Regional Connector Transit Corridor
Draft Environmental Impact Statement/
Draft Environmental Impact Report

APPENDIX P

VISUAL AND AESTHETIC IMPACTS

State Clearinghouse Number: 2009031043

Regional Connector Transit Corridor
Visual and Aesthetic Impacts
Technical Memorandum

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Prepared for

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

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ACRONYMS

APE	Area of Potential Effects
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
LRT	Light Rail Transit
LTS	Less than Significant Impact
Metro	Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
MOCA	Museum of Contemporary Art
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act of 1966
TBM	Tunnel boring machine
TSM	Transportation System Management
VMC	Visual Modification Class

1.0 SUMMARY

The findings of this visual and aesthetic impact assessment are based upon the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Thresholds of Significance Criteria included in Appendix G. These thresholds are used to identify significant visual and aesthetic impacts associated with "substantial degradation of existing visual character or quality of a site and its surroundings." Significance is also determined by "the degree of contrast between proposed features and existing features that represent the valued aesthetic image of an area."

This technical memorandum evaluates proposed alternatives of the Regional Connector Transit Corridor Project. These alternatives include the No Build Alternative, Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative, At-Grade Emphasis Light Rail Transit (LRT) Alternative, Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative, and Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variations 1 and 2.

Primary visual resources in the project area include historic buildings located along or near the proposed alignments. The alignments are located in or near (depending on the alternative) the Civic Center and the Little Tokyo Historic Districts. Table 7-1 summarizes visual and aesthetic impacts associated with each of the six alternatives.

The No Build Alternative would result in no visual impacts to these resources. The TSM Alternative would result in minor visual modifications to the existing environment due to construction of enhanced bus stops; potential impacts would be less than significant.

There would be permanent potential visual impact associated with the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative because new tracks, an overhead contact system, catenary poles, train portals, and two at-grade platforms would be added to streets adjacent to historic buildings. However, this potential impact would be less than significant. Visual impacts associated with construction of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would be temporary and less than significant.

Potential permanent visual impacts of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would be less than significant because the only visible street-level features would be a single tunnel portal and pedestrian entrances to underground stations. Visual impact associated with construction of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would be temporary and less than significant.

Potential permanent visual impacts of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would be the same as for the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative. Both alternatives follow the same alignment and configuration for most of the corridor. Portions of the corridor in the vicinity of Little Tokyo, along Alameda and east of Alameda, would have prominent, visible street-level features, including pedestrian entrances to an underground

station and a single tunnel portal in 1st Street. Visual impacts in this vicinity, including the area along the proposed train portal, would be less than significant. Visual impact associated with construction of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would be temporary and less than significant.

Potential permanent and temporary visual impacts of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would be the same as the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1. For most of the alignment, the two alternatives follow the same route and configuration. An exception is the portal location and arrangement in 1st Street.

Visual impacts in the vicinity of 1st Street would potentially occur because the portals are staggered and potential visual effects would extend farther along 1st Street than Fully Underground Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1. Impacts in this vicinity would be low to moderate and less than significant for about three blocks. In consultation with the Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Temple, the Reverend, indicated to the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) that the portal's proximity to the temple would be visually intrusive.

Under all build alternatives, the visual character of the corridor would be altered; however, views would not be degraded to the extent that significant impacts would result from project implementation. There are no scenic highways or protected views near the proposed alignments, so these types of resources would be unaffected.

All build alternatives would provide new pedestrian-friendly street improvements, including landscaping as appropriate, in the vicinity of the alignments and stations, thereby enhancing the aesthetics of the project area. Addition of an enhanced pedestrian environment would offset the potential low to moderate levels of visual impacts described above. The build alternatives would create improved and safer settings from which pedestrians could view visual and aesthetic resources and create a streetscape that complements those visual and aesthetic resources.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Downtown Los Angeles is known for its designated historic districts, buildings, and sites. The region's colorful history is captured in the downtown area's many historic buildings, several of which are located adjacent to the Regional Connector build alternative alignments.

Construction activities and potential changes to the streetscape could affect views of these historic resources. This technical memorandum evaluates the potential for visual and aesthetic impacts resulting from construction and operation of the proposed Regional Connector alternatives.

The portions of downtown Los Angeles near the proposed alignments lack broad views of mountains, water bodies, and other natural features. Therefore, there would be no impacts to such views. The significant visual resources currently along the proposed Regional Connector transit corridor are historic buildings, many of which are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and/or the California Register of Historic Resources.

Potential impacts to historic resources are evaluated in the Cultural Resources - Built Environment Technical Memorandum. The project would not impede views from any nationally recognized scenic highways, designated scenic routes, corridors, or parkways, nor would it affect any public viewing locations that are otherwise recognized or valued.

3.0 METHODOLOGY FOR IMPACT EVALUATION

Criteria used to evaluate the proposed alternatives are described below. Potential impacts have been evaluated according to CEQA guidelines. While there are other evaluation criteria for visual assessments, CEQA guidelines are most relevant to the Regional Connector Transit Corridor Project. Guidance and methodologies have been adapted to address the project's urban setting as appropriate.

Multiple federal agencies have developed analytical frameworks for visual resource management, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS 1974, 1995); U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM 1978); and U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA 1981). The methodology and assumptions presented here build on the guidance developed by these federal agencies and the extensive work of Lawrence Headley of LH&A for the Port of Los Angeles and other Los Angeles projects (Headley 2008, 2006, and 2005).

