3.3 Aesthetics

3.3.1 Introduction

This section addresses the potential impacts on the visual quality of the study area as a result of implementation of the proposed Expo Phase 2 project. The proposed project spans distinct communities that have unique visual attributes. In order to account for these differences, the study area is described and examined at three different scales from broad to specific—(1) the Westside of Los Angeles County, (2) corridor segments, and (3) visual character areas within the specific corridor segments—to identify potential impacts on visual quality.

Greater detail on aesthetics is contained within the *Aesthetics Technical Background Report*. Full bibliographic references can be found in Appendix B (Bibliography).

3.3.2 Existing Conditions

Regional Setting

The context for the Expo Phase 2 study area includes the portion of the Westside of Los Angeles County that is generally bounded by Santa Monica and Pico Boulevards on the north, La Cienega Boulevard on the east, Washington Boulevard on the south and the Pacific Ocean on the west. The study area is a relatively flat coastal plain with minor changes in elevation. The major visual feature of the study area is the built environment, consisting of a variety of commercial, industrial, and residential areas, and the transportation infrastructure of the region, including the Santa Monica Freeway (I-10) and the San Diego Freeway (I-405). Land uses are generally one- to three-story structures, with the exception of the sporadic high-intensity developments located along major arterials, where buildings can be in excess of five stories in height.

Local Setting

Visual Landscape and Character

The study area for this analysis encompasses approximately 0.5 mile on each side of the potential alignments and 0.5 mile around each proposed station. Figure 3.3-1a (Key Visual Elements in Study Area, Segment 1 and Segment 1a) through Figure 3.3-1c (Key Visual Elements in Study Area, Segment 3 and Segment 3a) identifies key visual elements in the study area. Because of the fully developed nature of the study area, views are often limited to the foreground, with relatively few long-range views.

To provide a framework for analyzing the visual environment, the potential alignments have been divided into visual character areas. Additionally, representative and/or key viewpoints have been selected within each designated visual character area. The visual character areas and the viewpoint locations are depicted in Figure 3.3-2a (Visual Character Areas and Photo Locations in Study Area, Segments 1 and 1a) through Figure 3.3-2c (Visual Character Areas and Photo Locations in Study Area, Segments 3 and 3a). Figure 3.3-3 (Visual Character Area A) through Figure 3.3-13 (Visual Character Area J) provide the photographs taken from selected viewpoint locations within each visual character area from east to west.

A textual summary of the visual character areas, including the character, views, visual elements, and visual quality, is provided in Table 3.3-1 (Visual Characteristics), with a detailed description of each visual area provided below. The visual character area is described by the land uses and viewers, scale, and visual resources (views and visual elements) depicted in a view. The assessment of visual quality is based on the cohesion or variation in form, the level of up-keep or deterioration of the built environment, and the level of landscaping and visual attractiveness, as well as the presence of scenic vistas identified by the cities of Los Angeles, Culver City, and Santa Monica General Plans.

Segment 1: Expo ROW (LRT Alternatives 1 and 2)

Visual Character Area A: Expo Phase 1 Terminus to I-10 Box Structure (Figure 3.3-3)

The dominant visual feature of this area is the I-10 freeway. Because of the prominence of the I-10 freeway, as well as the mix of building styles and types, the visual quality of this area would be considered moderate. The limited landscaping on the railroad berm and vacant character of the Expo ROW reinforces a moderate level of overall visual quality for Visual Character Area A.

Visual Character Area B: I-10 Box Structure to Overland Avenue (Figure 3.3-4)

The overall visual quality of Visual Character Area B would be moderate and is characterized by a relatively deep trench that contains the Expo ROW. The Expo ROW is only visible from those locations that are immediately adjacent to the trench or where the trench returns to street level approximately 1,000 feet east of Overland Avenue. There are no prominent or distinguishing characteristics of the trench or the grassy areas along the at-grade portion of the Expo ROW. Overland Avenue Elementary School is located to the north of the Expo ROW, at the northeast corner of Overland Avenue and Northvale Road, and defines the endpoint of this area.

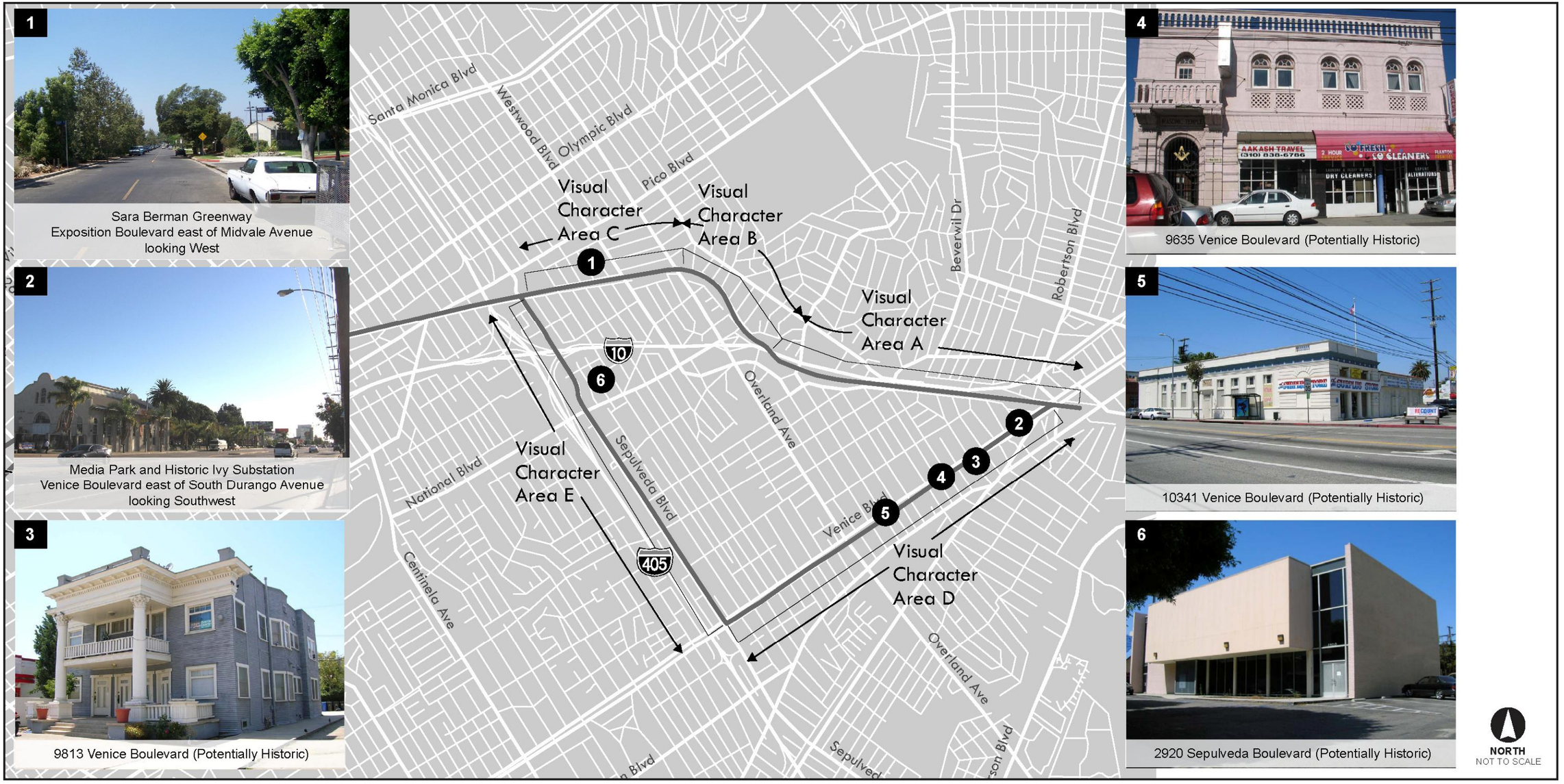
Visual Character Area C: Overland Avenue to Sepulveda Boulevard (Figure 3.3-5)

The visual quality of Visual Character Area C would be moderate high due to the wide parkway appearance of the Expo ROW with mature trees screening the Expo ROW from the street, and the uniformity of single-family residential uses adjacent to the Expo ROW.

Segment 1a: Venice/Sepulveda (LRT Alternatives 3 and 4)

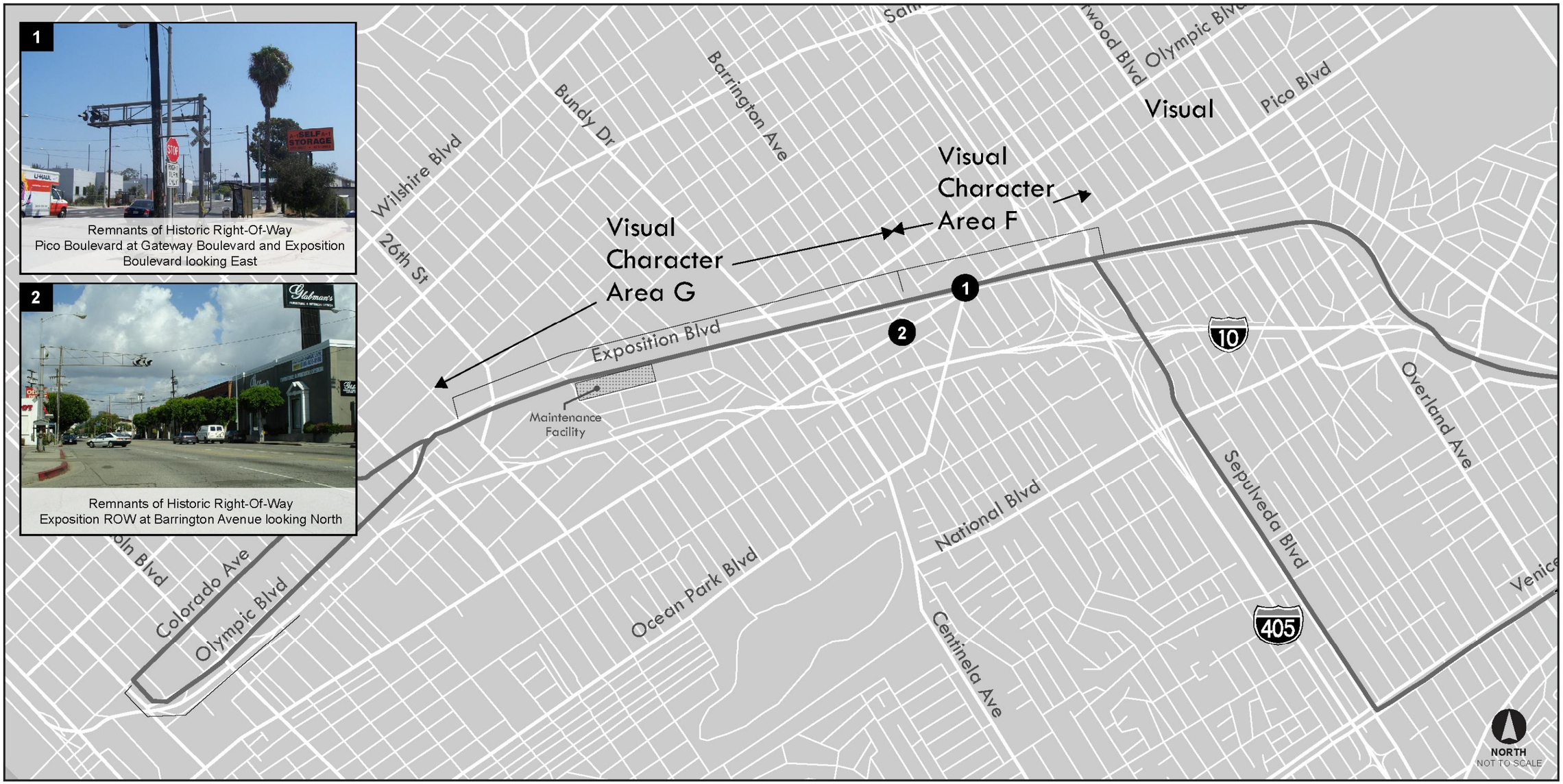
Visual Character Area D: Venice Boulevard from Expo Phase 1 Terminus to Sepulveda Boulevard (Figure 3.3-6)

The visual quality of Visual Character Area D would be considered moderate as there is no defining visual feature that characterizes this area, as the buildings are not distinctive in their architecture and have little visual variation from block to block. The streetscape is marked by alternating buildings and parking lots that contribute to the auto-oriented visual character of the area.



Source: ESRI; PBS&J, 2008.

