage, described below), or along L.A. Live Way.

- Pico Passage would comprise the area along either side of Pico Boulevard between Figueroa Street and L.A. Live Way underneath the existing Concourse Building and the New Hall. These outdoor spaces would be reconfigured to serve the Convention Center facilities and the Event Center, as well as for pedestrian movement along Pico Boulevard. Pico Passage would be designed to provide a welcoming arrival space and a safe passage for pedestrians along Pico Boulevard. To facilitate movement within this area, pedestrian improvements would include increased sidewalk widths on the north side of Pico Boulevard and potentially a mid-block crosswalk. An approximately 50,000-square-foot entry plaza would be located at the northeast corner of Pico Boulevard and L.A. Live Way adjacent to the New Hall main entrance and would be used as a gathering space and for pedestrian circulation. Pico Passage is also planned to have artificial lighting enhancements and potentially other visual and audio design elements to enhance the pedestrian and public experience, as

¹¹ *Gilbert Lindsay Plaza would be used occasionally also for bus staging in connection with major Convention Center events on an as needed basis.*

illustrated in Figures II-18 and II-19 in Section II, Project Description. A bus and taxi drop-off area would be provided along the south side of Pico Boulevard just west of the South Hall main entrance.

One of the goals of the Proposed Project is to create an urban environment designed to a human scale that facilitates activity on the adjacent streets, encourages pedestrian travel, promotes the walkability of and around the Project Site, and creates strong pedestrian connections to the surrounding area, particularly nearby transit stops and stations. The plazas identified above, along with the proposed streetscape improvements described below, would serve to accomplish this goal, as would pedestrian-scaled elements at all entrances to the new facilities. Further, Project improvements would create and enhance connectivity with existing uses within the Project Site, including STAPLES Center and the South Hall, as well as uses within L.A. LIVE, including Nokia Plaza, thus promoting pedestrian-oriented activity and creating an accessible public realm. Please refer to Section II, Project Description, of this Draft EIR for further discussion of the proposed plazas and outdoor public spaces.

Whereas the Proposed Specific Plan would focus on development within the Project Site, the Proposed Project's streetscape improvements, illustrated in Figure II-20 in Section II, Project Description, would involve landscaping and streetscaping within and extending beyond the Project Site and would address the public spaces (e.g., plazas and pedestrian passages) that connect the Project Site with off-site locations. The Proposed Project's streetscape improvements would specify features such as paving materials, crosswalks, sidewalk widths, setbacks, street tree species and spacing, street light fixture types and spacing, and street furnishings. These proposed streetscape improvements would create functional, safe streets and bike paths as well as pedestrian-friendly sidewalks that connect to and complement the Downtown area, while supporting the Project Site as a unique destination for regional sports and entertainment events within walking distance of Downtown. The proposed streetscape improvements would establish a hierarchy of public spaces, including streets and intersections that connect the plazas and pedestrian paths proposed on-site. The proposed streetscape improvements would also be consistent with the existing streetscape improvements and associated standards in place for the adjacent LASED area and in the City's Downtown Design Guide, which includes approved streetscape standards for Figueroa Street between 8th Street and the I-10 freeway.

As shown in Figure II-20 in Section II, Project Description, the proposed streetscape improvements would occur within the following on-site and off-site areas: (1) the on-site areas along the streets that form the perimeter of the Project Site that have not been improved per the LASED Streetscape Plan; (2) the off-site segments of Olympic Boulevard, 11th Street, 12th Street and Pico Boulevard that extend underneath the SR-110 Freeway; and (3) the area around the north side of the Georgia Street and Chick Hearn Court intersection. The Proposed Project would include streetscape improvements along both

sides of the street along those portions of Pico Boulevard, L.A. Live Way and Convention Center Way that occur within the Project Site. In addition, the Proposed Project would construct enhanced crosswalks at 12 intersections in the vicinity of the Project Site, principally along Figueroa and Flower Streets as well as along L.A. Live Way and Olympic Boulevard.

An example of the streetscape improvements to be implemented is the enhancement of the pedestrian circulation spaces along L.A. Live Way, to the west of the Event Center building, to create a functional, pedestrian-friendly urban space allowing convenient and safe pedestrian movement between the Event Center, the New Hall, STAPLES Center, and the parking facilities to the west. Through these streetscape improvements, L.A. Live Way would facilitate the arrival and departure of guests, and the overall space would provide a safe atmosphere at all hours, including during non-event times. Anticipated physical improvements to pedestrian access would include urban design enhancements to facilitate the flow of large crowds entering and exiting the Event Center from the parking structures, landscaping and streetscape improvements such as pedestrian-scale lighting and enhanced street crossings, and widening the sidewalk on the east side of L.A. Live Way.

Building on the established LASED standards, as part of the Proposed Project's streetscape improvements, street trees would include London plane tree (*Platanus acerifolia*), Brisbane box (*Tristania conferta*), Chinese flame tree (*Koelreuteria bipinnata*), and pink trumpet (*Tabebuia impetiginosa*), Bloodgold London plane tree (*Platanus acerifolia* 'Bloodgood') and Mexican sycamore (*Platanus Mexicana*), similar to those specified in the LASED Specific Plan.

In addition, a public art program would be implemented as part of the Proposed Specific Plan. As set forth in the Specific Plan, this provision would require public arts funding to be used for on-site art and amenities.

d. Project Impacts

(1) Aesthetics/Visual Character

(a) Construction

Construction activities generally contrast with the aesthetic character of an area, although temporary in nature. During construction activities for the Proposed Project, the visual appearance of portions of the Project Site would be altered due to the removal of an existing building, parking areas, plazas/paving and landscaping. Other construction activities including site preparation and grading, the staging of construction equipment and materials (i.e., bulldozers, portable toilets and offices), and the construction of foundations,

new buildings, parking structures and outdoor plazas would also alter the visual character of the Project Site. These construction activities would be visible to pedestrians and motorists on adjacent streets, including segments of the adjacent freeways, as well as to viewers within nearby buildings. Temporary construction fencing would be placed along the periphery of active construction areas to screen much of the construction activity from view at the street level. Additionally, pedestrian walkways and construction fencing could serve as targets for graffiti if not appropriately monitored. Therefore, the Applicant would monitor the Project Site and contract with a graffiti removal company, as needed. Given the temporary nature of construction activities, the use of construction fencing to reduce visual impacts and the prompt removal of graffiti when necessary, short-term construction activities would not substantially and adversely alter or degrade the existing visual character of the Project Site.