3.1 Regulatory Framework

3.1.1 Federal

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is an umbrella law that requires an evaluation and disclosure of potential impacts that might result from construction and operation of a project. As such, NEPA often does not have-topic specific requirements or guidance. There are no specific thresholds or evaluation criteria for potential visual and aesthetic impacts.

Compliance with other federal, state and local regulations is often used as a means of demonstrating that a proposed project would not have significant impacts under NEPA. Guidance for the Regional Connector Transit Project was found in the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and CEQA, and is used to evaluate potential impacts under NEPA.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) as amended in 1966 [36 CFR § 800.5(a)(2)] regulates activities that could impact historic properties by "diminishing the visual integrity of the property's significant historic features." There are approximately 50 properties, including three historic districts, within the project area in downtown Los Angeles that are listed in, determined, or found eligible for the National Register of Historic Properties. Potential visual impacts on historic resources are evaluated in the Cultural Resources Built Environment Technical Memorandum.

3.1.2 State

The principal evaluation criteria used in this visual resource analysis come from Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines; the methodology to evaluate visual resources also follows guidance from the *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide* (City of Los Angeles 2006), referred to in this document as the *Thresholds Guide*. This guide recommends that impacts and their

significance be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Except for shadow impacts, the *Thresholds Guide* includes no absolute principles, rules, standards, criteria, or thresholds for assessing the degree or significance of visual and aesthetic impacts.

Aesthetic impact assessment generally deals with the issue of contrast, or the degree to which elements of the environment differ visually. Aesthetic features occur in a diverse array of environments, ranging in character from urban centers to rural regions and wildlands. Adverse visual effects can include a loss of natural features or areas, removal of urban features with aesthetic value, or introduction of contrasting urban features into natural areas or urban settings. The key applicable visual consideration for downtown Los Angeles would be "introduction of contrasting urban features into ... urban settings." Significant alteration of the visual character through the introduction of a proposed project can result in a visual impact.

This aesthetic impact assessment concentrates on urban features because the proposed project is located within an urban setting. Urban features that may contribute to a valued aesthetic character or image include structures of architectural or historic significance or visual prominence; public plazas, art, or gardens; heritage oaks or other trees or plants protected by the City; consistent design elements (such as setbacks, massing, height, and signage) along a street or district; pedestrian amenities; and landscaped medians or park areas (*L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide* 2006). Additionally, CEQA guidelines require impacts to historic buildings within a state scenic highway be evaluated.

Visual and aesthetic findings can be highly subjective, making them difficult to analyze using rigid technical standards. The Regional Connector project is set in an urban context, where visual change is expected. Whether visual change in the downtown environment is adverse or beneficial remains a subjective matter. Different viewers may consider the same change in the visual environment as either beneficial or adverse. This analysis discusses potential impacts for public and agency consideration with as much objectivity as practical given the subjective nature of aesthetic perceptions.

3.2 Standards of Significance

This analysis examines whether the proposed Regional Connector alternatives have potential to cause significant visual impacts. Though NEPA offers no definition for "significance," CEQA Guidelines § 15382 define a significant impact as "... a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project, including ... objects of ... aesthetic significance." The methodology applied to this assessment expands upon the CEQA definition and draws from methodology recommendations included in the *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide*.

As outlined in Appendix G of the CEQA guidelines, determination of a significant impact to visual and aesthetic resources is based on the following thresholds:

- Would the project have a substantial, adverse effect on a scenic vista?
- Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within [view from] a state scenic highway?
- Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of a site and its surroundings?
- Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

In addition to the thresholds identified in Appendix G of the CEQA guidelines, the *City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide* includes the following criteria for identifying and evaluating potentially significant visual resources impacts from proposed actions occurring within the City:

- Would project-related structures result in the shading of shadow-sensitive uses for more than three hours between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time (between late October and early April), or for more than four hours between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time (between early April and late October)?

3.2.1 Definitions

According to the *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide*, urban features that may contribute to a valued aesthetic character may include, but are not limited to, structures of architectural or historic significance or visual prominence; public plazas, art, or gardens; heritage oaks or other protected trees; consistent design elements along a street or district; pedestrian amenities; and landscaped medians or park areas. Significant alteration of the visual character resulting from a proposed project can result in a visual impact.

According to Headley (2007), a visual impact on a visual or aesthetic resource occurs when:

- Features are altered, introduced, made less visible, or removed, and the resultant effect on the views is perceptibly inconsistent with the inherent, established character of the landscape; and/or
- Access to public views is diminished such that the affected view is limited to some degree and/or physical access to public viewing positions is impeded.

Headley (2007) further defines a significant visual impact as one that:

- Causes a substantial adverse change in the visual resources of the affected environment, and/or
- Would cause views from scenic highways, designated scenic routes, corridors, and parkways, or public views that are otherwise recognized or valued, to become substantially blocked or screened from view, and/or
- Would cause historically available public access to such views to become substantially diminished.

A substantial adverse change in visual resources occurs when visual quality has been noticeably reduced. The perception that visual quality has been noticeably reduced is influenced by public sensitivity to adverse visual impacts, including intensity and duration of the impacts, as qualified by the temporal viewing context. A highly sensitive public is more apt to notice adverse changes in visual resources of lesser intensity than a less sensitive public. A highly sensitive public is therefore more likely to regard the effects of adverse changes as "substantial" and significant.