Figure 3.3-1a Key Visual Elements in Study Area, Segment 1 and Segment 1a

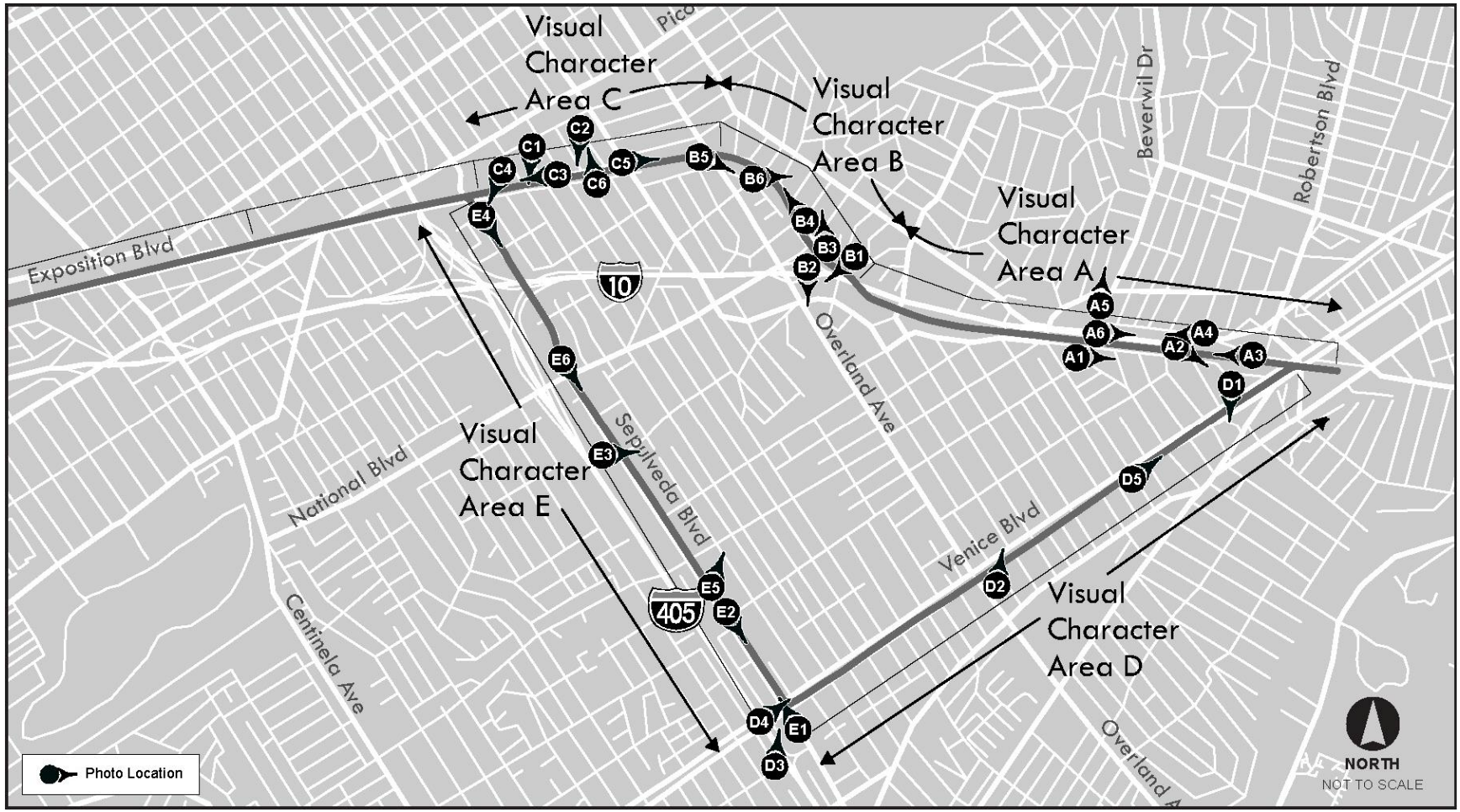


Source: ESRI; PBS&J, 2008.

Figure 3.3-1b Key Visual Elements in Study Area, Segment 2

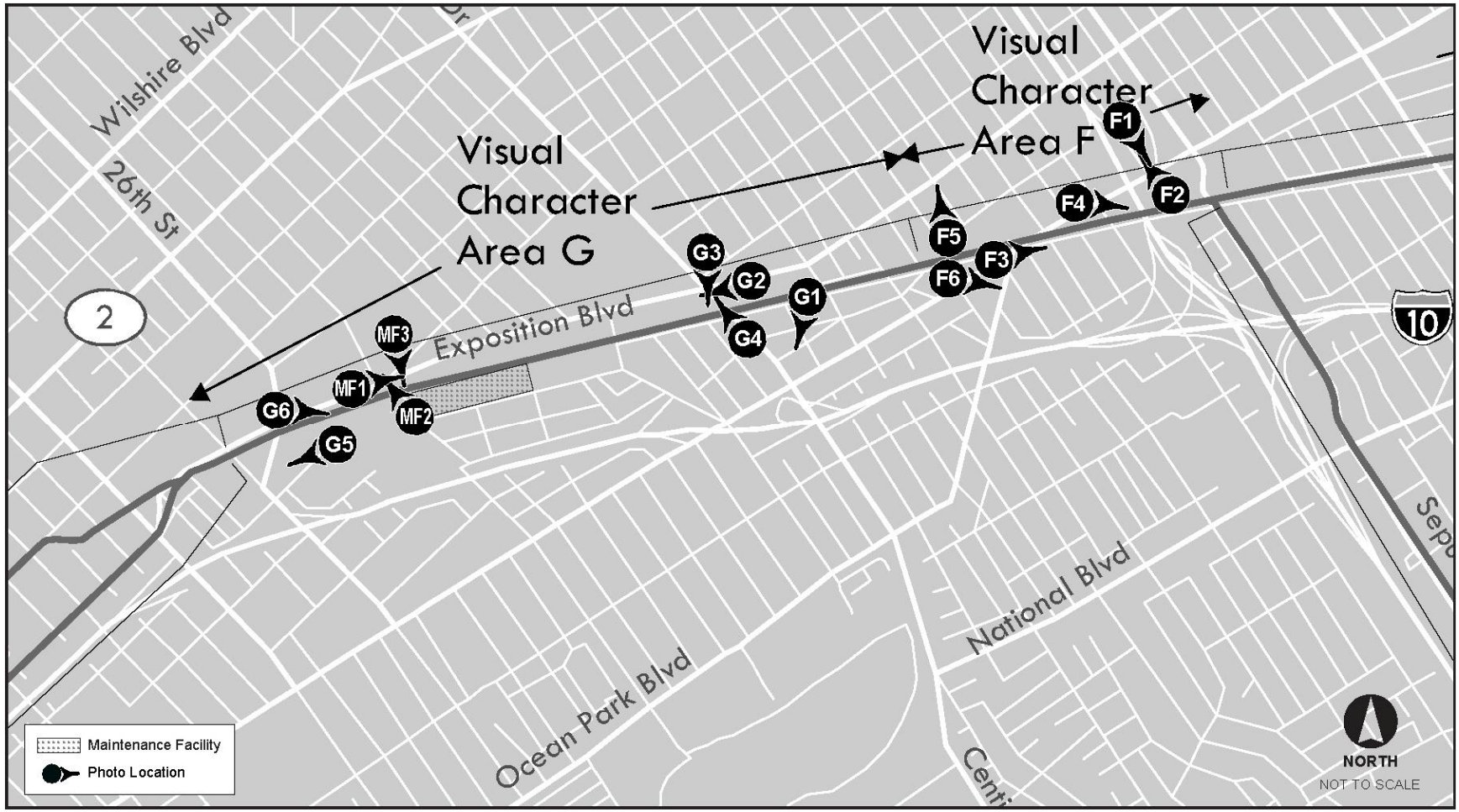
Source: ESRI; PBS&J, 2008.

Figure 3.3-1c Key Visual Elements in Study Area, Segment 3 and Segment 3a



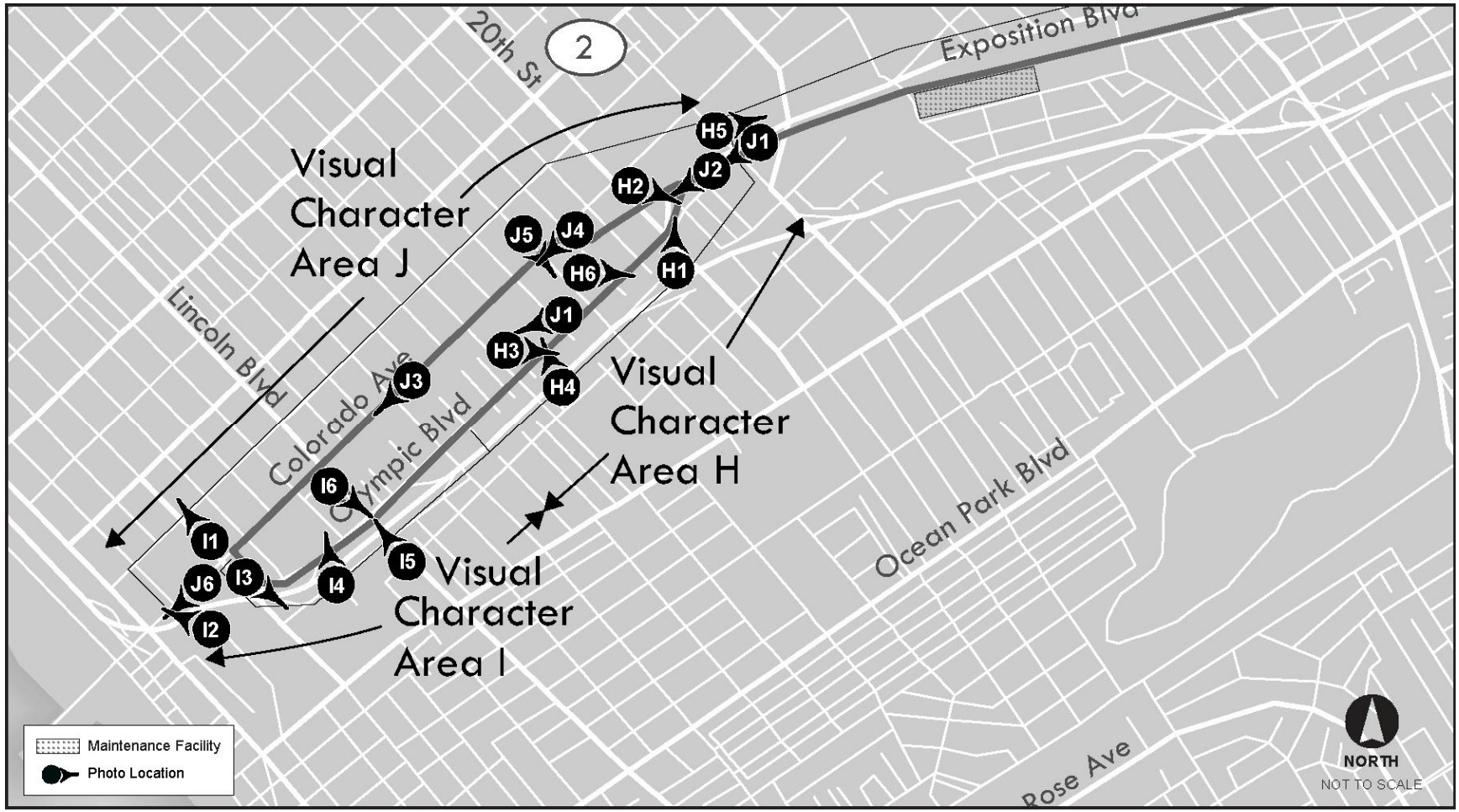
Source: PBS&J, ESRI

Figure 3.3-2a Visual Character Areas and Photo Locations in Study Area, Segment 1 and Segment 1a



Source: PBS&J, ESRI

Figure 3.3-2b Visual Character Areas and Photo Locations in Study Area, Segment 2



Source: PBS&J, ESRI

Figure 3.3-2c Visual Character Areas and Photo Locations in Study Area, Segment 3 and Segment 3a

Source: PBS&J, 2008.

Figure 3.3-3 Visual Character Area A

Source: PBS&J, 2008.