As described above, it is possible that a commission with jurisdiction, such as the California State Historical Resources Commission or the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission, could determine the West Hall eligible for the California Register, the National Register or as a local HCM. If any such determination were to be made, a significant impact would occur as a result of demolition of the West Hall because under the *Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide* historic resources are considered to be visual resources. As such, given that demolition of the West Hall would occur during the construction phase, construction-related impacts are therefore conservatively considered to be significant in the event that the West Hall were to be determined eligible as a historic resource.

The Proposed Project's streetscape improvements also include the removal of existing street trees along certain street segments within the Project area.¹² The removal of street trees would temporarily reduce the visual character of the streets during the construction phase of the Proposed Project. However, as previously discussed, none of the street trees or trees located on-site is considered a protected specimen. Moreover, the street trees to be removed would be replaced with new street trees of particular species designated for various roadways in the Project area, based on the species originally specified in the LASED Specific Plan. This would create a more cohesive streetscape throughout the Project Site and the surrounding area (see discussion below). Given that the loss of street trees would be temporary, that any removed trees would be replaced, and that the Proposed Project would ultimately improve the streetscape in the Project area, the

¹² Existing street trees would not be removed along the west side of Figueroa Street between Chick Hearn Court and Pico Boulevard, both sides of Chick Hearn Court between Figueroa Street and Georgia Street, and the north side of Chick Hearn Court between Georgia Street and L.A. Live Way, as these segments were improved with new street trees and other amenities in 1999 as part of the LASED Streetscape Plan.

removal of street trees during construction activities would not substantially and adversely alter or degrade the existing visual character of the Project Site.

Visible construction activities would also include truck traffic to and from the Project Site. However, the impact of construction trucking would not significantly impact the visual character of the area, since major roadways are intended to accommodate a range of vehicle types, including trucks incidental to construction and deliveries. Furthermore, as construction activities would be temporary, the visual impacts associated with construction would cease after Project completion.

Based on the above, with the exception of removal of the West Hall, construction activities associated with the Proposed Project would not substantially and adversely alter or degrade the existing visual character of the Project Site, nor introduce elements that substantially detract from the visual character of the Project Site or surrounding area on a permanent basis. However, construction-related impacts to visual resources are conservatively considered to be significant due to the removal of the West Hall.

(b) Operation

Implementation of the Proposed Project would result in the removal of the West Hall and the associated raised plaza, service deck and at-grade parking level, the Cherry Street Garage, the Bond Street Parking Lot (surface parking only), the associated paved/hardscaped areas and existing landscaping and would develop new buildings, plazas, amenities and landscaping. As shown in the site plan in Figure II-5 in Section II, Project Description, and the simulated aerial view in Figure IV.C-17 herein, the Proposed Project would create an integrated site with a mix of convention, sports, entertainment and office uses that would be consistent with and build on the existing uses on the Project Site and in the immediate area. The Proposed Project would increase the height, density and mass of on-site structures as compared to existing conditions, but would incorporate architectural design features such as pedestrian-scaled entrances and variations in building planes to reduce the effect of massing, provide pedestrian scale and introduce new and enhanced outdoor plazas networked by pedestrian pathways and improved streetscapes. More specifically and as discussed further below, the Project structures would feature varied rooflines, variations in façade treatment, pedestrian-scaled entrances, and building step-backs and/or overhangs to reduce building massing. Entrances would be well-marked and articulated with a pedestrian scale, compatible with the architectural style and integrity of the buildings. While the Event Center would have a height of up to 220 feet, the New Hall would have a maximum building height of 90 feet, similar to that of the 80-foot-tall South Hall and lower than the 135-foot West Hall main entry tower and the 160-foot South Hall main entry tower which would remain on-site. The new heights would also be comparable to those of several buildings located at L.A. LIVE to the immediate north and substantially shorter than the 642-foot Marriott/Ritz tower. Mid- to high-rise development

also occurs throughout the Financial District to the north and South Park to the east, and as such, the proposed building heights would not be out of character with surrounding development. Furthermore, a variety of pedestrian-oriented improvements including pedestrian-oriented lighting, pedestrian wayfinding signage, enhanced sidewalks and crosswalks, and pedestrian amenities (e.g., street furniture) would be introduced to create a human scale throughout the Project Site. Thus, the Proposed Project would not degrade the general visual character of the Project Site. Nonetheless, the Proposed Project would substantially alter some of the visual resources on-site and would introduce elements that may contrast with the current aesthetic image of the Project Site. The discussion below describes such changes, as depicted in the visual simulations presented in Figures IV.C-2 through IV.C-11 herein, followed by an analysis of the aesthetic impacts that would result from the Proposed Project.

As shown in Photo 1b in Figure IV.C-2 on page IV.C-13, the Event Center would be highly visible from SR-110, with a substantially increased height compared to the West Hall. As also shown, Project signage would be clearly evident and would include electronic digital displays in the upper portion of the building façades and smaller retail/tenant identity signs and Event Center identity signs near the ground level that would be oriented for pedestrians. An electronic digital display and numerous static wall signs on the L.A. Live Way Garage would also be visible. In addition, large-scale Event Center identity signs would be permitted on the roof, but would not be visible from SR-110 (or adjacent streets) at this angle and distance. The introduction of substantial façade articulation and pedestrian-scaled entrances at the Event Center would represent new architectural features intended to add visual interest, as compared with the generally flat façades of the existing West Hall that merely exhibit limited variations in color. Combined with streetscape improvements along Chick Hearn Court and L.A. Live Way, the Project Site would take on an active atmosphere, particularly on event days. The Pedestrian Bridge connecting the Event Center and the L.A. Live Way Garage would also be visible in the distance. As shown in the nighttime view provided in Photo 1d, the Project Site would appear more brightly lit during evening hours, and signage illumination would be highly visible. As previously indicated, construction-related impacts are conservatively considered significant due to the removal of the West Hall. The impact created during construction would extend to operation of the Proposed Project.