For example, a highly sensitive public would likely react adversely to a large, contemporary sculpture placed on the sidewalk directly in front of a national historic landmark building. The two could be at cross purposes visually. On the other hand, the public may be less sensitive to changes in the urban landscape of downtown Los Angeles along the proposed Regional Connector build alignments due to the large number of urban structures, circulation systems, and activities already present.

3.2.2 Impact Intensity

Both NEPA and CEQA use the concept of "intensity" to help determine the significance of an impact. For potential visual impacts, the intensity is the degree to which visual conditions change adversely relative to existing (baseline) conditions.

Changes in visual conditions can be classified by Visual Modification Classes (VMC) as defined by Headley (2008). VMCs provide a useful framework for describing and evaluating visual conditions. Table 3-1 provides definitions for each VMC.

A change from one VMC to another provides a method to evaluate the intensity or magnitude (and thus potential significance) of a change in visual condition. For example, a reduction from existing (baseline) conditions of VMC 1 to VMC 2 is a level 1 impact intensity; a reduction from VMC 1 to VMC 3, or VMC 2 to VMC 4, is a level 2 impact intensity; and a reduction from VMC 1 to VMC 4 is a level 3 impact intensity. The intensity of a visual impact

is a function of how apparent the proposed project's features, or those of its alternatives, may be within their context (e.g., barely noticeable versus visually dominant) (Table 3-1).

Table 3-1. Visual Modification Class Definitions

VM Class 1	Not noticeable: changes in the landscape are within the field of view but generally would be overlooked by all but the most concerned and interested viewers; they generally would not be noticed unless pointed out (inconspicuous because of such factors as distance, screening, low contrast with context, or other features in view, including the adverse impacts of past activities).
VM Class 2	Noticeable, visually subordinate: changes in the landscape would not be overlooked (noticeable to most without being pointed out), they may attract some attention but do not compete for it with other features in the field of view, including adverse impacts of past activities. Such changes often are perceived as being in the background.
VM Class 3	Distracting, visually co-dominant: changes in the landscape compete for attention with other features in view, including adverse impacts of past activities (attention is drawn to the change about as frequently as to other features in the landscape).
VM Class 4	Visually dominant, demands attention: changes in the landscape are the focus of attention and tend to become the subject of the view; such changes often cause a lasting impression of the affected landscape.

Source: Headley 2008

3.3 Evaluation Methodology

This visual and aesthetic impact analysis used a multi-step process to evaluate potential aesthetic impacts associated with the proposed alternatives. The progressive steps of this analysis are described in the following paragraphs.

- An inventory that included field observations and photography was undertaken of the visual and aesthetic resources along each alternative alignment. The inventory focused primarily on relevant historic buildings. Photos of the project area are included in this technical memorandum.
- The City of Los Angeles Circulation Element was reviewed to determine the presence of any scenic highways or recognized and valued views.

- Significant views along the corridor that warranted further aesthetic impact evaluation were identified. Close attention was paid to views that were potentially significant based on the key evaluation criteria, which include: substantial damage to scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within [a view from] a state scenic highway (*Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines*); and potential for substantial degradation of existing visual character or quality of a site and its surroundings.
- A site visit was conducted of the views identified in step 3 (selected photographs are included in Section 4 of this technical memorandum).
- Views of historic buildings were then highlighted and evaluated from the public right-of-way to assess potential impact of the proposed Regional Connector alternatives.
- Potential visual impacts of the build alternatives on historic features of the downtown streetscape were analyzed. Mitigation recommendations were made as appropriate.

4.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Area of Potential Visual and Aesthetic Effects

The four build alternatives (At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative, Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative, and Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variations 1 and 2) were subjected to a cultural resource identification process to define the area of potential impact for the visual and aesthetic analysis. The process resulted in development of a Area of Potential Effect (APE) The APE used to evaluate indirect impacts to cultural resources includes the entire Los Angeles Civic Center Historic District (determined eligible for listing in the California Register) and the Little Tokyo Historic District, a National Historic Landmark. The visual impact analysis used a modified APE including only the portions of the historic districts within one city block of the build alternatives. The areas within one city block of the proposed alignments are the only portions visible from the proposed alternatives.

4.2 Existing Visual and Aesthetic Environment

The existing visual and aesthetic APE was surveyed on May 7 and 8, 2009. Multiple photographs were taken and reviewed. Research was completed to locate previously identified visual and aesthetic resources. These resources include, but are not limited to, structures of architectural or historic significance or visual prominence; public plazas, art, and gardens; heritage oaks or other trees or plants protected by the City of Los Angeles; consistent design elements (such as setbacks, massing, height, and signage) along a street or district; pedestrian amenities; and landscaped medians or park areas. The objective was to capture relationships between existing buildings and the streetscape/corridor alignment environment.

The build alternatives' existing visual and aesthetic environment is characterized by an established urban landscape. Based on site reviews, the predominant visual resources within the modified APE are recognized historic buildings. Figures 4-1 through 4-4 show the visual resources identified within the modified APE.

This analysis includes historic structures and visual resources in the following communities within the modified APE:

- Financial District
- Bunker Hill
- Historic Core
- Civic Center
- Little Tokyo

Each of these areas has unique visual and aesthetic qualities, as shown in Figures 4-5 through 4-27. The potential for visual intrusion, blockage of views, and visual incompatibility by the project alternatives is assessed in Section 5.