Figure 3.3-4 Visual Character Area B

Exposition Boulevard ROW at Westwood Boulevard Looking East

Exposition Boulevard ROW at Greeenfield Avenue (Sara Berman Greenway) Looking South

Exposition Boulevard ROW at Military Avenue Looking West

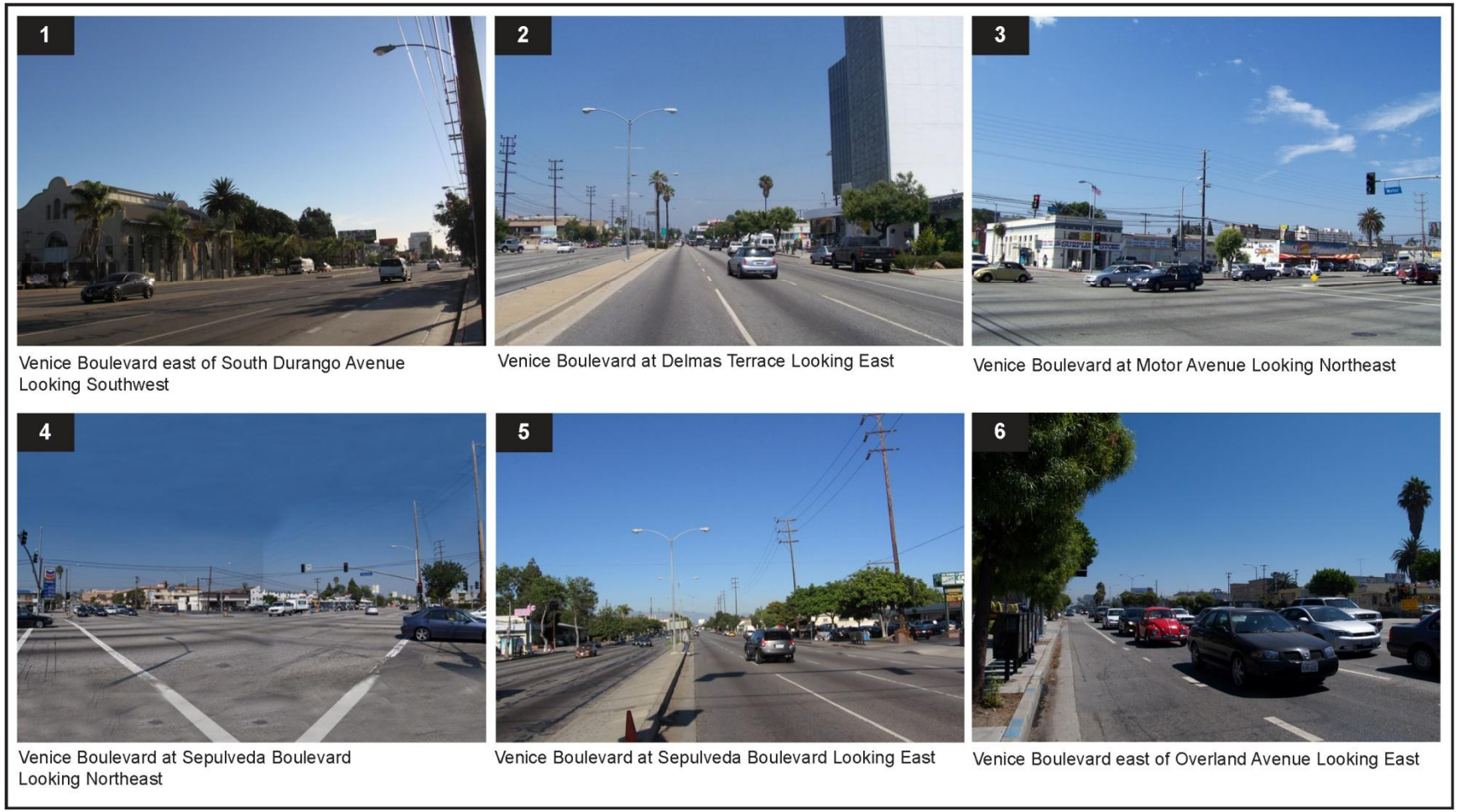
Exposition Boulevard ROW west of Westwood Boulevard Looking North

Exposition Boulevard at Kelton Avenue Looking Southwest

Exposition Boulevard North near Bentley Avenue Looking Southwest

Source: PBS&J, 2008.

Figure 3.3-5 Visual Character Area C



Source: PBS&J, 2008.

Figure 3.3-6 Visual Character Area D

Sepulveda Boulevard at Venice Boulevard Looking North

Sepulveda Boulevard at Charnock Road (West) Looking South

Sepulveda Boulevard at Charnock Road (East) looking Northeast

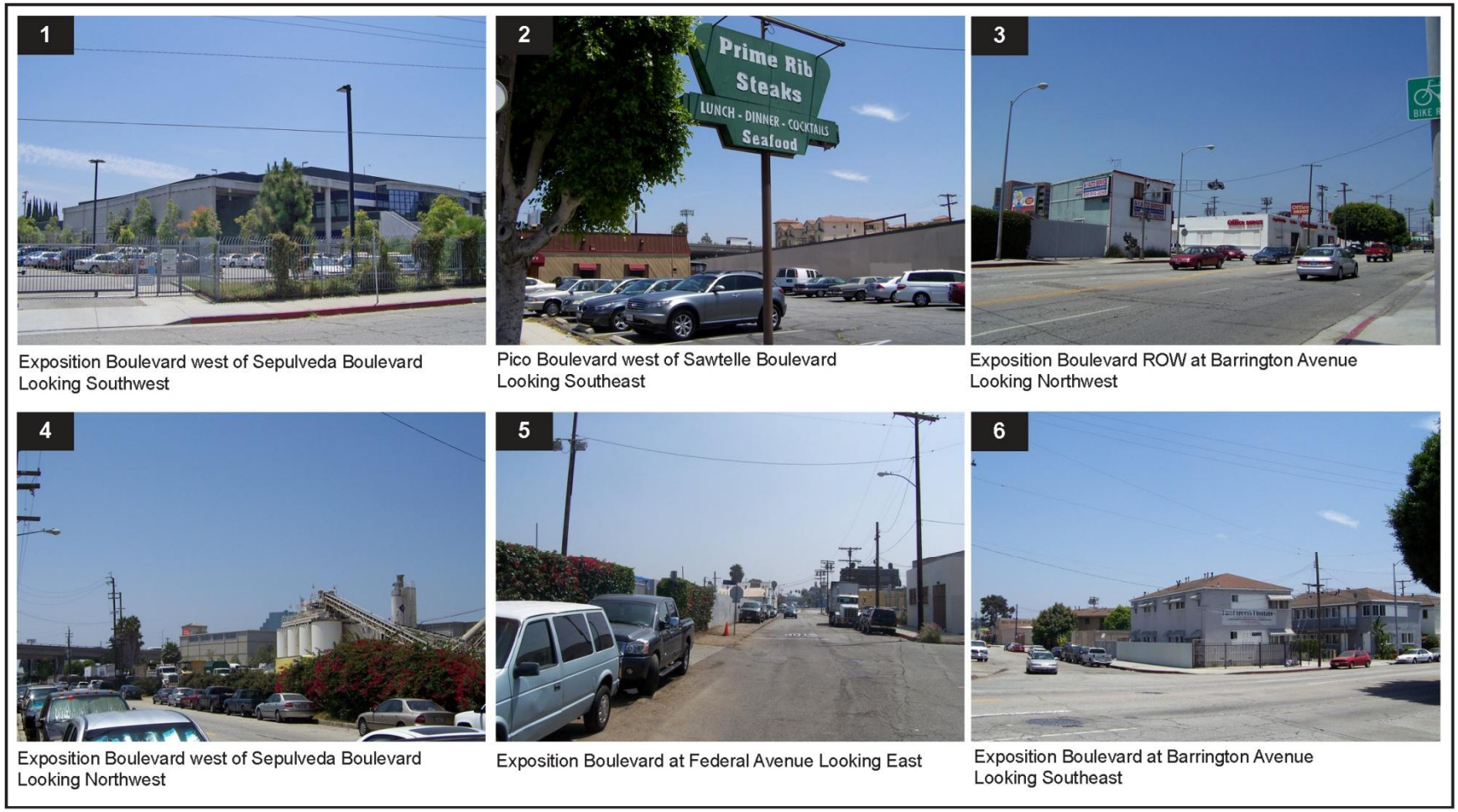
Sepulveda Boulevard at Queensland Street Looking Southeast

Sepulveda Boulevard at National Boulevard Looking South

Sepulveda Boulevard at Richland Avenue Looking South

Source: PBS&J, 2008.

Figure 3.3-7 Visual Character Area E



Source: PBS&J, 2008.

Figure 3.3-8 Visual Character Area F

Source: PBS&J, 2008.

Figure 3.3-9 Visual Character Area G

Exposition Boulevard east of Stewart Street Looking West

Exposition Boulevard east of Stewart Street Looking North

Exposition Boulevard ROW east of Stewart Street Looking South

Source: PBS&J, 2008.

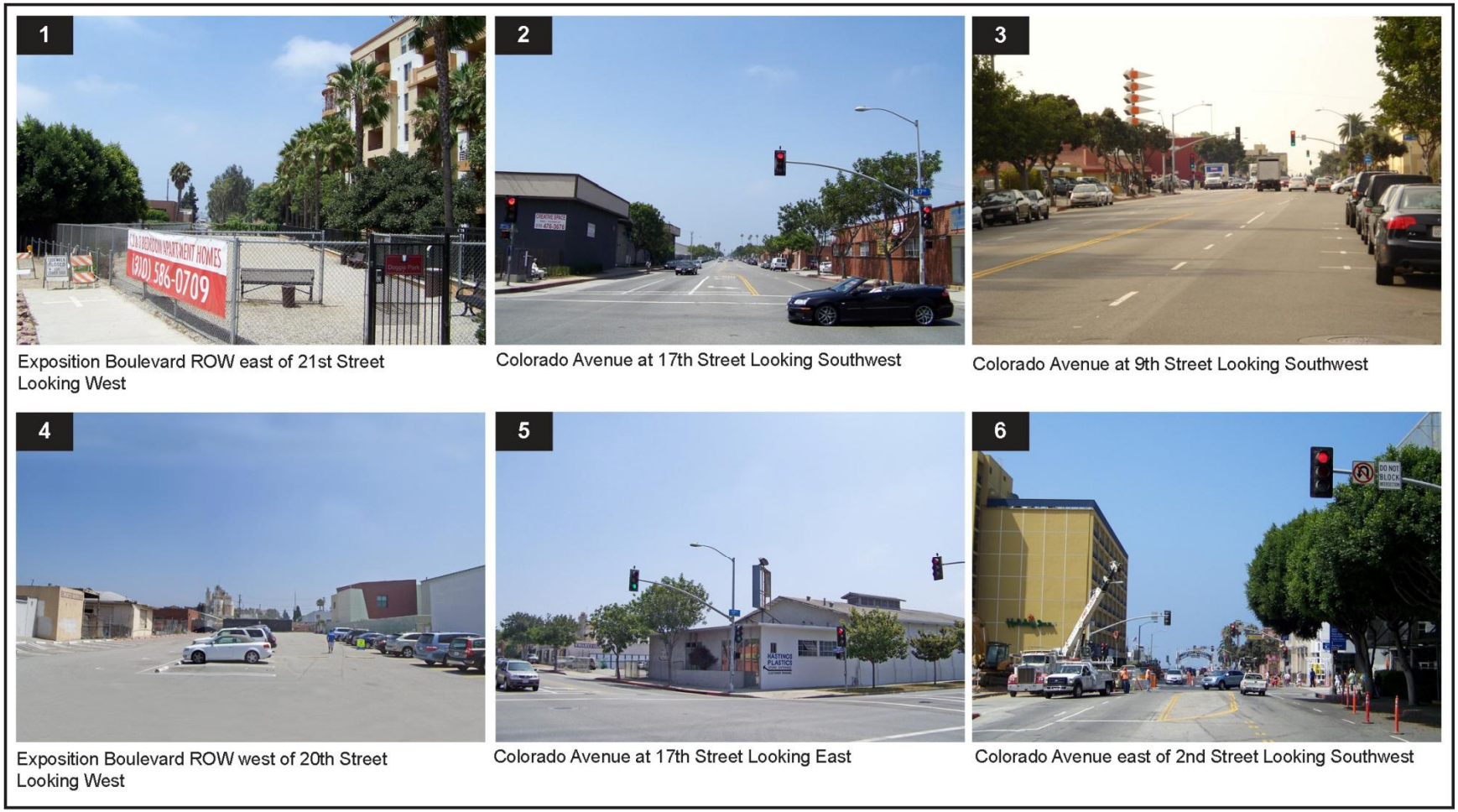
Figure 3.3-10 Visual Character Area Maintenance Facility (MF)

Source: PBS&J, 2008.

Figure 3.3-11 Visual Character Area H

Source: PBS&J, 2008.

Figure 3.3-12 Visual Character Area I



Source: PBS&J, 2008.