In Photo 2b in Figure IV.C-3 on page IV.C-14, the Event Center would appear prominently along Chick Hearn Court, and the Project Site would appear more densely developed. Similar to Photo 1b in Figure IV.C-2, the active character of the Project Site would also be evident (particularly on event days), complemented by the existing uses, lighting and signage at L.A. LIVE. Project signage would include a large-scale Event Center identity sign on the eastern façade, as well as on the roof (the latter of which, as illustrated in Photo 2b, would not be visible from street level at this angle), electronic digital displays in the

mid portion of the building façades, and smaller, pedestrian-oriented retail/tenant identity signs near the ground level. As also shown in Photo 2b, this new signage would not be out of character with the large-scale signage that currently exists along the north side of Chick Hearn Court within L.A. LIVE. Although not visible in the photo (located outside of the frame of the image, to the left), a new electronic digital display on the north side of STAPLES Center would also be seen along Chick Hearn Court, in addition to a portion of a large static wall sign that would wrap around that building's corner at Chick Hearn Court and Figueroa Street. Existing light posts and street trees adjacent to STAPLES Center and along the north side of Chick Hearn Court would remain in place, complemented by new landscaping and amenities within Event Center Plaza. Also located just outside of the frame of Photo 2b, the existing series of bronze sculptures located at Star Plaza just north of STAPLES Center would remain visible from both on- and off-site locations.

As shown in Photos 3b, 4b and 5b in Figures IV.C-4, IV.C-5, and IV.C-6 on pages IV.C-15, IV.C-16 and IV.C-17, respectively, the main structural elements of the Figueroa Street frontage would not change under the Proposed Project. Specifically, the South Hall, its main entry tower, the Concourse Building, the West Hall main entry tower and STAPLES Center would remain the prominent visual elements along the street, complemented by existing and proposed street trees and landscaping. The upper portion of the Event Center also would be visible behind the Concourse Building and West Hall main entry tower. The New Hall would not be visible in the background as its building height would be the same as that of the existing Concourse Building. New signage would be located on the South Hall and West Hall entry towers and would include several large electronic digital displays, static wall signs, and temporary event signs. A large electronic digital display and a temporary event sign would be located on the façade of the Concourse Building, and an Event Center identity sign would be visible above and behind the Concourse Building on the Event Center façade. Combined with a potential café within Gilbert Lindsay Plaza, increased landscaping, and new signage at Gilbert Lindsay Plaza that would include freestanding electronic digital displays and static wall signs, the Proposed Project features and in particular, the new signage along Figueroa Street, would serve to enhance the site's identity as a unique sports and entertainment destination by creating more activity and promoting pedestrian uses. The existing statue of Gilbert Lindsay, an identified visual resource, would remain, but may be relocated within the plaza.

Photos 6b and 7b in Figures IV.C-7 and IV.C-8 on pages IV.C-18 and IV.C-19, respectively, depict the Project Site as seen from nearby locations along I-10. The proposed Event Center would be visible to varying degrees, and its increased height as compared to existing development at the Convention Center would be noticeable, especially from closer vantage points. Within the southern portion of the Project Site, the most apparent changes would be the addition of signage along the southwestern (rear) façade of the South Hall. Regarding the latter, as shown in Photos 6b and 7b, a series of

static wall signs, electronic digital displays and a new Convention Center identity sign lining the South Hall's rear façade near the roof would be visible. In compliance with Caltrans' Outdoor Advertising Act, the electronic signs facing the freeway would not have flashing images or continuous motion.¹³ Images would be static and remain at a constant brightness for eight seconds and then complete an instant refresh to the next image, which would then be static for eight seconds. In addition, two electronic digital displays would be located near the top of the southern façade of the Venice Garage (but would be only intermittently visible due to intervening landscaping). The existing STAPLES Center pole sign adjacent to the Venice Garage and I-10 would continue to remain prominent given its height, and the roof sign on the Event Center would be visible in the distance. Portions of the new parking garages and the New Hall would also be visible from vantages to the southwest, as shown in Photo 7b in Figure IV.C-8 on page IV.C-19.

As shown in Photo 8b in Figure IV.C-9 on page IV.C-20, the L.A. Live Way and Bond Street Garages would essentially line the Project Site boundary adjacent to SR-110 and would be visually prominent to passersby traveling the freeway. The upper portion of the Event Center would also be visible. As also shown in Photo 8b, along the garage façades electronic digital displays would be seen which, as previously described, would consist of static images for eight seconds and then complete an instant refresh. Screening elements along the parking garage façades would be seen as well.

The aesthetic character of Pico Boulevard within the Project Site, referred to as the Pico Passage, would change dramatically with Project implementation, as shown in Photos 9b and 9d in Figure IV.C-10 on page IV.C-21. The configuration along the north side of Pico Boulevard would be altered with the addition of the New Hall entry plaza, new streetscape improvements, and Project signage, with similar changes along the south side of the street associated with the creation of a bus and taxi drop-off area. The Concourse Building would no longer be visible in the distance due to the New Hall structure overhead, and the roadway would be covered. Signage would include alternating Convention Center identity signs and electronic digital displays. As previously mentioned, the New Hall entry plaza is planned to have artificial lighting enhancements and potentially other visual and audio design elements. With respect to easterly views from general locations west of SR-110, as represented in Photo 10a provided in Figure IV.C-11 on page IV.C-22, the upper portion of the Event Center would be visually prominent. This new building would be more noticeable than the West Hall due to the increase in height, but the elevated freeway would continue to cause partial obstruction. A portion of the L.A. Live Way Garage would

¹³ *The Outdoor Advertising Act defines "flashing" as a light or message that changes more than once every four seconds.*

also be visible but would be similarly partially obstructed by the freeway. Portions of the new electronic digital displays on the west façade of the L.A. Live Way Garage would be visible, as would the Event Center's rooftop signage.

As discussed above, the West Hall exhibits substantial building massing and lacks façade articulation. Other than its main entry tower on the east side of the building (which would be retained under the Proposed Project), the West Hall lacks pedestrian-scaled entrances, inviting outdoor entry plazas and any ground level activity designed to activate the public realm or promote the walkability of and around the Project Site. The evaluation of aesthetics is inherently influenced by a degree of subjectivity, since individuals respond differently to changes in the visual environment, and an adverse visual scene to one person may represent an improved visual condition to another. Nonetheless, the aesthetic impact created during construction due to removal of the West Hall would extend to operation of the Proposed Project.