4.2.1 Scenic Vistas

The City of Los Angeles General Plan and the Scenic Highways Plan within the General Plan's Circulation Element were reviewed to determine whether the project would affect scenic vistas.

Based on this review, it was determined that no scenic highways are located in downtown Los Angeles. Though Objective 11 of the Circulation Element is to "preserve and enhance access to scenic resources and regional open space," there are no such features adjacent to the TSM or build alternatives.

4.2.2 Scenic Resources

The following buildings and open spaces have been identified as scenic resources along the proposed alignment corridors for the TSM and build alternatives.

4.2.2.1 Financial District:

- Fine Arts Building
- 818 Building
- Roosevelt Lofts
- Pegasus
- 811 Wilshire Boulevard
- Engine Company No. 28
- The Standard Hotel
- California Club
- Los Angeles Central Library and Maguire Gardens
- Arco Plaza
- Citigroup Center Plaza

4.2.2.2 Bunker Hill:

- Walt Disney Concert Hall
- 2nd Street Tunnel
- Grassy Open Space at General Thaddeus Kosciuszko Way

4.2.2.3 Historic Core:

- Los Angeles Law Center
- Times Annex
- Times Building
- Higgins Building
- St. Vibiana's Cathedral
- Redwing Shoes

4.2.2.4 Civic Center:

- City Hall South
- Los Angeles City Hall
- U.S. Courthouse
- Fletcher Bowron Square
- Parker Center
- Tinker Toy Parking Structure

4.2.2.5 Little Tokyo:

- Little Tokyo Historic District
- Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Temple

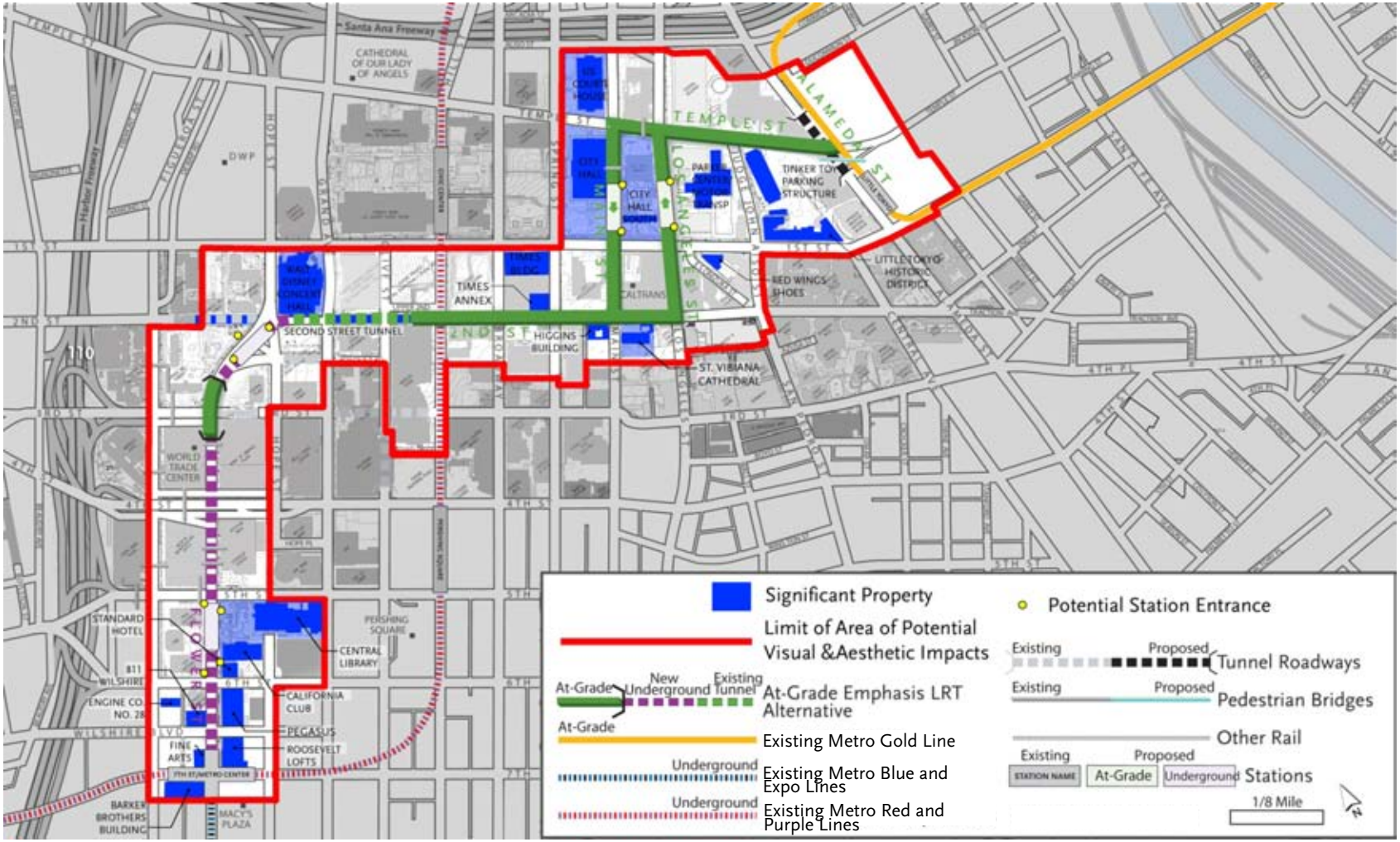

Figure 4-1. Visual Resources Associated with the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative

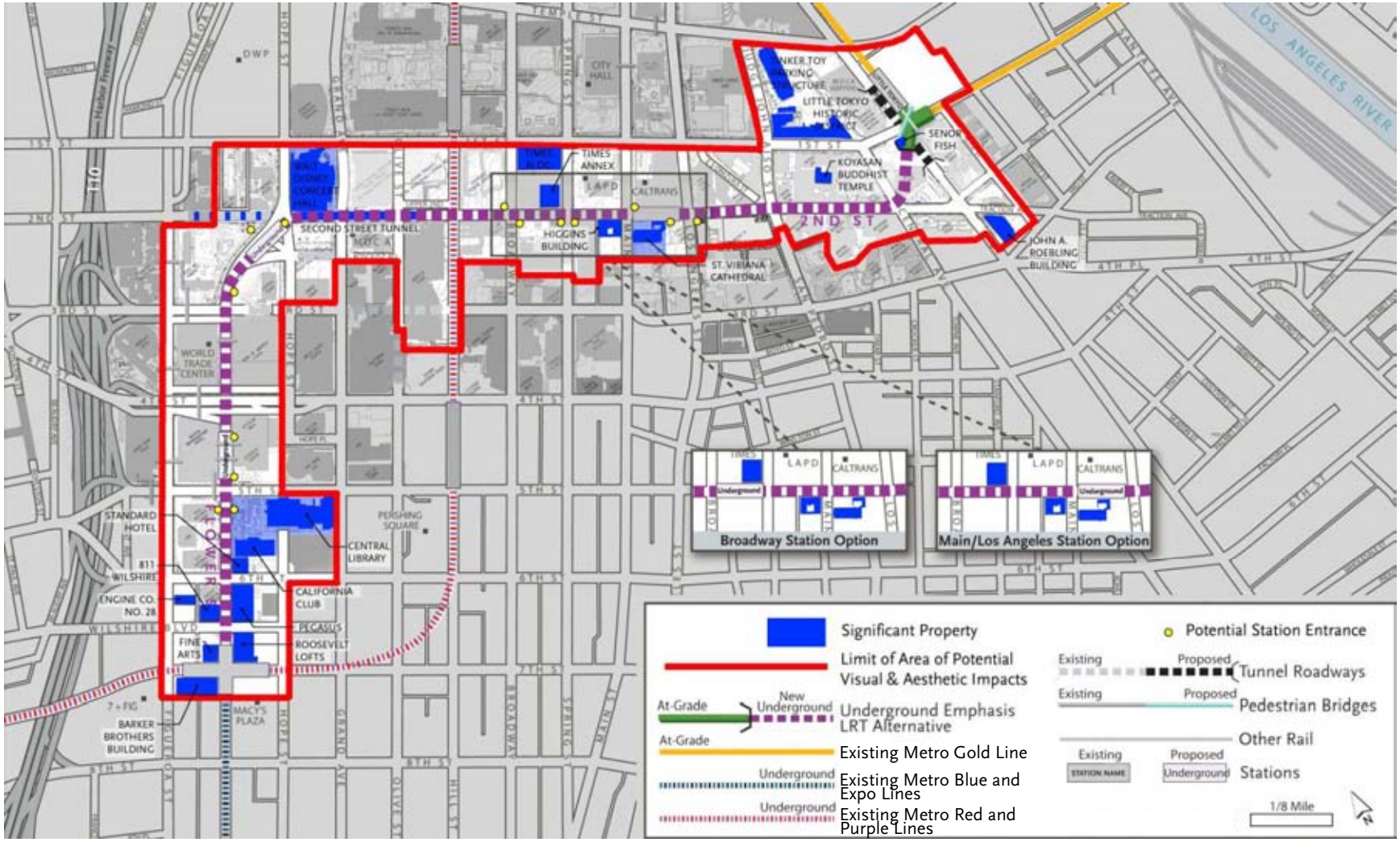

Figure 4-2. Visual Resources Associated with the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative

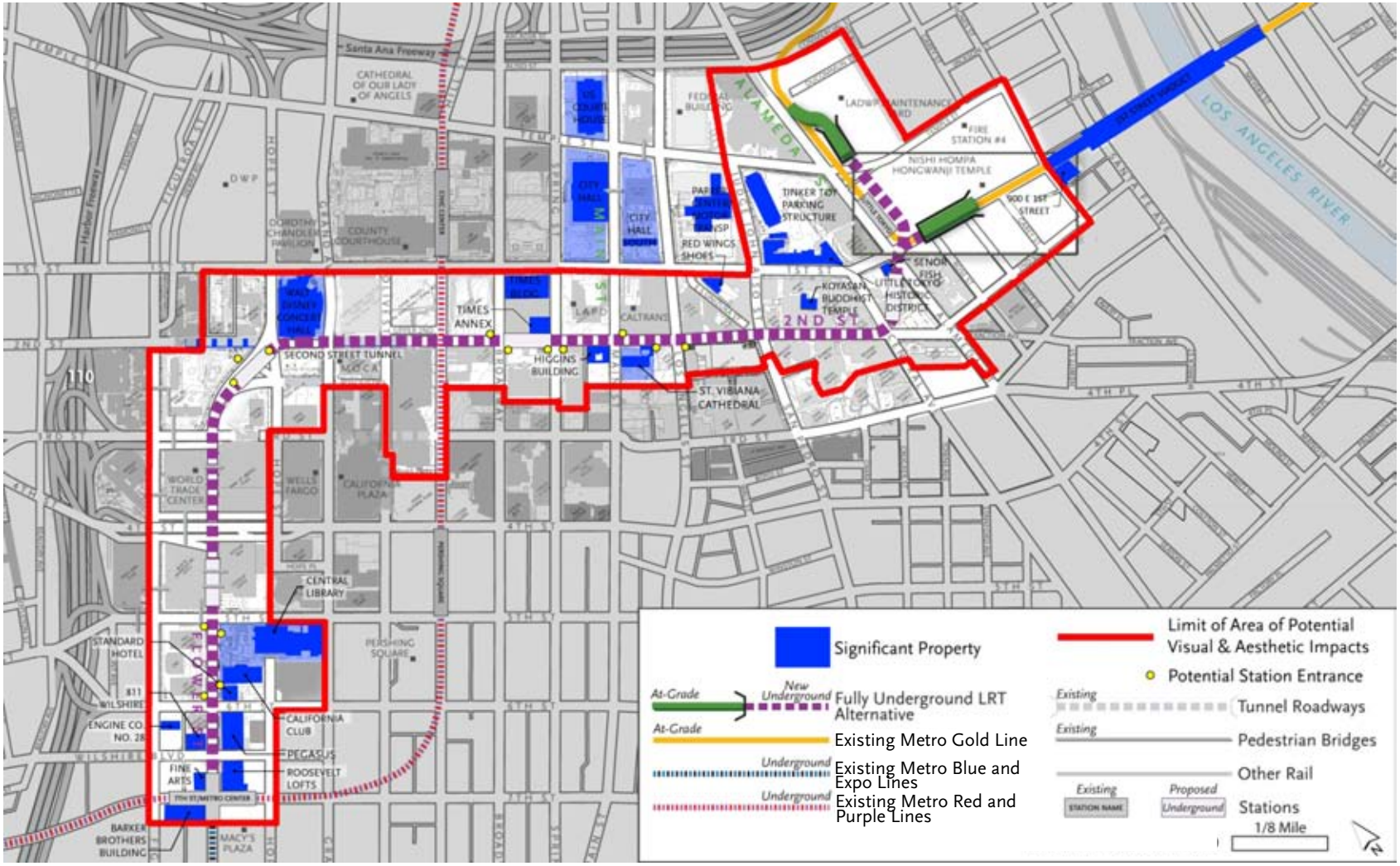

Figure 4-3. Visual Resources Associated with the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1