Figure 3.3-13 Visual Character Area J

Table 3.3-1 Visual Characteristics

Visual Character Area	Character of Views			Visual Quality[a]
	Land Use/Viewer Group Along Area	Scale of Adjacent Development	Visual Resources (Views and Visual Elements)	
Segment 1: Expo ROW (LRT Alternatives 1 and 2)				
A: Expo Phase 1 Terminus to I-10 Box Structure	I-10 freeway; Commercial; Multi-family Residential	Mid-Rise	**Views:** San Gabriel Mountains; Baldwin Hills **Visual Elements:** I-10 freeway, Landscaping along building frontages	Moderate
B: I-10 Box Structure to Overland Ave	I-10 freeway; Single- and Multi-Family Residential	Low-Rise	**Views:** Cheviot Hills cut trench slopes **Visual Elements:** Sporadic vegetation	Moderate
C: Overland Ave to Sepulveda Blvd	Overland Ave Elementary School; Single-Family Residential	Low-Rise	**Views:** Santa Monica Mountains; commercial uses along Westwood Blvd/Pico Blvd **Visual Elements:** Planted areas in Expo ROW (Sara Berman Greenway); Landscaped residential yards	Moderate High
Segment 1a: Venice/Sepulveda (LRT Alternatives 3 and 4)				
D: Venice Blvd from Expo Phase 1 Terminus to Sepulveda Blvd	Light Industrial; Commercial; Some Multi-Family Residential	Low-Rise	**Views:** San Gabriel Mountains; Baldwin Hills **Visual Elements:** Landscaped median; street trees; Landscaping along building frontages; Media Park, Ivy Substation, 9070 Venice Blvd, 9813 Venice Blvd, 9635 Venice Blvd, 10341 Venice Blvd	Moderate
E: Sepulveda Blvd from Venice Blvd to Expo ROW	Light Industrial; Office; Retail; Multi-Family Residential	Low-Rise	**Views:** Santa Monica Mountains **Visual Elements:** Charnock Road Elementary School; street trees; 2920 Sepulveda Blvd, Landscaping along building frontages; Housing	Moderate

Table 3.3-1 Visual Characteristics

Visual Character Area	Character of Views			Visual Quality[a]
	Land Use/Viewer Group Along Area	Scale of Adjacent Development	Visual Resources (Views and Visual Elements)	
Segment 2: Sepulveda to Cloverfield (All LRT Alternatives)				
F: Expo ROW from Sepulveda Blvd to Barrington Ave	Office; Light Industrial; Multi-Family Residential	Low-Rise	**Views:** I-405 overpass; Santa Monica Mountains **Visual Elements:** Isolated landscaping along building frontages; Remnants of historic ROW	Moderate Low
G including Maintenance Facility (MF): Expo ROW from Barrington Ave to Cloverfield Blvd	Office; Light Industrial; Studio; Single-family Residential	Low- to High-Rise	**Views:** Santa Monica Mountains; Water Gardens Business Park **Visual Elements:** Landscaped median with coral trees; Landscaped residential yards; Stewart Park; Bergamot Station	Moderate
Segment 3: Olympic (LRT Alternatives 1 and 3)				
H: Olympic Blvd from Cloverfield Blvd to 11th St	Light Industrial; Office; Studio	Low-to Mid-Rise	**Views:** Santa Monica Mountains; Water Gardens Business Park **Visual Elements:** Landscaped Median; Coral Trees; Memorial Park; Crossroads School	Moderate High
I: 11th St. to Colorado/4th St Station	Commercial; Light Industrial; Office	Low-Rise	**Views:** Santa Monica Mountains **Visual Elements:** I-10 freeway; Landscaping along building frontages; Santa Monica Pier and sign; Main St. Bridge, 302 Colorado Ave	Moderate
Segment 3a: Colorado (LRT Alternatives 2 and 4)				
J: Colorado Ave from Cloverfield to Colorado/4th St Station	Light Industrial; Commercial; Office; Studio	Low- to Mid-Rise	**Views:** Santa Monica Mountains; Water Gardens Business Park **Visual Elements:** Santa Monica Pier and sign, Main St. Bridge, 516 Colorado Ave, 302 Colorado Ave	Moderate

SOURCE: PBS&J

a. Visual Quality is rated Low, Moderate Low, Moderate, Moderate High, or High. These ratings reflect upkeep or deterioration, landscaping, and visual attractiveness.

Visual Character Area E: Sepulveda Boulevard from Venice Boulevard to Expo ROW (Figure 3.3-7)

Both the I-405 and the I-10 freeways are visually prominent within Visual Character Area E. Sepulveda Boulevard crosses under the I-10 freeway between Sardis Avenue and Richland Avenue and the I-405 freeway is located parallel to, and just west of, Sepulveda Boulevard. The freeway structures obstruct many of the background and middleground views within the area. While the area does not have any distinguishing visual character or landscaping, the overall visual quality would be considered moderate because the setting is one that is well maintained and cohesive.

Segment 2: Sepulveda to Cloverfield (All LRT Alternatives)

Visual Character Area F: Expo ROW from Sepulveda Boulevard to Barrington Avenue (Figure 3.3-8)

The visual quality in Visual Character Area F would be considered moderate low as this area is visually dominated by the Sepulveda Boulevard Undercrossing and the I-405 infrastructure, extensive industrial and commercial development, and the heavily travelled arterial streets that the Expo ROW crosses, with little formal landscaping or aesthetically pleasing features available.

Visual Character Area G: Expo ROW from Barrington Avenue to Cloverfield Boulevard (Figure 3.3-9 and Figure 3.3-10)

Although Visual Character Area G is mostly commercial and industrial, the visual quality would be considered moderate because of the uniformity of the built environment, some formal landscaping, and aesthetically pleasing visual features.

Visual Character Area G is located within the area bounded by the Expo ROW to the north, and Stewart Street on the west. The proposed maintenance facility would be located in this area.

Segment 3: Olympic (LRT Alternatives 1 and 3)

Visual Character Area H: Olympic Boulevard from Cloverfield Boulevard to 11th Street (Figure 3.3-11)

Within Visual Character Area H, the uses adjacent to the Expo ROW are mostly commercial in nature with low-scale one- to two-story buildings lining both sides of the street. Olympic Boulevard within Santa Monica transforms from a wide highway into a green and aesthetically pleasant corridor, highlighted by a procession of mature coral trees in a median that extends from the City limits at Centinela Avenue to 10th Street. Additionally, the median is identified as having scenic highway properties in the 1997 Open Space Element of Santa Monica's General Plan. The visual quality of this area would be considered moderate high because of the relatively continuous building façade throughout this area, the new commercial development, the landscaped commercial grounds, the boulevard median, and Memorial Park, all of which are visually attractive features.

Visual Character Area I: 11th Street to Colorado/4th Street Station (Figure 3.3-12)

The Lincoln Boulevard and 4th and 5th Street off-ramps from the I-10 freeway and the travel lanes of the I-10 freeway are the prominent visual features within Visual Character Area I. The buildings within this area range from one to six stories in height. Additionally, to the immediate southwest of the proposed terminus, the City of Santa Monica has recently developed the new Police Department & Fire Administration Building as part of the Santa Monica Civic Center Specific Plan. The streets are planted with medium-sized trees approximately every 20 feet. The landscaping and newly developed buildings are of a visually pleasing quality, but the lack of unity of building type and the prominence of the I-10 freeway infrastructure detracts from the visual quality of the area. The visual quality of this area would be considered moderate.

Segment 3a: Colorado (LRT Alternatives 2 and 4)

Visual Character Area J: Colorado Avenue from Cloverfield Boulevard to Colorado/4th Street Station (Figure 3.3-13)

From the Expo ROW to the Santa Monica terminus via Colorado Avenue, the visual landscape of the Expo ROW within Visual Character Area J is mostly commercial and industrial in nature, with low-scale one- to two-story buildings and trees lining both sides of the street. The majority of Colorado Avenue in this area provides a relatively continuous building façade, with minimal landscaping and no distinct visual features. The visual quality of this area would be considered moderate.

3.3.3 Regulatory Setting

State

State Scenic Highway Program

The State Scenic Highway Program was established to preserve and protect scenic highways from change that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. Accordingly, sections of State Route 1 (Pacific Coast Highway) have been designated as a scenic highway under the State Scenic Highway program. Lincoln Boulevard is a continuation of State Route 1 within the City of Santa Monica, but is not designated as part of the Pacific Coast Highway Scenic Highway and is, therefore, not considered to be a scenic highway. Additionally, Olympic Boulevard from Centinela Avenue west to 11th Street is identified as having scenic highway properties in the 1997 Open Space Element of Santa Monica's General Plan, but is not designated as a State Scenic Highway and is also not considered to be a scenic highway.

Local

City of Los Angeles General Plan

The City of Los Angeles has designated Venice Boulevard as a scenic highway from Longwood Avenue in the Mid-City area of Los Angeles to Abbott Kinney Boulevard in the Venice Beach area of Los Angeles. While Venice Boulevard is locally designated by the City of Los Angeles, it would not be considered a scenic highway for purposes of CEQA as it is not listed as an eligible or designated state scenic highway and is, therefore, not considered to be a scenic highway.

City of Santa Monica General Plan

The City of Santa Monica's Scenic Corridors General Plan Element provides for protection and enhancement of the City of Santa Monica's scenic resources. The Santa Monica Municipal Pier and the Main Street Bridge, which is located south of Colorado Avenue on Main Street and crosses the I-10 freeway, are designated as scenic corridors. Similarly, the median along Olympic Boulevard from Centinela Avenue west to 11th Street is identified as having scenic highway properties in the 1997 Open Space Element of Santa Monica's General Plan, and as such, is identified as a scenic corridor.

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro)

The visual quality and aesthetics of the proposed project would comply with the *Metro Design Criteria*. The *Metro Design Criteria* establish the guidelines and standards for the design of a rail project. The *Metro Design Criteria* include standards pertaining to the design of LRT system components including guideways, station site development, consolidation of overhead power lines to avoid visual clutter, landscaping and other screening mechanisms, light and glare, shade and shadow, the treatment of historic properties, the removal of existing landscaping and street trees, materials, signing and graphics, public art, and other appropriate standards to ensure the development of an integrated, compatible, and visually pleasing system.

3.3.4 Analytic Methodology

Analysis of potential impacts to visual character is subjective by nature, since the qualities that create an aesthetically pleasing setting or that result in the perception of a visual element as aesthetically positive or negative vary from person to person. In preparing this analysis, the LRT Alternative alignments were surveyed to identify important views, key views, or visual resources that could theoretically be noticeably altered by the proposed project. These views include the presence or absence of landscaping, the predominant land uses along the alignment, the scale of buildings along the alignment, and the major scenic views and substantive visual elements that are available along each segment of the alignment, such as open space resources, street trees, and building frontages.

An assessment of the visual character and quality was made based on the cohesion or variation in form, the level of up-keep or deterioration of the built environment and the level of landscaping and visual attractiveness for each visual character area (summarized in Section 3.3.2 (Existing Conditions). As recommended by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), views are described by the view character and quality; the visual resources present; viewer group, and viewer group sensitivity, and the duration of the views (i.e., amount of time available to see the view).

The *character* of a view is described by the topography, land uses, scale, form, and natural resources depicted in the view. The assessment of the visual character is descriptive and not evaluative because it is based on defined attributes. Visual *quality* refers to the aesthetics of the view. Determining the quality of a view can be subjective because it is based in part on the viewer's values and notions about what constitutes a quality setting. In an effort to establish an objective framework, this assessment's qualitative rankings (low, moderate low, moderate, moderate high, and high) are adapted from the FHWA guidelines.

Additionally, designated scenic vistas were surveyed for potential impacts resulting from the proposed project. Scenic vistas are those identified in the cities of Los Angeles, Culver City, and Santa Monica General Plans as being "scenic" or are considered "unique" in the area.

Data used to prepare this section were taken from reviews of visual simulations of proposed elements of the project, actual site conditions, and information provided by the cities involved. Potential impacts examined include the loss of scenic resources, obstruction of scenic views, and the introduction of new project-related features that may influence the visual significance, scale, or character of the existing visual environment.

The potential physical features of the LRT Alternatives were considered in assessing changes to the visual setting and the existing visual quality. These features that could alter the visual setting and quality in a segment or visual character area include revised medians, tracks, stations (including ramps, platforms, fare vending equipment, and canopies to protect riders), overhead contact system (OCS) and power lines, ~~barriers to restrict access to the guideway,~~ parking lots, the maintenance facility, and elevated guideways. This section assumes that any potential sound mitigation feature that would be required would consist of sound walls, which would present the greatest potential change in visual quality compared to ~~vegetated buffers or~~ berms that can also provide sound abatement. ~~This is~~Barriers to restrict access to the guideway would be located along the entire guideway except along the street running segments and portions of the aerial structures. This section assumes fencing or walls would be used along the guideway throughout the exclusive ROW alignment. Both the sound walls and the fencing would be considered a conservative approach as it anticipates the greatest potential for impact.

3.3.5 Criteria, Impact Evaluation, and Mitigation Measures

Criterion	**Would the project result in an adverse effect on a scenic vista, or damage or remove important aesthetic features (e.g., removal of vegetation originally intended to enhance the appearance of the constructed environment)?**

No-Build Alternative

There would be roadway and transit service improvements associated with the No-Build Alternative. However, the only improvement that would change the physical environment in the Expo Phase 2 ROW would be the I-405 Widening project. No scenic vista or important aesthetic feature was identified along the I-405 Widening project within the Expo Phase 2 ROW area. Vegetation that would be removed by the I-405 Widening project would be subsequently replaced where space allows. Therefore, the No-Build Alternative would have a ***less-than-significant*** impact.

Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Alternative

The TSM Alternative would include all of the improvements under the No-Build Alternative and new on-street bus services to directly serve the Expo Phase 2 community transit needs. Those additional improvements would include minor physical modifications such as upgraded bus stops and additional buses. In addition to the impacts identified in the No-Build Alternative, any vegetation that is removed as a result of the TSM Alternative would be subsequently replaced where space allows. Therefore, the TSM Alternative would have a ***less-than-significant*** impact on a scenic vista or an important aesthetic feature in the study area.

LRT Alternatives

Segment 1 (Expo ROW), Segment 1a (Venice/Sepulveda), and Segment 2 (Sepulveda to Cloverfield) (All LRT Alternatives)

No scenic vistas, as defined by the cities of Los Angeles, Culver City, or Santa Monica, have been identified for Segment 1, Segment 1a, or Segment 2. As a result, the LRT Alternatives would have ***no impact*** on a scenic vista or an identified aesthetic feature in the study area.

FEIR Design Options

As no scenic vistas were identified along Segment 1 (Expo ROW) and Segment 2 (Sepulveda to Cloverfield), implementation of the Expo/Westwood Station No Parking Design Option, the Sepulveda Boulevard Grade Separation and the Maintenance Facility Buffer Design Option would not diminish views or otherwise impact designated scenic vistas. ***No impact*** would occur with implementation of any of the identified design options along Segment 1 (Expo ROW) and Segment 2 (Sepulveda to Cloverfield). None of the design options would be implemented in Segment 1a (Venice/Sepulveda).