In contrast, the proposed Event Center, which would be located on the West Hall site, and the New Hall, which would functionally replace the West Hall, would feature varied rooflines, variations in façade treatment and building materials, pedestrian-scaled entrances, and building step-backs and/or overhangs to reduce building massing and avoid blank street walls. The Event Center building façades, which would include glazed curtain walls, metal wall panels, GFRC and concrete and steel support piers, would incorporate high-quality materials exhibiting variation in style, architectural detail and texture that would generate visual interest, create a unique building identity and provide three-dimensional elements. Entrances would be well-marked and articulated with a pedestrian scale, compatible with the building's architectural style and integrity. In addition, the Event Center's architectural design would feature a deployable roof with an internal steel pipe frame and/or cable structure, which would add an "endearing sculptural form to the skyline," consistent with the City's Downtown Design Guide.¹⁴ The New Hall structure would include simple paneled façades similar to portions of the existing South Hall and Concourse Building, thus featuring an architectural style compatible with that which already exists on-site.

While the Event Center would have a height of up to 220 feet, the New Hall would have a maximum building height of 90 feet, similar to that of the 80-foot tall South Hall and lower than the 135-foot West Hall main entry tower and the 160-foot South Hall main entry tower which would remain on-site. The new heights would also be comparable to those of

¹⁴ Quoted from the Tower Form guidelines provided in the City of Los Angeles Downtown Design Guide, page 33. Any portion of a building taller than 150 feet is subject to the tower standards and guidelines.

several buildings located at L.A. LIVE to the immediate north and substantially shorter than the 642-foot Marriott/Ritz tower. As previously indicated, mid- to high-rise development also occurs throughout the Financial District to the north and South Park to the east, and as such, the proposed building heights would not be out of character with surrounding development. Furthermore, despite the increases in building height, density and massing, the architectural elements to be incorporated into the proposed building designs would soften the visual effect of the buildings, and a variety of pedestrian-oriented improvements such as appropriately scaled entrances, pedestrian-oriented lighting, pedestrian wayfinding signage, enhanced sidewalks and crosswalks, and pedestrian amenities (e.g., street furniture) would be introduced to create a human scale throughout the Project Site.

While no building setbacks would be required as part of the Proposed Project, as shown in the site plan provided in Figure II-5 in Section II, Project Description, the creation of defined entry areas along with the wide and varying sidewalks would serve to demarcate building entrances and the adjacent plazas and create visual interest along the adjoining streets. As previously indicated, Event Center Plaza may include temporary kiosks and event tents, and Gilbert Lindsay Plaza may include a café as well as temporary tents and kiosks, thus promoting pedestrian activity and fostering connectivity between the on-site buildings and the outdoor plaza areas. Further, the Proposed Project would create visual interest and enhance the pedestrian environment through façade articulation and the incorporation of distinctive architectural features where appropriate to provide shade for pedestrians. Thus, the Proposed Project would result in clear and obvious changes to the visual character of the Project Site. Such changes would be, on the whole, more consistent with adopted City policies and guidelines regarding architecture, walkability, the public realm and streetscapes than the West Hall currently is.

The Proposed Project parking garages would be integrated with the on-site buildings through the use of Pedestrian Bridges and well-marked at-grade crossings across L.A. Live Way, and consistent with the Project's prominent architectural design, the east façade of the L.A. Live Way Garage may include an exterior pedestrian vertical circulation element (e.g., escalator/staircase). Parking and loading uses on ground floor levels would be obscured from view from the adjacent streets, and vehicular drop-off areas would be located so as to minimize obstruction to pedestrian activity. The existing South Hall loading dock area would continue to be visible from the adjacent freeway interchange, but all other loading areas on-site would be enclosed or underground. The existing STAPLES Center truck ramp and central plant cooling towers adjacent to Chick Hearn Court would be removed to accommodate Event Center Plaza. Additionally, mechanical and other equipment would be located in designated utility, loading, and storage areas, away from the primary pedestrian circulation spaces, and thus would not be visible from public view to the maximum extent practicable.

The proposed signage program would also represent an important Project component and a strong visual element that would influence the aesthetics of the Project Site. As previously described, the Project signage program would allow a variety of sign types with requirements based on specific locations. The types and extent of permitted signage would emphasize the event- and entertainment-oriented aspect of the Project Site and complement the existing sign district in the adjacent LASED area, including L.A. LIVE. The signage program is intended to support the ongoing development of the Project area. Central to this concept is the goal of establishing a unique visual identity for the Project Site, which would be achieved in part through dynamic signage. As described above, the Signage Regulations would place limitations on the types, amounts, locations, sizes, operating hours and illumination of permitted signs. By design, Project signage would be consistent with the character of a sports and entertainment district (i.e., a bright and active environment with substantial pedestrian activity including nighttime activity), such as that which already exists on-site and within the surrounding area, and would further promote the Project area's evolving sense of place. Further, the design review process to be undertaken by the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Commission would assure consistency with applicable guidelines that focus on the design of and experience in the public realm. Moreover, adherence to the Signage Regulations would create consistent design elements with respect to signage, would ensure that Project signage is appropriate to the Project Site, and, consequently, that less than significant impacts would result.

As discussed throughout this analysis, the Proposed Project would introduce distinctive architecture, outdoor plazas and a variety of human-scaled elements that activate the public realm, and substantial new streetscape elements including a cohesive street tree palette consistent with that established by the previously approved LASED Specific Plan (refer to the species list provided above in Subsection 3.c), all of which would build on many of the existing visual character-defining elements within and near the Project Site. Moreover, as it relates to the signage that currently exists at L.A. LIVE, the proposed signage program would not present a contrast between proposed features and some of the existing features that represent the area's aesthetic image (although Project signage would contrast with the existing visual character of the West Hall). Given the proposed improvements and the nature of the existing uses presently located within the immediately surrounding area, the Proposed Project would not introduce elements that substantially detract from the visual character of the area, particularly since the proposed improvements would offset the otherwise adverse visual impacts from certain types of signs. Furthermore, the Proposed Project's various visual elements, including the signage component, would all serve to create a distinctive visual identity for the Convention Center/Arena district that is consistent with the Project Site's character as a unique, urban, sports and entertainment destination.