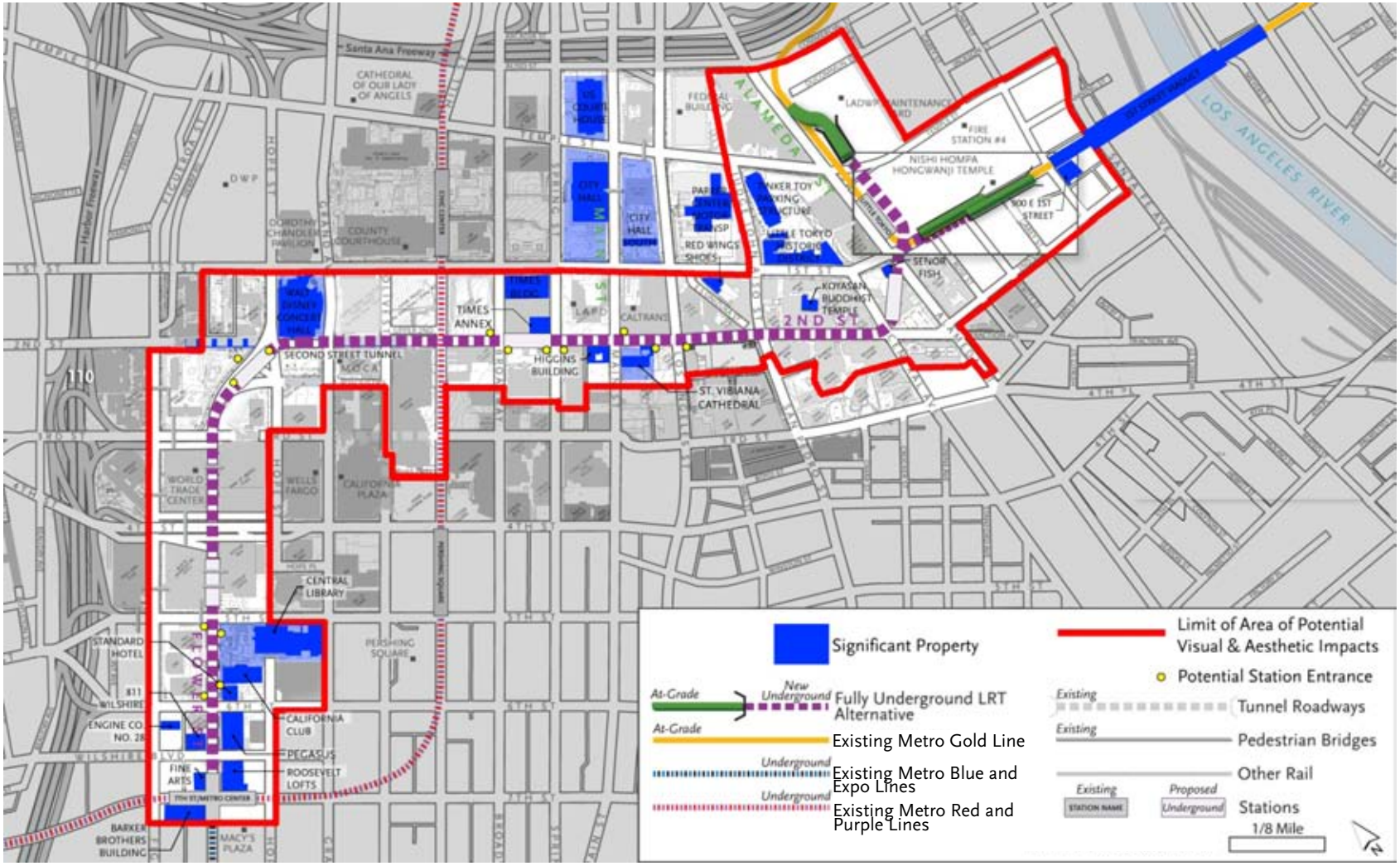

Figure 4-4. Visual Resources Associated with the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2

4.2.3 Visual Character

The visual context for the build alternatives consists of five distinct communities. Each is rich with a variety of buildings and public and private spaces that create an individual character. These communities include the Financial District, Bunker Hill, Historic Core, Civic Center, and Little Tokyo and are described in the following paragraphs.

4.2.3.1 Financial District

Located around Flower Street, the Financial District is characterized by predominantly high-rise institutional, hotel, and financial buildings, as shown in Figure 4-5. The area contains several open space areas of varying character. The Central Library's Maguire Gardens is located immediately west of the Central Library and south of 5th Street between the library building and Flower Street, as shown in Figures 4-6, 4-7, and 4-8.

Across the street and to the west of the Central Library is the City National Plaza, a paved private open space that serves as a forecourt to the Paul Hastings Tower, CNB, and City National Tower complex (shown in Figure 4-9). A paved plaza is located at the Citigroup Center on the northeast corner of the intersection of Flower and 5th Streets, as shown in Figure 4-10.

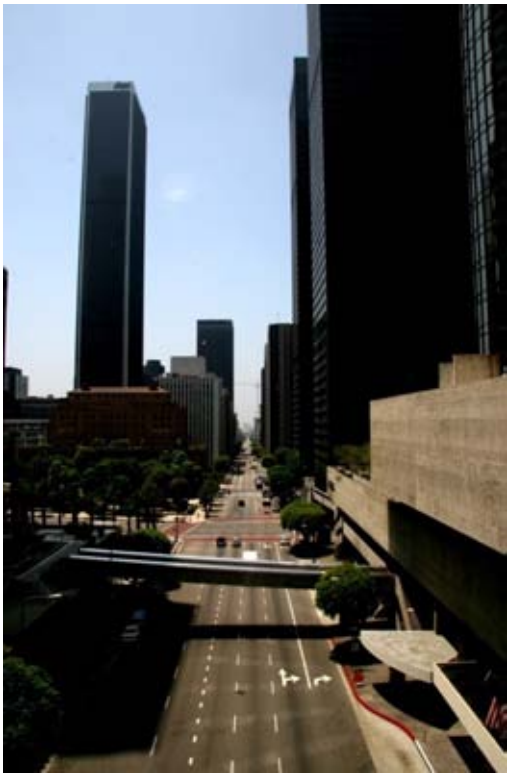

Figure 4-5. Financial District/Flower Street Corridor

Figure 4-6. Los Angeles Central Library

Figure 4-7. Central Library's Maguire Gardens - 1

Figure 4-8. Central Library's Maguire Gardens - 2

Figure 4-9. City National Plaza

Figure 4-10. Citigroup Center Plaza

4.2.3.2 Bunker Hill

Located approximately near the intersection of Flower and 2nd Streets, Bunker Hill includes several high-rise institutional and cultural buildings that interface with the Civic Center to the east and a residential complex to the west. The iconic Walt Disney Concert Hall (Figure 4-16), flanked by the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion to the north, is located in this neighborhood, as are the Colburn School for the Performing Arts and the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA).

Topographically, Bunker Hill is the highest point in downtown Los Angeles, with several viewpoints toward the northeast, southwest, and east. A grassy open space area on Bunker Hill (Figure 4-11) is located on the north end of Flower Street. Office towers located on the southern part of Bunker Hill are visible from various points in the downtown area. Crossing beneath Bunker Hill are the 2nd and 3rd Street tunnels, linking areas east and west of Bunker Hill. These tunnels are shown in Figures 4-12, 4-13, 4-14, and 4-15.

Figure 4-11. Open Space at West End of 2nd and 3rd Street Tunnels

Figure 4-12. West End of 2nd Street Tunnel

Figure 4-13. East End of 2nd Street Tunnel

Figure 4-14. West End of 3rd Street Tunnel

Figure 4-15. 3rd Street Corridor and East End of 3rd Street Tunnel

Figure 4-16. Walt Disney Concert Hall

4.2.3.3 Historic Core

The 2nd Street portion of the Historic Core is centered around Broadway and characterized by large civic buildings to the north and a mixture of retail, religious, and office buildings to the south (Figures 4-17, 4-18, and 4-19). Broadway runs roughly north-south through this area, and numerous vestiges of downtown Los Angeles' historic past are found here. Broadway is lined with many mid-rise commercial and residential buildings, typically with no space between them.