Segment 3: Olympic (LRT Alternatives 1 and 3)

The scenic vistas identified for Segment 3 consist of views of the median along Olympic Boulevard, the Santa Monica Pier sign and the Main Street Bridge. Views of the Pier sign and the bridge would not be obstructed or otherwise altered by implementation of this segment. At the proposed Colorado/4th Street Station, looking west along Colorado Avenue, there is a clear view of the "World Famous Santa Monica Pier" sign, which marks the entrance to the Pier. There are no current views of the pier sign across the Colorado/4th Street station site that would be obstructed, and no impact would occur. Similarly, with regard to the Main Street Bridge, there are no current views of the bridge that would be obstructed. The proposed LRT Alternatives would provide new views of the Main Street Bridge as it turns the corner between 4th and 5th Streets to its destination at the proposed Colorado/4th Street Station, and no impact would occur.

In October 2007, the City of Santa Monica City Council approved a recommendation to study Colorado Avenue (Segment 3a), in part, to preserve the Olympic median and coral trees. Implementation of Segment 3 of LRT Alternatives 1 and 3 would result in the removal of the mature coral trees located within the 35-foot-wide median of Olympic Boulevard, and this is considered a potentially significant impact to this aesthetic feature. The *Metro Design Criteria* would require the implementation of replacement landscaping along the alignment, where feasible. Additionally, mitigation measure MM AES-1 would be incorporated to ensure that the loss of the coral trees is addressed. Implementation of mitigation measure MM AES-1 would reduce potential impacts resulting from removal of the coral trees in the median of Olympic Boulevard by requiring that the coral trees be relocated if feasible, or replaced within the vicinity of the alignment. However, removal of the coral trees and the reconfiguration of Olympic Boulevard would result in a loss of an important aesthetic feature and thus, an impact.

MM AES-1 *Prior to the issuance of grading permits associated with construction along Olympic Boulevard of Segment 3 (Olympic), the Expo Authority shall consult with the City of Santa Monica's Community Forester and/or Director of Recreation and Parks to determine whether the coral trees could be relocated within the Olympic Boulevard Corridor. If relocation within the Olympic*

Boulevard Corridor is not feasible, the Expo Authority shall relocate the trees within the City of Santa Monica, as determined by the Community Forester and/or Director of Recreation and Parks.

If the Community Forester determines that relocation of the coral trees is not feasible, the Expo Authority shall replace the trees at a minimum of 1:1 (1 impacted: 1 replaced) within the Olympic Boulevard Corridor. The species and locations shall be consistent with the Metro Design Criteria *and/or the* City of Santa Monica Tree Code*, and subject to the approval of the Director of Recreation and Parks. In the event the ROW is not wide enough to allow for establishment of mature replacement trees, the Expo Authority shall plant trees within the City of Santa Monica, as determined by the Community Forester and/or Director of Recreation and Parks.~~negotiate with the City of Santa Monica on tree replacement.~~*

While the Expo Authority would relocate or replace the coral trees, the loss of the coral trees would be considered a ***significant and unavoidable*** impact for LRT Alternatives 1 and 3.

FEIR Design Options

Implementation of the Colorado/4th Parallel Platform and South Side Parking Design Options would not result in the removal of additional coral trees within the median of Olympic Boulevard. In addition, the implementation of these design options would not affect existing views of the Santa Monica Pier or Main Street Bridge. As such, ***no impact*** would occur with implementation of any of the identified design options along Segment 3 (Olympic).

Segment 3a: Colorado (LRT Alternatives 2 and 4)

The scenic vistas identified for Segment 3a consist of a direct view of the Santa Monica Pier heading west on Colorado, and a direct view of the Main Street Bridge from the proposed Colorado/4th Street Station. The collective LRT system (OCS, trackwork, etc.) would extend down the center of Colorado Avenue and would diminish views of the Pier sign from within the roadway when LRVs are present; however, views from the pedestrian sidewalks on either side of the street would remain unobstructed, and this would be a less-than-significant impact. Views of the Main Street Bridge from the proposed Colorado/4th Street Station would not be considered sensitive, as views are limited to the top side of the bridge including surface paving, vintage street lights, and approach fences, and no impact would occur. Therefore, implementation of LRT Alternatives 2 and 4 would not obstruct views of the pier sign or of the bridge and a ***less-than-significant*** impact would occur.

FEIR Design Options

Implementation of the Colorado Parking Retention and the Colorado/4th Parallel Platform and South Side Parking Design Options would not affect existing views of the Santa Monica Pier or Main Street Bridge. As such, no impact beyond that discussed above for the LRT Alternatives would occur with implementation of any of the identified design options along Segment 3a (Colorado). Impacts would remain ***less than significant*** with implementation of these design options.

Criterion	**Would the project substantially damage a scenic resource, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?**

No-Build Alternative

There would be roadway and transit service improvements associated with the No-Build Alternative. However, the only improvement that would change the physical environment in the Expo Phase 2 ROW would be the I-405 Widening project. No highway or scenic resource has been identified along the I-405 Widening project area within the Expo Phase 2 ROW. Therefore, the No-Build Alternative would have ***no impact*** on scenic resources within a state scenic highway.

Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Alternative

The TSM Alternative would include all of the improvements under the No-Build Alternative and new on-street bus services to directly serve the Expo Phase 2 community transit needs. Those additional improvements would include minor physical modifications such as upgraded bus stops and additional buses. However, no scenic highway or scenic resource has been identified within the study area of the proposed project. Therefore, the TSM Alternative would have ***no impact***.

LRT Alternatives

Implementation of the LRT Alternatives using Segment 1 or Segment 1a (all LRT Alternatives) would intersect with, or offer views of, Venice Boulevard, which is designated as a scenic highway by the City of Los Angeles but is not eligible or designated as a state scenic highway. There are no designated state scenic highways within Segment 2 (all LRT Alternatives), Segment 3 (LRT Alternatives 1 and 3), or Segment 3a (LRT Alternatives 2 and 4). Therefore, the LRT Alternatives would have ***no impact*** on any scenic resources within a state scenic highway.

FEIR Design Options

Implementation of the Sepulveda Boulevard Grade Separation, Maintenance Facility Buffer, Colorado Parking Retention, Colorado/4th Parallel Platform and South Side Parking, or Expo/Westwood Station No Parking design options would have ***no impact*** on any scenic resources within a state scenic highway, as no designated state scenic highways were identified along any of the proposed segments of the LRT Alternatives.

Criterion	**Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?**

No-Build Alternative

There would be roadway and transit service improvements associated with the No-Build Alternative. However, the only improvement that would change the physical environment in the Expo Phase 2 ROW would be the I-405 Widening project. Sound walls associated with the I-405 Widening project would affect visual character and the views in the immediate vicinity of the

widening project at the Expo ROW. However, the visual quality in this area is rated moderate low so that the proposed change would not substantially alter the surrounding visual character. The new walls would be designed to match the existing sound walls, and therefore, the No-Build Alternative would have a ***less-than-significant*** impact on the visual character or quality of the area.

Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Alternative

The TSM Alternative would include all of the improvements under the No-Build Alternative and new on-street bus services to directly serve the Expo Phase 2 community transit needs. Those additional improvements would include minor physical modifications such as upgraded bus stops and additional buses. In addition to the impacts identified in the No-Build Alternative, the TSM Alternative would construct upgraded bus stops, but they would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the area. Therefore, the TSM Alternative would have a ***less-than-significant*** impact.

LRT Alternatives

Segment 1: Expo ROW (LRT Alternatives 1 and 2)

In Visual Character Area A, where limited landscaping on the railroad berm and vacant character of the Expo ROW result in moderate visual quality, the implementation of aesthetic improvements to the Expo ROW and the National/Palms Station area, as well as implementation of the *Metro Design Criteria*, means that the proposed project would likely alter the character of the area in a positive manner. Implementation of the LRT Alternatives would introduce new visual elements to the area, including the ballast track system, OCS, LRVs, traction power substations (TPSS), the proposed radio tower west of Motor Avenue and the proposed station at National/Palms Boulevards (no station parking provided); altering the appearance and character of the area by adding a new physical structure and associated access elements. Both the light-rail vehicles (LRVs), which would travel along the existing 20-foot-high elevated berm, as well as the station's visual features would likely be fully visible to the multi-family residential uses located to the south of the Expo ROW. The radio tower would be located west of Motor Avenue and would be in height and scale to the existing utility infrastructure in the area. The LRT station would provide a focal point for this area with potential pedestrian-level amenities including public art, landscaping, and other design features that should enhance the visual character of the surrounding community.

Visual Character Area B has a moderate visual quality characterized by a relatively deep trench that contains the Expo ROW. Residences adjacent to the ROW have limited views across the trench until approximately 1,000 feet east of Overland Avenue, where the Expo ROW returns to street level. Existing views are of the vacant tracks, the backs of houses adjacent to the Expo ROW and vegetation within the Expo ROW. A barrier along the Metro property line to prevent pedestrian intrusion to the guideway and sound mitigation features would be developed within this area. The new barrier and sound mitigation features would not degrade the existing visual quality, because there are no viewers within the trench and views across the trench would not change.

In Visual Character Area C, characterized as moderate high due to the wide parkway appearance of the Expo ROW, one traction power substation (TPSS) would be located, either east or west of Overland Avenue (Figure 3.3-14 [Visual Simulation of Overland Avenue and Exposition Boulevard]). Sound mitigation would be required along both sides of the Expo ROW.

Source: CityWorks Design, 2008.

Figure 3.3-14 Visual Simulation of Overland Avenue and Exposition Boulevard

The sound mitigation features would be designed consistent with the *Metro Design Criteria* and would be properly screened and/or incorporate design features that would improve appearance and reduce visual intrusion. Refer to Section 3.12 (Noise and Vibration) for detail regarding the placement and design of sound mitigation features. Additionally, Overland Avenue would be widened by approximately 4 feet within the public right-of-way between Cushdon Avenue (north of the Expo ROW) and Coventry Place (south of the Expo ROW) to accommodate an additional lane of traffic in both the northbound and southbound directions.

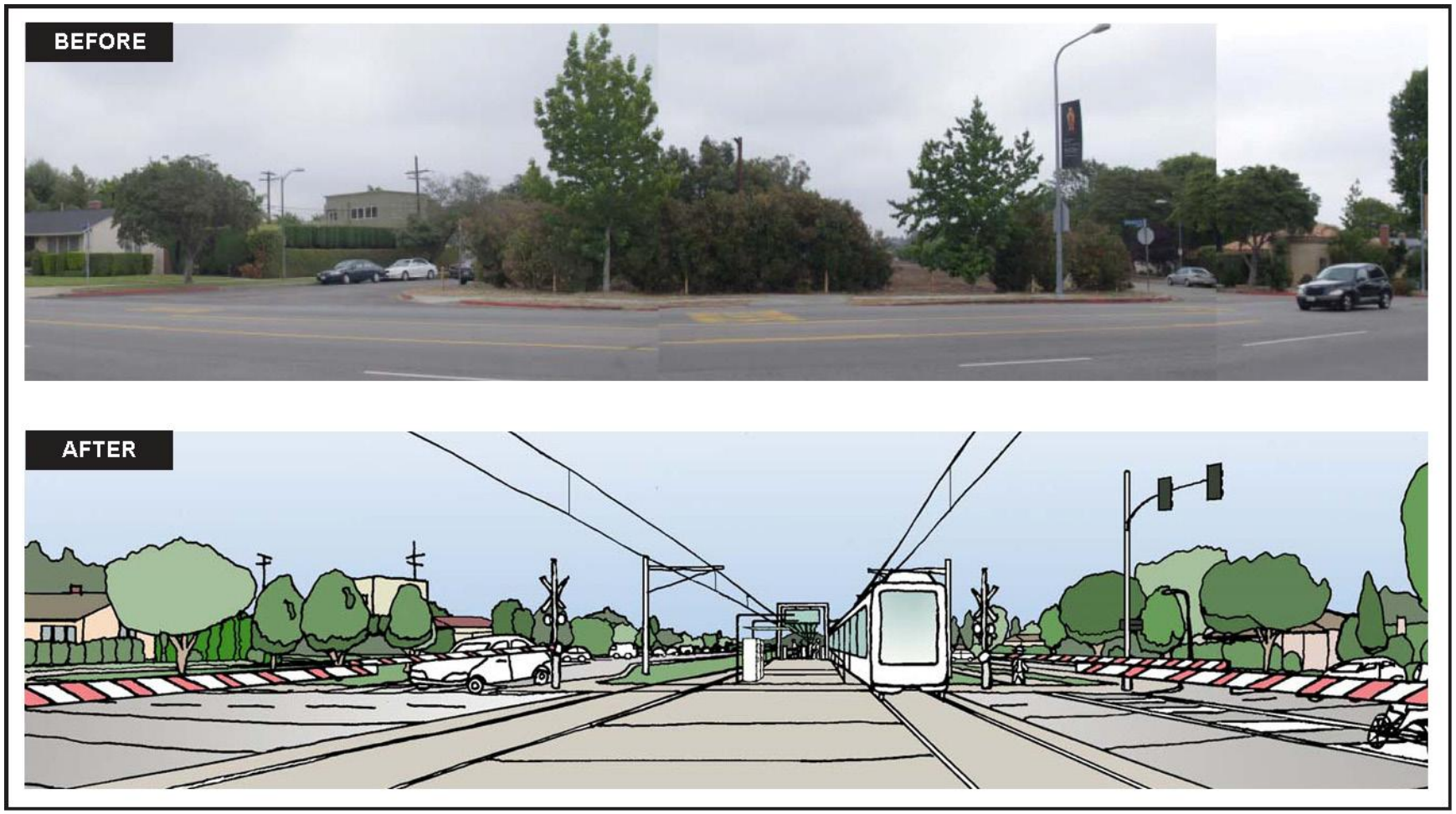
Westwood Boulevard would be widened by approximately 4 feet within the public right-of-way between Ashby Avenue and Richland Avenue, which would result in a ~~few~~limited number of the ~~street~~liquidambar trees along Westwood Boulevard being removed and replaced with younger trees. Conformance to the *Metro Design Criteria* would ensure that street trees and landscaped areas shall be preserved wherever practicable. Also, trees that require removal would be replaced on a one-for-one basis, subject to local jurisdictional requirements for minimum size, species, and set-back requirements. The City of Los Angeles does not designate the liquidambar tree as a protected tree (City of Los Angeles, Ordinance 177404). As such, there is no requirement to save and/or replace these trees in kind.