Project lighting would also influence the visual character of the Project Site. Overall, Project lighting would be used to visually enhance and activate the Project Site, resulting in a vibrant, safe and visually appealing pedestrian environment. As also discussed further in Section IV.D.2, Artificial Light and Glare, a number of architectural design features would be implemented to reduce light spillover from the proposed structures, such as specification constraints for luminaires and illuminated signage as well as exterior screening (e.g., metal mesh or other screen devices) on parking garage façades, some of which would also serve to enhance views of specific building elements. As with the signage program, Project lighting would not be out of character with that which currently exists within and around the Project Site, particularly at L.A. LIVE, and the Proposed Project would not introduce elements that substantially detract from the visual character of the Project area.

With respect to outdoor areas and gathering spaces, the Proposed Project would develop a series of plazas, including Event Center Plaza, the New Hall entry plaza and the redesigned Gilbert Lindsay Plaza, each described above in Subsection 3.c. Pedestrian pathways would be provided to connect the various plazas throughout the Project Site and would include clear lines of sight, appropriate lighting and visual focal points. With respect to the latter, Gilbert Lindsay Plaza may include a water feature, potentially coupled with public art, to define the experience of the plaza area, and the bronze statues within Star Plaza, immediately north of STAPLES Center, would remain. The existing hockey puck installations just northwest of STAPLES Center would be relocated or recreated by the same artist. The Proposed Project's public art component would generate visual interest by creating focal points, define some of the plazas on-site and enhance the image of the Project area and Downtown as a whole. As also previously described, the proposed streetscape improvements would establish a hierarchy of public spaces, including streets and intersections, that would connect the plazas and pedestrian paths proposed on-site and build on the existing streetscape improvements and associated standards in place for the adjacent LASED area, as depicted in Figure II-20 in Section II, Project Description. Streetscape features such as decorative paving materials, new crosswalks, light fixtures and street furniture would be introduced, and street trees would be planted similar to those established in the previously approved LASED Specific Plan and consistent with those that exist along portions of Figueroa Street and Chick Hearn Court adjacent to the Project Site. Implementation of the proposed streetscape improvements would thus visually integrate the Convention Center, Event Center and STAPLES Center with L.A. LIVE and the surrounding area, promote the walkability of and around the Project Site and encourage pedestrian activity.

In summary, the removal of the West Hall is conservatively determined to represent a significant aesthetic impact in the event that the West Hall were to be determined eligible as a historic resource.. However, the Proposed Project would introduce a high quality

development that would meet many of the City's adopted policies and guidelines regarding architecture, walkability, the public realm and streetscapes, thereby resulting in beneficial effects with regards to aesthetic character. The Proposed Project would incorporate features in the design of its architecture, outdoor plazas, signage, lighting and streetscape that build on many of the existing visual character-defining elements within and near the Project Site. Nonetheless, it is conservatively concluded that Project impacts with regard to aesthetics and visual resources would be significant due to the removal of the West Hall.

(2) Views

(a) Public Views

The construction of new buildings and structures within the line of sight of a visual resource has the potential to create an adverse impact with respect to view blockage. Due to the generally flat topography in the area, public viewing locations or vantage points within the Project area are generally limited to public streets, sidewalks and elevated freeway locations within the Project area that have existing views of identified view resources. As previously identified, visual resources in the Project area include the statues/art installations located adjacent to STAPLES Center, the 54-story Marriott/Ritz tower (due to its prominent size and visibility and its resulting contribution to the skyline) and the Downtown Los Angeles skyline. In addition, the Central City Community Plan designates SR-110 as a scenic freeway, most likely because it offers northbound views of the Downtown skyline and San Gabriel Mountains in the distance.^{15,16} This freeway, however, is not a state-designated scenic highway nor is it designated on a Citywide level within the General Plan Transportation Element; it is only mapped as a scenic freeway on the Land Use Map for the Central City Community Plan.

Simulated public views of and across the Project Site are provided in Figures IV.C-2 through IV.C-11 on pages IV.C-13 through IV.C-22. As shown in Photo 1b in Figure IV.C-2, the Event Center would be highly visible from SR-110 (as illustrated in the representative view from the northbound on-ramp). Given the height increase compared to the West Hall, the Event Center would take up a greater proportion of the viewshed, although clear views to the sky would still be available. Similarly, the L.A. Live Way Garage would be more visible than the existing Cherry Street Garage, and Project signage would be prominent. Portions of the New Hall and Bond Street Garage would also be visible in the distance. In the nighttime

¹⁵ *City of Los Angeles, Central City Community Plan, General Plan Land Use Map, July 7, 2009.*

¹⁶ *In addition, the South Los Angeles and Southeast Los Angeles Community Plans designate I-110, from I-10 south to Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, as a scenic freeway.*

view provided in Photo 1d, the Project Site would appear more brightly lit, and illuminated signage would be visible.

In Photo 2b in Figure IV.C-3, the Event Center would again take up a greater proportion of the viewshed, although clear views to the sky would still be available, and the Project Site would appear denser. The character of the Project Site as a sports and entertainment destination would also be evident, complemented by that at L.A. LIVE. Light posts and street trees would line Chick Hearn Court as under existing conditions, and Project signage would be highly visible. Although located just outside of the left side of the frame of Photo 2b, the existing series of bronze sculptures located at Star Plaza just north of STAPLES Center, which are visual resources, would remain visible from both on- and off-site locations. Similarly, the Marriott/Ritz tower (located further right of the frame) would continue to be visible. Project development would not block such views.

Views of the developed street frontage along Figueroa Street, depicted in Photos 3b, 4b and 5b in Figures IV.C-4, IV.C-5 and IV.C-6, respectively, would not change substantially from existing views. The South Hall, its main entry tower, the Concourse Building, the West Hall main entry tower and STAPLES Center would remain prominent visual elements, screened somewhat by existing and proposed street trees and landscaping. The upper portion of the Event Center also would be highly visible behind the Concourse Building and West Hall main entry tower; however, the New Hall would not be visible in the background as its building height would be the same as that of the existing Concourse Building. Project signage would be readily apparent, particularly on the entry towers, the façade of the Concourse Building and within Gilbert Lindsay Plaza. Increased landscaping also would be evident within Gilbert Lindsay Plaza, and the site frontage along Figueroa Street north of Pico Boulevard would appear more lively with the addition of ground floor retail space. However, expansive sky views would continue to be available above the buildings, and no views of visual resources would be obstructed from these vantage points.