Introduction of a 170-space parking lot and station within this area, along with modifying existing bus stops on either side of Westwood Boulevard, would change the character of the area. Figure 3.3-15 (Visual Simulation of Expo/Westwood Station) provides a representation of this station. The proposed street modifications, the surface station parking, as well as the increased bus service and stops along Westwood Boulevard would alter the character of the station vicinity from that of a residential neighborhood with a vacant right-of-way that serves as an informal community open space to that of a transit corridor. The proposed Expo/Westwood Station would be designed according to the *Metro Design Criteria*, which would ~~potentially~~ include public art, landscaping to screen the Expo/Westwood Station from view, and other design features that enhance the visual quality of the community.

Although the Expo ROW served as a rail corridor up until the mid-1980s, the surrounding community has grown accustomed to the existing visual character (i.e., moderate high) of the area. As such, implementation of the LRT station and the associated parking area would represent a substantial change in the area's character and visual quality, which is a potentially significant impact and no mitigation measure other than conformance to the *Metro Design Criteria* has been identified to reduce this impact to less than significant for this segment. Therefore, implementation of LRT Alternative 1 or 2 would result in a ***significant and unavoidable*** impact due to the introduction of the LRT and bus components on Westwood Boulevard within the vicinity of the Expo/Westwood Station in Segment 1.

~~The~~Additionally, the Expo Authority will implement an urban design process that will endeavor to minimize community aesthetic impacts and allow for the transit system to become a source of civic pride. The urban design vision would be implemented with a focus on five major areas:

1. Landscaping and Station Design—Through landscaping elements, the LRT Alternatives would reflect a landscaped transit parkway.
2. Station Area Plan—The Station Area Plan focuses on physical improvements of the pedestrian experience within a 300-foot radius of each station, creating a safe and comfortable access path for surrounding residents.



Source: CityWorks Design, 2008.

Figure 3.3-15 Visual Simulation of Expo/Westwood Station

3. Vertical Elements—All vertical elements of the project are designed to integrate into the overall aesthetic.
4. Station Canopy Design—The architecture of the canopy and associated elements will create a sense of place at each station.
5. Public Art—Original artworks will create a unique identity for each station, and enhance the passenger experience.

FEIR Design Options

The Expo/Westwood Station No Parking Design Option would eliminate the 170 surface parking spaces at the Expo/Westwood Station. However, 20 parking spaces would be dedicated to neighborhood residents east of Westwood Boulevard and north of the LRT line to address community concerns regarding on-street parking losses. While removing the 170 surface parking spaces would lessen the change in visual character, implementation of this design option would still result in a ***significant and unavoidable*** impact on Westwood Boulevard, as the associated street modification, removal of a limited number of street trees, and introduction of the LRT system would result in a change in the area's character and visual quality as described above for the LRT Alternatives.

With implementation of the Sepulveda Boulevard Grade Separation Design Option the LRT alignment would transition to an area elevated by retained fill[50] just west of Tilden Avenue and remain on the retained fill until just before Sepulveda Boulevard where the LRT alignment would transition to a bridge structure over Sepulveda Boulevard. Within Visual Character Area C, the Exposition ROW is screened from view by the residences by use of heavy landscaping in this area. The aerial structure would offer passing motorists using Sepulveda Boulevard highly visible but fleeting views of the aerial structure. Residents to the south along Exposition Boulevard would have the greatest visibility of the aerial structure; however, these views would be screened as feasible as landscaping would be incorporated to screen the Expo ROW from view, as would other design features specified by the *Metro Design Criteria* to reduce visual impacts. Therefore, implementation of the Sepulveda Grade Separation Design Option would not result in a degradation of the area, and, as such, introduction of the Sepulveda Grade Separation Design Option would result in ***less than significant*** impacts.

Segment 1a: Venice/Sepulveda (LRT Alternatives 3 and 4)

Visual Character Area D is characterized as moderate visual quality, as there is no defining visual feature that characterizes this area, as the buildings are not distinctive in their architecture and have little visual variation from block to block. Along Venice Boulevard, full and partial property acquisitions are proposed along the north and south sides of the street. Some property acquisitions in this area could result in impacts to previously shielded residential uses, which would now front directly onto the reconfigured Venice Boulevard, and would result in a sense of visual encroachment to those occupants. This is a potentially significant impact.

Mitigation measure MM AES-2 would be implemented so that residential uses that were previously screened by acquired property would not result in visual encroachment to the residential occupants, and this impact would be reduced for these sensitive viewers through the installation of a visual barrier such as fencing or a wall and landscaping.

[50] Refer to Section 7.2.1 (Guideway) for further description of aerial and retained fill guideway construction.

MM AES-2 *In the event that a property acquisition along Segment 1a (Venice/Sepulveda) results in residential uses fronting directly onto a city street that was previously shielded by the acquired property, a barrier, such as fencing or a wall, and landscaping, shall be installed where feasible to shield the existing residential uses from the reconfigured streetscape.*

Mitigation measure MM AES-2 would reduce the impact to residential uses that would front directly onto city streetscapes as a result of property acquisitions along Venice Boulevard. However, the property acquisitions, the reconfigured streetscape, the loss of existing street trees, and the visual dominance of the aerial portions of the LRT Alternative as it turns north along Sepulveda Boulevard would result in a substantial change to the visual character of Venice Boulevard. The recommended pedestrian and aesthetic improvements and conformance to the *Metro Design Criteria* for streetscape improvements would serve to reduce the magnitude of these changes; however, the dominant feature within Visual Character Area D would be the LRT Alternatives and associated infrastructure.

The proposed Venice/Sepulveda Station would be adjacent to dense residential neighborhoods and a mix of auto-oriented and neighborhood businesses. The area has multi-unit housing along Venice Boulevard and within walking distance of the proposed station. While the aerial structure would be consistent with the scale of adjacent development, it would also result in new shade, shadows, and visual encroachment. Drivers and pedestrians in this area could be overwhelmed by the mass and prominence of the aerial structure. The aerial structure would be the new prominent visual feature in this area replacing the openness of long-distance views down Venice Boulevard.

Figure 3.3-16 (Venice and Sepulveda Intersection Visual Simulation) illustrates the aerial structure at this intersection. The Venice/Sepulveda Station would be constructed as part of the aerial structure over the Venice/Sepulveda intersection, and no station parking would be provided. The station would be located within the median of Venice Boulevard to the east of Sepulveda Boulevard. It would have an approximately 270-foot-long, 23-foot-wide center platform reaching a height of up to 30 feet (to top of rail). Stairs and elevators would be provided to give access to the street level at the intersection of Venice Boulevard and Tilden Avenue.

The proposed alignment would become aerial at the intersection of Venice and Sepulveda Boulevards and continue until the intersection of Charnock Road (South) and Sepulveda Boulevard reaching a height of up to 30 feet (at top of rail), as shown in Figure 3.3-17 (Visual Simulation of LRT Alternative at Sepulveda Boulevard and Charnock Road). The introduction of an aerial guideway on supporting columns or retained fill (i.e., concrete retaining walls or mechanically stabilized earth [MSE] walls),[51] would result in a substantial change in visual conditions along Sepulveda Boulevard. In particular, the LRT structure would become visually dominant because of its elevated position with respect to the roadway and the one- to three-story multi-family residential buildings below the structure on both sides of Sepulveda Boulevard. The structure would present an imposing visual feature in relation to the street level views of Sepulveda Boulevard. Thus, the visual impact of the aerial structure in this area would be a potentially significant impact as the structure would become the focal point along a street dominated by street level multi-family residential and educational land uses.

[51] Refer to Section 7.2.1 (Guideway) for further description of aerial and retained fill guideway construction.

Source: CityWorks Design, 2008.

Figure 3.3-16 Venice and Sepulveda Intersection Visual Simulation

Source: CityWorks Design, 2008.

Figure 3.3-17 Visual Simulation of LRT Alternative at Sepulveda Boulevard and Charnock Road

Visual conditions along Venice Boulevard would substantially change where the LRT Alternative transitions to an aerial structure as it turns north towards Sepulveda Boulevard. The guideway would become visually dominant because of its elevated position with respect to the roadway, and would assume physical dominance with respect to vehicles and the existing one- to three-story buildings near the structure. The structure would present an imposing visual feature in relation to the street level views of Venice Boulevard. The height of the guideway could create a sense of physical encroachment for the occupants of the commercial and residential structures located along Venice Boulevard, and a potentially significant impact would result.

Street parking along Sepulveda Boulevard would be eliminated, the landscaping would be narrowed, and street trees would be removed. Due to the narrow width of Sepulveda Boulevard, and in order to retain existing traffic lanes, no landscaping would be provided adjacent to the at-grade portions of the proposed project. The prominent northerly views would still be of the I-10 overpass and the existing streetscape; however, the mature street trees located north of National Boulevard would be removed to accommodate the LRT guideway. There would not be sufficient room along Sepulveda Boulevard to accommodate landscaping and amenities in a manner that would be consistent with the *Metro Design Criteria*; therefore, these streetscape alterations are potentially significant, as they would result in a substantial change to the visual character along Sepulveda Boulevard.

The proposed Sepulveda/National Station would be compatible with the commercial uses in the area, which would be enhanced by pedestrian and aesthetic improvements. North of National Boulevard, the LRT Alternative would return to grade and continue north at grade to pass below the I-10 overpass. The effect of the LRT Alternative would be to change the street-level views from the streetscape and buildings to views dominated by the LRT guideway.

Acquisition and demolition of the properties north of the I-10 overpass on Sepulveda Boulevard in Visual Character Area E would expose residential uses located behind and adjacent to the demolished properties to the newly reconfigured Sepulveda Boulevard. Mitigation measure MM AES-2 would be implemented so that residential uses that were previously screened by acquired property would not result in visual encroachment to the residential occupants, and this impact would be reduced for these sensitive viewers through the installation of barriers such as fencing or a wall and landscaping.

Mitigation measure MM AES-2 would reduce the impact to residential uses that would front directly onto city streetscapes as a result of property acquisitions along Sepulveda Boulevard. However, the visual dominance of the aerial portions of the LRT Alternative along Sepulveda Boulevard would create a sense of physical encroachment for the occupants of the residential and educational uses along the alignment, resulting in a substantial change to the visual character of Sepulveda Boulevard. Additionally, the removal of the existing landscaping, the reconfiguration of the parkways, loss of street trees, and the numerous property acquisitions would reduce the existing moderate visual quality. The guideway would become visually dominant because of its elevated position with respect to vehicles and the one- to three-story multi-family residential buildings below the structure on both sides of Sepulveda Boulevard.

Therefore, implementation of the LRT Alternative would result in an impact to the visual quality of Sepulveda Boulevard. The recommended pedestrian and aesthetic improvements and conformance to the *Metro Design Criteria* for streetscape improvements would serve to reduce this impact, but not to levels of less than significant. Therefore, development of LRT

Alternatives 3 and 4 would result in a ***significant and unavoidable*** impact within Visual Character Areas D and E.

FEIR Design Options

No design options are associated with Segment 1a (Venice/Sepulveda).