The proposed Event Center would be clearly visible in views of and across the Project Site from nearby locations along I-10, as shown in Photos 6b and 7b in Figures IV.C-7 and IV.C-8, respectively. High-rise buildings in the background and the Downtown skyline to the north would continue to be visible beyond the Project Site. The Marriott/Ritz tower, which for the purposes of this analysis is considered a visual resource due to its contribution to the Downtown skyline, would also continue to be clearly visible. Its lower stories, along with those of other surrounding buildings, would be obstructed from view from certain vantage points by the Event Center, but overall views of the Downtown skyline would not be affected by the Proposed Project.

With respect to views from SR-110 northbound, as depicted in Photo 8b in Figure IV.C-9, the L.A. Live Way and Bond Street Garages would appear prominently in the

foreground, behind which part of the Event Center would be visible, and the upper portion of the Marriott/Ritz tower, considered a visual resource, would remain distinctive in the background. Nearly all of the view of the Downtown skyline to the north would be blocked by Project development from certain vantage points, such as that shown in the photo. This blockage of the skyline would be considered a loss of a recognized view. It is acknowledged that freeway views vary considerably by their inherent nature as a viewer's location changes with high travel speeds. View impacts along SR-110 would be relatively brief in duration and limited to certain vantage points. Nonetheless, the obstruction of skyline views along much of an approximately 0.5-mile segment of the scenic freeway (roughly from the SR-110/I-10 interchange to Chick Hearn Court) would be a significant impact. In addition, as with views from certain other vantage points, the removal of the West Hall would represent the loss of a recognized view given that the building is conservatively considered to be a visual resource for purposes of this analysis.

As shown in Photos 9b and 9d in Figure IV.C-10, the view from Pico Boulevard at L.A. Live Way would change considerably with Project implementation. The Concourse Building would no longer be visible, and the view of the sky above would be blocked by the New Hall structure above the roadway. The configuration along the north side of Pico Boulevard would also be altered with the addition of the New Hall entry plaza, new streetscaping, and Project signage. No views of visual resources would be affected.

With respect to easterly views from west of SR-110, as represented in Photo 10b provided in Figure IV.C-11, the upper portion of the L.A. Live Way Garage and Event Center would be visually prominent. While the elevated freeway would continue to cause partial obstruction, the new buildings would be more noticeable than the West Hall due to their increased height and would dominate the view. However, clear views of the sky would continue to be visible above the Project Site. No views of visual resources would be affected.

In addition, the northbound I-110 Harbor Freeway offers views of the Downtown skyline from just south of I-10. From this location, the upper portion of the Event Center would be visible and would block the lower stories of the Marriott/Ritz tower, a visual resource. However, from most vantage points the upper portion of the tower would continue to be visible, as would the Downtown skyline to the north. In general, the view experience with respect to that building and its interplay with the high-rises that surround it would be unaffected. Additionally, such view impacts would be of brief duration and limited to certain vantage points and would not affect long segments of the scenic freeway. Overall, the Proposed Project would not substantially obstruct existing views of visual resources.

In summary, from most public vantages, views of visual resources would not be significantly affected by Project development. From those locations where partial obstruction of the Marriott/Ritz tower and/or the Downtown skyline may occur, such impacts would be limited and, when viewed from most segments of adjacent freeways, of brief duration and would not alter the general view experience which relies on the building tops to form the skyline. Overall, the Proposed Project would not substantially obstruct existing views of most visual resources. However, the obstruction of skyline views along the stretch of SR-110 between I-10 and Chick Hearn Court would be considered a significant impact. Additionally, given that the West Hall is conservatively considered to be a visual resource, its removal would represent the loss of a recognized view, resulting in a significant view impact.

(b) Private Views

Private viewing locations within the Project vicinity include nearby residential mid- and high-rise buildings, most of which are located to the east and north. The significance thresholds cited in the *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide* do not consider impacts to individual private views from residential or other private properties to be significant. Nonetheless, view impacts affecting such properties are discussed herein for informational purposes only.

Simulated private views of and across the Project Site are provided in Figures IV.C-12 through IV.C-16. As shown in Photo 11b in Figure IV.C-2, the 24th story view from east of the Project Site would continue to offer an expansive panorama with the entire Project Site in the mid-ground and much of the Los Angeles basin to the west in the background. The 54-story Marriott/Ritz tower would continue to clearly punctuate the horizon, and the mountains would be visible in the distance on a clear day. The upper portion of the Event Center would be visible behind STAPLES Center, as, to a lesser degree, would the top of the New Hall. In the nighttime view depicted in Photo 11d, the brightness of the Event Center would blend with that of the existing STAPLES Center and L.A. LIVE, while the general view and brightness of the southern portion of the Project Site would appear relatively unchanged.

The highly urbanized panoramic view depicted in Photo 12b in Figure IV.C-13 would remain substantially unchanged by the Project. From this location, intervening mid- to high-rise development would continue to obstruct views of most of the Project Site. A limited portion of the Event Center would be visible but would not exert a strong influence on the view, which would continue to extend to the horizon.

As shown in Photo 13b in Figure IV.C-14, the STAPLES Center and Convention Center would continue to figure prominently in the panoramic view from three blocks to the

east on 11th Street. Added to this, the Event Center would appear behind STAPLES Center and the West Hall main entry tower, revealing the increase in building height and density that would result from Project Implementation. While views of the horizon in the distance from the vantage point shown in the photo and other locations at higher elevations (i.e., on higher stories) would not be obstructed by Project development, vantages on lower floors may experience partial obstruction of the horizon. However, the Proposed Project would block a limited portion of such views and in any event would only impact a limited number of viewpoints. Increased landscaping and pedestrian activity also would be evident within Gilbert Lindsay Plaza and along the site frontage on Figueroa Street north of Pico Boulevard.