~~The Expo Authority will implement an urban design process that will endeavor to minimize community aesthetic impacts and allow for the transit system to become a source of civic pride. The urban design vision would be implemented with a focus on five major areas:~~

1. ~~Landscaping and Station Design – Through landscaping elements, the LRT Alternatives would reflect a landscaped transit parkway.~~
2. ~~Station Area Plan – The Station Area Plan focuses on physical improvements of the pedestrian experience within a 300-foot radius of each station, creating a safe and comfortable access path for surrounding residents.~~
3. ~~Vertical Elements – All vertical elements of the project are designed to integrate into the overall aesthetic.~~
4. ~~Station Canopy Design – The architecture of the canopy and associated elements will create a sense of place at each station.~~
5. ~~Public Art – Original artworks will create a unique identity for each station, and enhance the passenger experience.~~

Segment 2: Sepulveda to Cloverfield (All LRT Alternatives)

Visual Character Area F has been previously characterized as moderate low in visual quality due to the mix of light-industrial and office uses, as well as a lack of sensitive viewers, in the area. Because of the lack of sensitive viewers and the predominately commercial/industrial nature of this area, the reuse of the Expo ROW for LRT would alter, but not substantially degrade the character of the area or its surrounding. The LRT guideway and the I-405 overpass would both be elevated in this portion of the corridor reducing the visual dominance of the guideway. As such the guideway would not add a visually significant element to the existing setting.

The proposed aesthetic improvements to the Expo ROW and the Expo/Sepulveda Station area, including the street improvements would create an aesthetically uniform environment. The station would be a highly visible and attractive neighborhood feature, with improved pedestrian pathways, attendant landscaping, and public art associated with implementation of both the LRT Alternative and the station site. The proposed two-story station parking structure would be of similar height and massing to the existing U.S. Post Office multi-story parking structure just to the west of the site. The proposed radio tower located east of the I-405 and within Expo ROW, is less height then the current I-405 overpass.

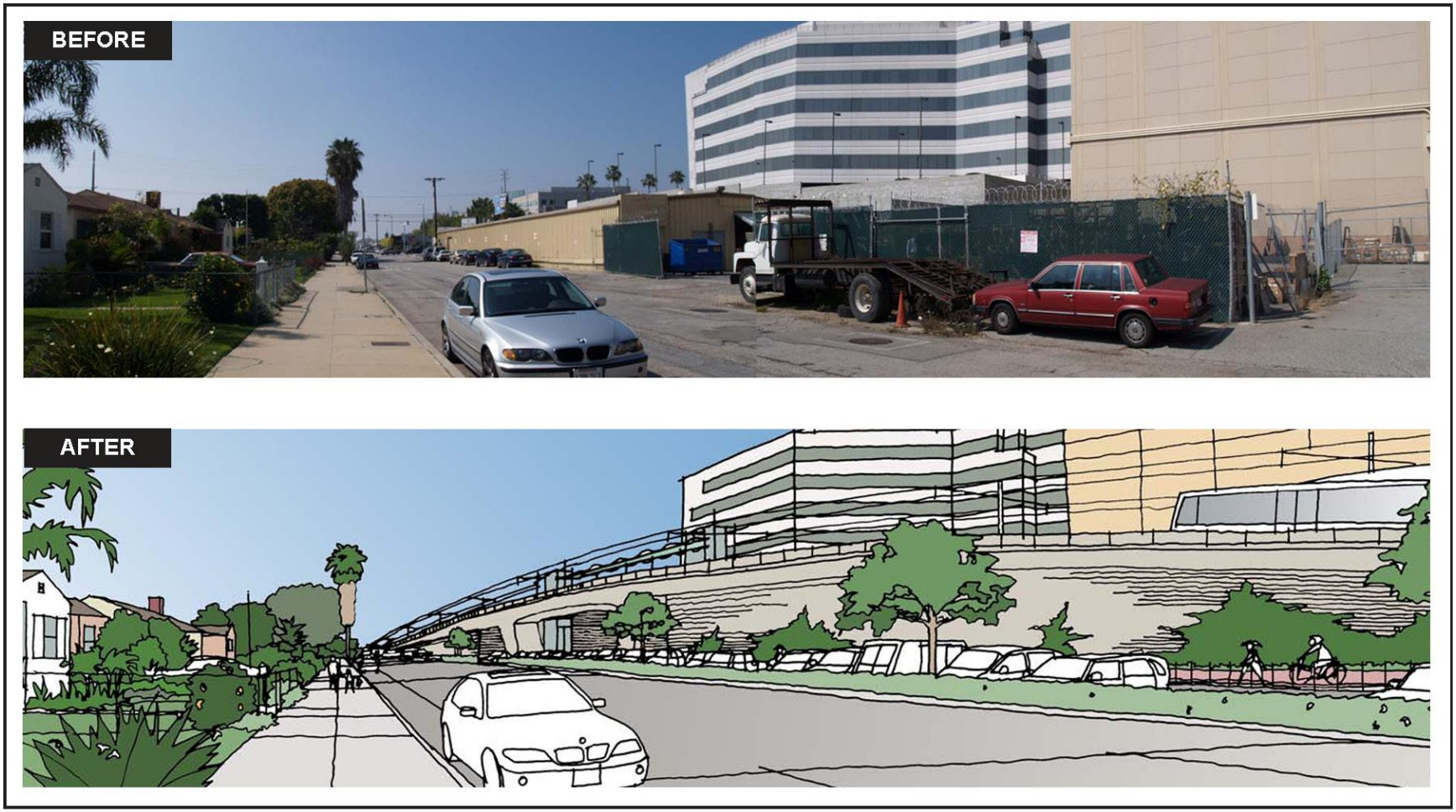
Street modifications would be made to Exposition Boulevard, Sawtelle Boulevard, and Pico Boulevard to accommodate the LRT Alternative as it passes under the I-405 overpass and over Sawtelle Boulevard. The primary change would be to depress Sawtelle Boulevard so that the I-405 underpass would have adequate clearance. Additionally, aerial elements would occur at Pico Boulevard, Sawtelle Boulevard, and Gateway Boulevard to accommodate the LRT Alternative as it passes under the I-405 overpass, and over Sawtelle Boulevard. These

elements, while noticeable, would not alter the scale or mass of development existing in this area. Therefore, the change in visual quality within Visual Character Area F would not result in a degradation of the area.

Visual Character Area G is characterized as moderate in visual quality due to the mix of industrial, commercial, and residential uses, and the primary uses of the area as a truck corridor and delivery area. The uniformity of the built environment, formal landscaping, and aesthetically pleasing visual features contribute to the area's visual quality. The character of uses within the Expo ROW would change from light-industrial uses to an active LRT system. Figure 3.3-18 (Visual Simulation of Bundy Drive and Exposition Boulevard) illustrates the LRT Alternative in this area, and Figure 3.3-19 (Visual Simulation of Maintenance Facility) illustrates the proposed maintenance facility.

The Expo/Bundy Station is proposed to be a grade-separated center platform station and would provide up to 250 surface parking spaces that would be located within the Expo ROW between Barrington Avenue and Centinela Avenue. Vehicular access to these spaces would be directly from Exposition Boulevard along the entire length of Barrington to Centinela Avenues. The station would be adjacent to mid-rise office buildings on Olympic Boulevard and a variety of chain stores and large-format retail. The aerial structure would offer passing motorists using Bundy Drive highly visible but fleeting views of the station. Residents to the south along Exposition Boulevard would have the greatest visibility of the station; however, these views would be substantially similar to the existing views, as the station area and associated surface parking lot would be consistent with the light-industrial uses currently within the ROW. The Centinela Avenue grade separation would not be visible to the residential uses south of Exposition Boulevard; they would be shielded from views of the structure by the existing light-industrial uses that currently screen views of the ROW.

The proposed maintenance facility site is currently a surface parking lot and light-industrial dispatch facility. The maintenance facility would not be visible other than from within the Expo ROW and from the commercial properties north of the facility between Olympic Boulevard and the facility. The building would be visible from Exposition Boulevard. The existing commercial structures would shield the facility from viewers along Olympic Boulevard. The structures of the facility would screen the residential uses to the south from the maintenance activities. The *Metro Design Criteria*, as specified in Section 1.4.4 (Yard and Shops Facility), would require that the Maintenance Facility be designed in a manner that would appropriately consider the existing urban context in which the Maintenance Facility is located. As shown in Figure 3.3-19 (Visual Simulation of Maintenance Facility), the perimeter features of the proposed Maintenance Facility would be developed with landscaping and wall treatments in order to improve views of the facility from Exposition Boulevard, as required by Section 6.6.2 (Landscaping, Basic Goals) of the *Metro Design Criteria*. Additionally, development of the maintenance facility would result in the replacement of one industrial site (light-industrial dispatch facility) for another light-industrial use (the maintenance of light-rail vehicles). Therefore, no substantial change in visual quality would occur on this site.



Source: CityWorks Design, 2008.

Parking shown is representative; final design of parking to be determined.

Figure 3.3-18 Visual Simulation of Bundy Drive and Exposition Boulevard

Source: CityWorks Design, 2008.
Maintenance Facility Buffer Design Option not shown.

Figure 3.3-19 Visual Simulation of Maintenance Facility

With implementation of aesthetic improvements, such as improved landscaping, public art, and pedestrian improvements as feasible in the vicinity of the stations, the visual character of Visual Character Area G would be enhanced. Development of the maintenance facility would not result in the visual degradation of the facility site because existing light-industrial uses would be replaced with new light-industrial uses of a similar scale. Additionally, the implementation of these facilities would not result in a substantial change in visual quality from the perspective of residential areas to the south. Therefore, the change in visual quality would not result in a degradation of the area, and, as such, introduction of the LRT Alternatives within Segment 2 would result in ***less-than-significant*** impacts.

FEIR Design Option

Due to the lack of sensitive viewers and the predominately commercial/industrial nature of this area, the implementation of the Sepulveda Boulevard Grade Separation Design Option would alter, but not substantially degrade the character of the area or its surrounding in Segment 2 (Sepulveda to Cloverfield). The Sepulveda Boulevard Grade Separation Design Option and the I-405 overpass would both be elevated in this portion of the corridor reducing the visual dominance of the guideway. As such, the guideway would not add a visually significant element to the existing setting, and the change in visual quality would not result in a degradation of the area. Therefore, introduction of the Sepulveda Boulevard Grade Separation Design Option within Segment 2 (Sepulveda to Cloverfield) would result in ***less than significant*** impacts.

The Maintenance Facility Buffer Design Option would include a 100- to 110-foot buffer, located south of the Maintenance Facility, on the north side of Exposition Boulevard. This design option would also include the acquisition and use of the existing Santa Monica City College parking area located on the northeast corner of Exposition Boulevard and Stewart Street. Currently, there are two large commercial buildings located on the north side of Exposition Boulevard. These buildings would be razed and replaced with a 100- to 110-foot buffer area that could potentially be landscaped or redeveloped. While the current use and design of this buffer area is undetermined at this time, the proposed buffer would result in shifting the majority of the perimeter wall further to the north of the residential uses located to the south of the Maintenance Facility. This would likely result in improved short-range views for those residential uses, as currently the immediate view is of the existing commercial buildings on the existing Verizon site. All other design features detailed above would also be incorporated into the Buffer Design Option, which would serve to ensure that the Maintenance Facility Buffer Design Option does not result in the visual degradation of the community. Therefore, the change in visual quality as a result of implementation of the design option would not result in visual degradation of the area beyond that already identified for development of and along Segment 2 (Sepulveda to Cloverfield), and impacts would remain ***less than significant*** as discussed above for the LRT Alternatives.

Segment 3: Olympic (LRT Alternatives 1 and 3)

In Visual Character Area H, the LRT Alternatives would be visually compatible with the one- to three-story commercial uses in this portion of Olympic Boulevard (including the proposed aerial structure at Cloverfield Boulevard) and would serve to reinforce the character of Olympic Boulevard as a major transit corridor. Figure 3.3-20 (Visual Simulation of Olympic Boulevard near Memorial Park) illustrates the LRT Alternative in this area. While street parking would be eliminated from approximately 20th Street to Euclid Street, Olympic Boulevard would maintain

Source: CityWorks Design, 2008.

Figure 3.3-20 Visual Simulation of Olympic Boulevard near Memorial Park

four traffic lanes. The Olympic/17th Street Station would further serve to reinforce the commercial-serving nature of uses along Olympic Boulevard. While the LRT Alternative would run adjacent to the Crossroads Elementary School between 18th and 17th Streets, the alignment would be in the middle of the right-of-way of Olympic Boulevard. The LRT Alternative would be consistent with the density and intensity of use of Olympic Boulevard. While removal of the coral trees is acknowledged as the removal of an important aesthetic feature (refer to the previous discussion of scenic vistas and important aesthetic features for analysis of removal of coral trees), it would not result in a substantial change to the character of Olympic Boulevard, which would remain an arterial roadway with more extensive transportation infrastructure. Therefore, the change in visual quality within Visual Character Area H would not result in a degradation of the area.

The visual quality of Visual Character Area I is considered moderate due to the prominence of the Lincoln Boulevard and 4th and 5th Street ramps from the I-10 freeway, and the travel lanes of the I-10 freeway. Most of Visual Character Area I would contain aerial elements; however, the structure would be consistent with the I-10 freeway infrastructure, the lack of a continuous building façade, and the mix of light-industrial, office, and commercial character of the area.