The southwesterly panoramic view from northeast of the Project Site, shown in Photo 14b in Figure IV.C-15, would continue to prominently feature existing development at L.A. LIVE in the foreground, with STAPLES Center, the Event Center and the South Hall visible in the background. The Marriott/Ritz tower would remain the dominant feature, punctuating the horizon. As in Photo 13b, the Event Center may also obstruct a portion of the horizon from vantage points at lower stories than shown in Photo 14b. However, this type of obstruction already occurs due to the presence of the Marriott/Ritz tower and is not unexpected in a Downtown area. Further, the Proposed Project would block a limited portion of such views and in any event would only impact a limited number of viewpoints.

A representative private south-facing panoramic view from the Ritz-Carlton Residences (which are located on floors 27 through 54 of the tower) is depicted in Photos 15b and 15d in Figure IV.C-16.¹⁷ As shown, like STAPLES Center, the Event Center would be visually prominent, both during daytime and nighttime hours, and it would obstruct portions of the South Hall. Like views from other nearby vantage points, the introduction of substantial façade articulation and pedestrian-scaled entrances at the Event Center would add visual interest to such views. In nighttime views, the Project Site would appear more brightly lit, and illuminated signage would be visible. As previously discussed, the removal of the West Hall would represent the loss of a view. While views from the stories lower than the 27th floor may experience view obstruction, those floors comprise hotel uses which are not considered to have the same view sensitivity as residential uses due to the temporary occupancy of hotel guests, as well as the expectation that hotel stays in a highly urbanized area are likely to include views of urban development.

¹⁷ The 27th story of the Ritz-Carlton Residences at L.A. LIVE is located approximately 527 feet above sea level. In comparison, the Event Center's maximum height of up to 220 feet would be 448 feet above sea level.

In summary, most private views from residential buildings near the Project Site are located at a distance and/or elevation such that views of Downtown high-rises, including the Marriott/Ritz tower, and panoramic views of the Los Angeles basin would not be substantially affected by Proposed Project development. While views of the distant horizon may be partially obstructed by the Event Center from some vantage points, in nearly all cases such views currently include intervening development or other high-rise structures that punctuate the horizon. Furthermore, any obstruction posed by the Proposed Project would represent a less than significant portion of the affected views and would only impact a limited number of vantage points. Overall, the Proposed Project would not substantially obstruct existing views of most visual resources from private vantage points. However, as previously indicated, the removal of the West Hall would represent the loss of a recognized view, and would result in a significant view impact if the *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide* considered impacts to individual private views from residential or other private properties to be significant.

4. Cumulative Impacts

The geographic context for the cumulative impact analysis for aesthetics and views is the immediate Project vicinity, as such impacts are largely localized. Of future development through 2017 (the Proposed Project buildout analysis year) in the surrounding area, only those projects that are sufficiently close to influence the visual character of the immediate Project area or that fall within the same viewshed as the Project Site could pose cumulative effects in conjunction with the Proposed Project.

a. Aesthetics/Visual Character

In general, the land use plans that guide development in the Project area anticipate the intensification of existing land uses in the surrounding area. Development of low-rise structures and lower intensity development would not be anticipated to have a substantial aesthetic effect since the Project area is already highly urbanized. Future development of mid- or high-rise structures, however, may change the density and visual character of the area over time. These future developments would be subject to City discretionary review to ensure consistency with adopted guidelines and standards that address aesthetics (e.g., LAMC height limits and density, Community Plan design guidelines, etc). Therefore, it is not anticipated that future development would introduce new aesthetic elements that would be substantially out of scale or character with the Project area's visual environment.

Additionally, as shown in Section III, Environmental Setting, of this Draft EIR, future development through 2017 includes 133 related projects identified within an approximately two-mile radius of the Project Site. Only a few of the related projects are located adjacent to the Project Site or within the immediate vicinity and would appear prominently within the

same viewshed as the Proposed Project so as to potentially cause cumulative visual impacts. These are Related Project Nos. 27, 60 and 91, located across Figueroa Street, and to a lesser extent Related Project Nos. 2, 7, 28, 34, 64 and 65, located within an approximately two to three block radius of the Project Site to the north and east. The balance of the related projects, including nearby projects located west of SR-110, would not cause cumulative visual impacts as these developments are either not visible from the Project area due to distance and/or existing intervening development, or are located at such a distance so as not to figure prominently within views that include the Project Site.

Of the related projects located adjacent to the Project Site, Related Project No. 27 consists of buildout of the remainder of the LASED District and would include development of hotel, theater, restaurant, retail, office and multi-family residential uses; Related Project No. 60 involves development of two high-rise condominium towers; and Related Project No. 91 includes development condominiums, a spa and restaurant uses. Given their proximity, these developments have the greatest potential to influence the aesthetic character of the Project area and to affect views from both nearby public vantage points as well as private locations within neighboring residential mid- and high-rise buildings. The other nearby development to the north and east consist primarily of mixed-use projects that include various combinations of hotel, office, retail and restaurant uses, condominiums and a community center. Many of these related projects consist of infill development, and in general, would reinforce existing and emerging land use patterns (e.g., high-rise development) in the area rather than introduce new development characteristics to the Project area. Furthermore, those related projects that involve mid- to high-rise structures are primarily located in or near the Financial Core and South Park, where similar development already exists.

Each related project would be (or already has been) analyzed on a case-by-case basis to determine its impact on aesthetics and to verify compliance with applicable regulatory standards. In particular, buildout of the LASED District as part of Related Project No. 27 would be required to adhere to standards set forth in the LASED Specific Plan and the LASED Streetscape Plan, which largely form the basis of the plans established for the Proposed Project. The related projects would also be subject to the Community Plan, the associated Downtown Design Guide, the Walkability Checklist, the Citywide Urban Design Guidelines and the Downtown Street Standards as applicable, all of which would ensure the development of high-quality projects that enhance the visual character of the Project area, promote pleasant, pedestrian-oriented streetscapes and support efforts to increase pedestrian activity. To the extent the related projects may involve the removal or alteration of any visual resource(s), those projects would be subject to mitigation and/or would be expected to incorporate features or elements that contribute positively to the visual environment.

With respect to signage, the related projects would be expected to either comply with existing regulatory requirements or undergo review and approval by the City for modified signage rights. It is anticipated that any new regulatory mechanism approved by the City for a particular project would address such issues as the permitted signage types, amounts, locations, sizes, operating hours and/or illumination to ensure that any new signage is appropriate to and visually compatible with its location and surroundings. As it relates specifically to Related Project No. 27, based on previously granted signage rights, buildout of the LASED District could introduce new signage which is expected to be consistent with the character-defining signage that currently exists at L.A. LIVE. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to signage would be less than significant.

Overall, it is anticipated that the related projects would not substantially and adversely alter or degrade the existing visual character of the Project area or introduce elements that substantially detract from its visual character.

b. Views

Development of low-rise structures and lower intensity development anticipated in conjunction with ambient growth in the Project area would not be anticipated to have a substantial effect on views since the Project area is already highly urbanized. Future development of mid- or high-rise structures, however, may obstruct views from some viewing locations. As previously described, public vantage points available in the Project vicinity are largely limited to public streets and freeway corridors. Due to the relatively flat topography and developed nature of the Project area, including the presence of the elevated freeways, which obstruct many views, public views from street level locations are largely limited to short-range views of the immediately surrounding urban landscape (i.e., building façades, signage, roadway infrastructure, etc). Visual resources are thus generally only visible to adjacent land uses and/or along certain segments of street corridors. Given the limitations on such views under existing conditions, increased building heights and density associated with future growth would merely affect views from adjacent vantages and would have a limited effect on longer-range views along area roadways.

Similar to cumulative aesthetic impacts, the related projects with the greatest potential to cumulatively affect views in conjunction with the Proposed Project are Related Project Nos. 27, 60 and 91, located across Figueroa Street, and Related Project Nos. 2, 7, 28, 34, 64 and 65, located within an approximately two to three block radius of the Project Site to the north and east. As previously described, those related projects that involve mid- to high-rise structures are primarily located in or near the Financial Core and South Park, where similar development already exists.

Views up and down Figueroa Street are likely to be affected due to the concentration of new development adjacent to the Project Site. However, the slight bend in the roadway's alignment at Pico Boulevard is such that buildings on the east side of the street do not block views of the Financial District's high-rises, and in northerly views of Downtown from Figueroa Street south of the Project Site, STAPLES Center appears directly ahead. The 54-story Marriott/Ritz tower would continue to be highly visible to the northwest of STAPLES Center. Furthermore, the addition of new high-rises in the area would merely add the kind of elements to the Downtown skyline that make it a recognized view. The same would be true of views from the adjacent freeways, and in particular the portion of the SR-110 Harbor Freeway that is designated a scenic freeway in the Central City Community Plan. From these vantage points, skyline views would not be obstructed, but rather if anything would increase as the extent of high-rise development spreads throughout the Downtown area. Based on the above, cumulative impacts on views would be less than significant.

While private views could be affected by the introduction of intervening development, in general only those related projects consisting of high-rise buildings located directly adjacent to private viewing locations would have the potential to cause substantial obstruction of privately available long-range panoramic views. Such conditions are not anticipated to affect a substantial number of views. It is also acknowledged that the Proposed Project may be visible from future locations within many of the related projects, specifically from high-rise buildings planned to the north and east. Impacts to these private views would be comparable to those previously described in the Project analysis. Due to their proximity, Related Project Nos. 27, 60 and 91 located across Figueroa Street would have the greatest potential to experience view obstruction. The effect of such impacts would decrease as elevation increases (i.e., vantage points on a 20th story or higher would experience reduced view obstruction, as the Event Center would have a height comparable to that of a 20-story building). In any case, such views are not afforded protection under the *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide*.

5. Project Design Features and Mitigation Measures

a. Project Design Features

Project Design Feature C-1: Temporary construction fencing shall be placed along the periphery of active construction areas to screen much of the construction activity from view at the street level.

Project Design Feature C-2: The Project Applicant shall monitor the Project Site for graffiti and contract with a graffiti removal company, as needed.

b. Mitigation Measures

(1) Construction Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measure is proposed to provide that construction-related aesthetic impacts are less than significant:

Mitigation Measure C-1: The Applicant shall provide through appropriate postings and daily visual inspections that no unauthorized materials are posted on any temporary construction barriers or temporary pedestrian walkways, and that such temporary barriers and walkways are maintained in a visually attractive manner throughout the construction period.

(2) Operational Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measures are proposed to reduce aesthetic impacts associated with Proposed Project operations to the extent feasible and to assure that specific design features would be implemented:

Mitigation Measure C-2: The proposed streetscape improvements shall be reviewed and approved by the City's Department of Public Works Street Tree Division prior to issuance of the first grading permit.

Mitigation Measure C-3: All landscaped areas shall be maintained in accordance with a landscape plan, including an automatic irrigation plan, prepared by a licensed landscape architect in accordance with LAMC Sections 12.40 and 12.41. The final landscape plan shall be reviewed and approved by the City of Los Angeles Department of Planning prior to issuance of the first grading permit.

Mitigation Measure C-4: All new sidewalks along the Project Site's street frontages shall be paved with concrete, pavers, or other safe, non-slip material to create an environment accommodating to pedestrians.

Additional relevant mitigation measures are provided in Sections IV.D.1, Natural Light (Shading), and IV.D.2, Artificial Light and Glare, of this Draft EIR.

6. Level of Significance After Mitigation

a. Aesthetics/Visual Character

As analyzed above, the majority of construction activities would result in less than significant aesthetics/visual character impacts. The mitigation measures specified above

would further reduce such impacts. However, removal of the West Hall during construction would result in a significant and unavoidable impact.

With respect to ongoing operations, although the Proposed Project would incorporate features in the design of its architecture, outdoor plazas, signage, lighting and streetscape that build on many of the existing visual character-defining elements within and near the Project Site and support City policies and guidelines regarding design and walkability, the impact created during construction would extend to operation of the Proposed Project and would constitute a significant and unavoidable impact.

b. Views

Although the Proposed Project would not substantially obstruct views of the majority of the visual resources in the Project area from most nearby vantage points, the obstruction of views of the Downtown skyline along an approximately 0.5-mile segment (roughly from the SR-110/I-10 interchange to Chick Hearn Court) of SR-110, a designated scenic freeway, would be a significant and unavoidable impact. In addition, the removal of the West Hall would represent the loss of a visual resource, resulting in a significant and unavoidable view impact.