Figure 3.3-21 (Visual Simulation of Olympic Boulevard Approach to 4th Street) illustrates the form and mass of the LRT system from 4th Street as it approaches the proposed Colorado/4th Street Station. The station would be up to 35 feet above the grade of the Colorado Avenue/4th Street intersection, but would be approximately 22 feet lower than the roof of the adjacent ~~Macy's~~ Santa Monica Place building located at the northwest corner of the intersection, as shown in Figure 3.3-22 (Visual Simulation of Colorado/4th Street Station with Segment 3: Olympic). The aerial structure would introduce a visually prominent element within downtown Santa Monica, altering the visual character within Visual Character Area I; however, this new feature would be consistent with the scale and type of land uses adjacent to the Colorado/4th Street Station. While the station would alter the visual quality of the area, the station would be consistent with the scale and type of adjacent development. Introduction of the LRT Alternatives 1 and 3 within Segment 3 would result in ***less-than-significant*** impacts.

FEIR Design Options

No design options are associated with Segment 3 (Olympic).

Segment 3a: Colorado (LRT Alternatives 2 and 4)

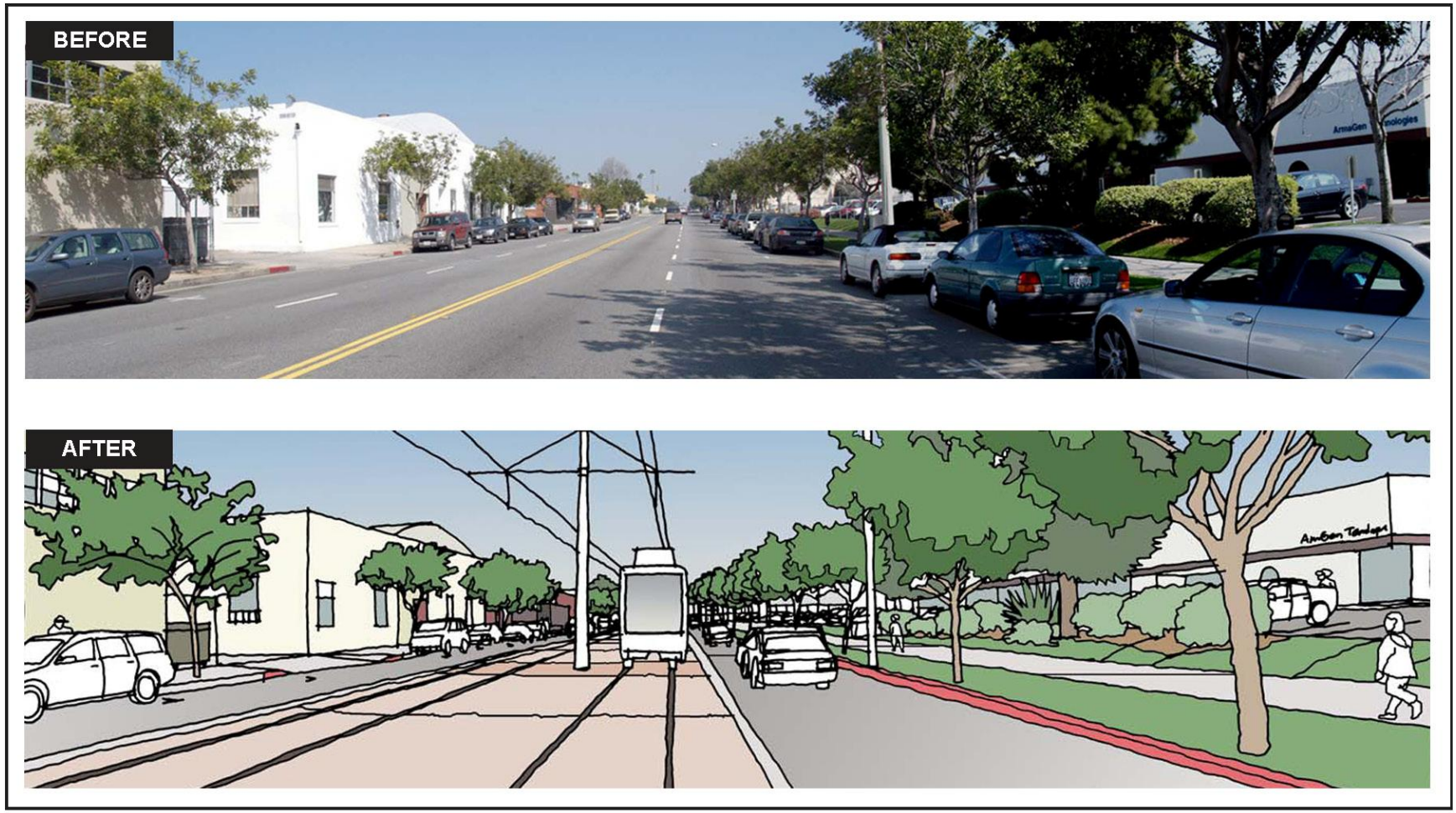
In Visual Character Area J, characterized as moderate visual quality due to a relatively continuous building façade, with minimal landscaping and no distinct visual features, the proposed LRT Alternative would be visually compatible with the one- to three-story commercial uses along Colorado Avenue. The views of the OCS and LRVs would be consistent with existing infrastructure of the roadway and would not substantially alter the views down the corridor and would serve to reinforce the character of Colorado Avenue as a commercial and light-industrial corridor. While street parking would be eliminated from the south side of Colorado Avenue from 17th Street to the terminus, Colorado Avenue would maintain one traffic lane in each direction along with parking on the north side. Figure 3.3-23 (Visual Simulation of the LRT Alternative along Colorado Avenue) illustrates the LRT Alternative along Colorado Avenue.

Source: CityWorks Design, 2008.

Figure 3.3-21 Visual Simulation of Olympic Boulevard Approach to 4th Street

Source: CityWorks Design, 2008.

Figure 3.3-22 Visual Simulation of Colorado/4th Street Station with Segment 3: Olympic



Source: CityWorks Design, 2008.

Figure 3.3-23 Visual Simulation of the LRT Alternative along Colorado Avenue

Source: CityWorks Design, 2008.

Figure 3.3-24 Visual Simulation of the Colorado/4th Street Station with Segment 3a: Colorado

The proposed Colorado/17th Street Station would further serve to reinforce the commercial-serving nature of the uses along Colorado Avenue. The Santa Monica terminus would serve as a transit destination providing improved access to Santa Monica's downtown. Figure 3.3-24 (Visual Simulation of the Colorado/4th Street Station with Segment 3a: Colorado) illustrates the Colorado/4th Street Station. Additionally, the attendant visual improvements including landscaping, public art, and increased pedestrian accessibility as feasible would serve to enhance the visual character of this area. Therefore, the LRT Alternatives 2 and 4 would result in a ***less-than-significant*** impact with regard to visual character within Segment 3a.

FEIR Design Options

Implementation of the Colorado/4th Parallel Platform and South Side Parking Design Option would not result in the addition of structures beyond those already discussed above for the LRT Alternatives that would be considered potentially inconsistent with the scale and type of land uses adjacent to them. As such, implementation of this design option would not result in further impacts to visual quality, and impacts would remain ***less than significant***.

With the reduced track spacing to accommodate the Colorado Parking Retention Design Option, the OCS poles would need to be located within the sidewalks on either side of the street (versus in the center of the tracks). As such, the contact wire would need to span the entire street overhead, creating a potential visual impact for the Colorado Parking Retention Design Option. However, since Colorado Avenue is already located within an urban environment and a low profile OCS system would be used to minimize the visual effect of the wires and poles, this impact would be ***less than significant***.

Criterion	**Would the project create a new source of light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?**

No-Build Alternative

There would be roadway and transit service improvements associated with the No-Build Alternative. However, the only improvement that would change the physical environment in the Expo Phase 2 ROW would be the I-405 Widening project. Proposed lighting for the I-405 Widening project would be equipped with shields to direct light and minimize spillover, use metal halide lamps for better color rendering, and be installed in coordination with the City of Los Angeles. As a result, these new sources of light are not anticipated to cause a substantial change to the area, so that there would be a ***less-than-significant*** impact related to light and glare.

Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Alternative

The TSM Alternative would include all of the improvements under the No-Build Alternative, and new on-street bus services to directly serve the Expo Phase 2 community transit needs. Those additional improvements would include minor physical modifications such as upgraded bus stops and additional buses. In addition to the impacts identified in the No-Build Alternative, the TSM Alternative would construct upgraded bus stops, which would potentially create a new source of light or glare. However, any new source created would not adversely affect day or nighttime views, and as such, there would be a ***less-than-significant*** impact related to light and glare.

LRT Alternatives

The light-rail vehicles (LRVs) could potentially create a source of daytime glare along the proposed alignments where the ROW is adjacent to residential or other glare-sensitive uses. Neither the LRT tracks nor the overhead catenary system (OCS) would be made of reflective materials and would require minimal surface area.

Residential uses located adjacent to the LRT Alternatives (i.e., stations areas and at the maintenance facility) could be impacted by new sources of nighttime lighting. Additionally, lighting used inside the LRVs and vehicle headlights could cause glare and point sources of light affecting motorists or pedestrians. With respect to nighttime lighting, all segments of the LRT Alternatives would be within a built urban environment that necessarily includes and requires nighttime street lighting.

Section 2.7 of *Metro Design Criteria* for the Exposition LRT Project (January 2007) addresses light and glare as follows:

- 2.7.3 Light and Glare
  - Lights used for construction and for operational lighting can illuminate adjacent properties in undesired ways. Designs will follow the principle of keeping direct and effected illumination or glare from the project from striking adjacent properties, where feasible.
  - Station plazas, parking lots, yard area and guideway lighting fixtures, and standards shall incorporate directional shielding, where needed, to avoid the intrusion of unwanted light and glare into adjacent sensitive land uses, such as residential.

Additionally, the lighting requirements of the LRVs are set forth by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). The lighting requirements put forth by the CPUC are designed to maximize LRT safety. Adherence to the requirements of CPUC and the *Metro Design Criteria* would reduce potential impacts resulting from new sources of light and glare such that a less-than-significant impact would occur with implementation of the LRT Alternatives. Therefore, the LRT Alternatives would result in a ***less-than-significant*** impact with respect to light and glare.

FEIR Design Options

Implementation of the Colorado Parking Retention, Sepulveda Grade Separation, Colorado/4th Parallel Platform and South Side Parking, Maintenance Facility Buffer, or Expo/Westwood Station No Parking design options would be subject to the *Metro Design Criteria*, as well as CPUC lighting requirements, consistent with the aforementioned requirements of the LRT Alternatives. Additionally, all lighting, including lighting would be designed and implemented to ensure that light spillage and glare on neighboring residential uses is minimized or does not occur with any of the design options.

The Expo/Westwood Station No Parking Design Option would reduce the footprint of security lighting in the vicinity of the Expo/Westwood Station, as the reduction of the 170 to 20 surface parking spaces would reduce the need for lighting in the areas adjacent the station. This reduction and adherence to the current requirements would ensure that impacts would remain ***less than significant*** with respect to light and glare.

The Maintenance Facility Buffer Design Option would serve to place the majority of the southern perimeter lighting an additional 100 to 110-feet to the north of Exposition Boulevard. This buffer and adherence to the current requirements would ensure that impacts would remain ***less than significant*** with respect to light and glare.

The aesthetic impacts are summarized by LRT Alternative in Table 3.3-2 (Visual Impacts by LRT Alternative).

Table 3.3-2 Visual Impacts by LRT Alternative

LRT Alternative	Criteria				
	Scenic Vista/ Aesthetic Feature	**Scenic Resources**	**State-Designated Scenic Highways**	**Visual Character or Quality**	**Light and Glare**
LRT 1	Removal of coral trees from Olympic median would result in **SU** even with mitigation measure MM AES-1.	**NI**	**NI**	Introduction of Expo/Westwood Station and related street reconfiguration would represent a substantial change in visual character of the area and result in **SU**. No other significant impacts were identified for LRT 1.	CPUC requirements and *Metro Design Criteria* would address impacts from new sources of light and glare; **LTS**.
LRT 2	Impacts to obstruction of views of the SM Pier sign or of the Main Street Bridge would be **LTS**.	**NI**	**NI**	Introduction of Expo/Westwood Station and related street reconfiguration would represent a substantial change in visual character of the area and result in **SU**. No other significant impacts were identified for LRT 2.	CPUC requirements and *Metro Design Criteria* would address impacts from new sources of light and glare; **LTS**.
LRT 3	Removal of coral trees from Olympic median would result in **SU** even with mitigation measure MM AES-1.	**NI**	**NI**	Street widening and property acquisition north of National on Sepulveda, elevated structures along Sepulveda Blvd, Sepulveda/National Station, and Venice/Sepulveda Station would substantially change the visual conditions and, therefore, would result in **SU**. No other significant impacts were identified for LRT 3.	CPUC requirements and *Metro Design Criteria* would address impacts from new sources of light and glare; **LTS**.
LRT 4	Impacts to obstruction of views of the SM Pier sign or of the bridge would be **LTS**.	**NI**	**NI**	Street widening and property acquisition north of National on Sepulveda, elevated structures along Sepulveda Blvd, Sepulveda/National Station, and Venice/Sepulveda Station would substantially change the visual conditions and, therefore, would result in **SU**. No other significant impacts were identified for LRT 4.	CPUC requirements and *Metro Design Criteria* would address impacts from new sources of light and glare; **LTS**.

SOURCE: PBSJ, 2008.

SU = significant and unavoidable; LTS = less than significant; NI = no impact