Many buildings were constructed between 1880 and the late 1920s and range in height from four to 12 stories; heights were restricted by the City's 150-foot height limit at that time. Most of the ground floor retail shops along Broadway have been modernized, but the exterior facades of the upper floors are largely intact and unchanged since the buildings' original construction. Most of Broadway's historic buildings are located south of 3rd Street, at least one block from the proposed LRT alignments.

Figure 4-17. 2nd Street Corridor and the Los Angeles Times Building

Figure 4-18. 2nd Street and the Higgins Building

Figure 4-19. 2nd Street and St. Vibiana's Cathedral

4.2.3.4 Civic Center

The Civic Center District includes both city and federal buildings, including the Los Angeles City Hall, the Los Angeles Law Center, the United States Federal Courthouse, Parker Center, and other civic buildings (Figures 4-20 through 4-23). Many of these buildings, including the

Los Angeles City Hall Building, collectively contribute to the determined-eligible-for-listing Los Angeles Civic Center Historic District, shown in Figure 4-23. Buildings within the Civic Center district of Central Los Angeles are primarily mid-rise structures with large open space and/or plaza setbacks separating the buildings from the streets.

Figure 4-20. Los Angeles Law Center

Figure 4-21. Los Angeles City Hall

Figure 4-22. Fletcher Bowron Square/Los Angeles Mall

Figure 4-23. Temple Street Corridor through the Civic Center

4.2.3.5 Little Tokyo

This community includes the Little Tokyo Historic District, which is a National Historic District as defined by the National Park Service. It is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Little Tokyo Historic District is described in more detail in the Cultural Resources – Built Environment Technical Memorandum.

The neighborhood surrounding the National Historic District has become known as "Little Tokyo" and is approximately four city blocks in size. First called Little Tokyo in 1903, this neighborhood contains an assemblage of buildings and spaces that are inviting to pedestrians and tourists. There is a diversity of buildings in Little Tokyo, including cultural, religious, retail, office, hotel, institutional, and residential uses (Figures 4-24 through 4-27). The area is pedestrian and transit friendly, with numerous bus stops, pedestrian alleyways, plazas, and storefront retail.

Figure 4-24. 2nd Street & Central in Little Tokyo

Figure 4-25. 2nd Street Corridor Adjacent to Japanese Village Plaza

Figure 4-26. Onizuka Street with "Friendship Knot" at San Pedro & 2nd Street

Figure 4-27. 1st Street Corridor in the Heart of Little Tokyo

4.2.4 Nighttime Illumination

The build alternative alignments are within the greater downtown Los Angeles area, which is a heavily urbanized environment. Extensive nighttime lighting is provided throughout the region via street lighting, building entrance lighting, and general illumination from lights shining through the windows of high- and mid-rise buildings lining the corridor.

4.2.5 Shade and Shadows

Within this heavily urbanized environment, extensive shadows are cast by the existing mid- and high-rise buildings lining the corridor. Therefore, the project area experiences extensive shade during certain parts of the day as the sun moves from east to west in the sky.

4.3 Conclusions

There are no scenic byways, scenic vistas, or protected public view corridors. All of the proposed alignments are located in downtown Los Angeles, which is heavily urbanized. All of the proposed alignments include several downtown communities, each with its own unique character and visual context. Most of these downtown communities include historic buildings. Two communities in particular, Civic Center and Little Tokyo, include designated historic districts. The visual and aesthetic context of the project area is primarily shaped by these historic resources.

The key difference between the visual contexts for the alternatives is that the alignments follow slightly different routes through downtown Los Angeles. The TSM Alternative's proposed bus routes extend farther north and east to Union Station than the other alternatives.

The At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative incorporates both Los Angeles and Main Streets and the buildings fronting them, including City Hall. It also includes the Temple Street environment, which consists primarily of large-scale office buildings, institutional buildings, and parking lots. The At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would traverse through the eligible-for-listing Civic Center Historic District.

The Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative remains predominantly underground and would pass through only four of the five districts comprising the project area: the Financial District, Bunker Hill, the Historic Core, and Little Tokyo. The Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would be located within one block of the Little Tokyo Historic District and pass through Little Tokyo at grade east of Central Avenue between 1st and 2nd Streets.

Both Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variations 1 and 2 are identical to the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative except for segments that continue east for several blocks in 1st Street, and north for two blocks just east of Alameda Street.

5.0 IMPACTS

5.1 Build Alternative Features

Visual and aesthetic impacts associated with the No Build, TSM, and build alternatives are described in the following subsections. Impacts discussed within this section are summarized in Tables 5-1 through 5-5. These tables list the identified visual resources in the project area potentially affected by each of the build alternatives, and show how aspects of construction and operation for each alternative have the potential to affect the identified visual resources.

5.2 No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative would not involve construction of a new light rail transit project in downtown. It would also not include any major service improvements or new transportation infrastructure beyond what is listed in Metro's 2009 Long Range Transportation Plan. The transit network within the project area would be largely the same as it is now (Figure 5-1).

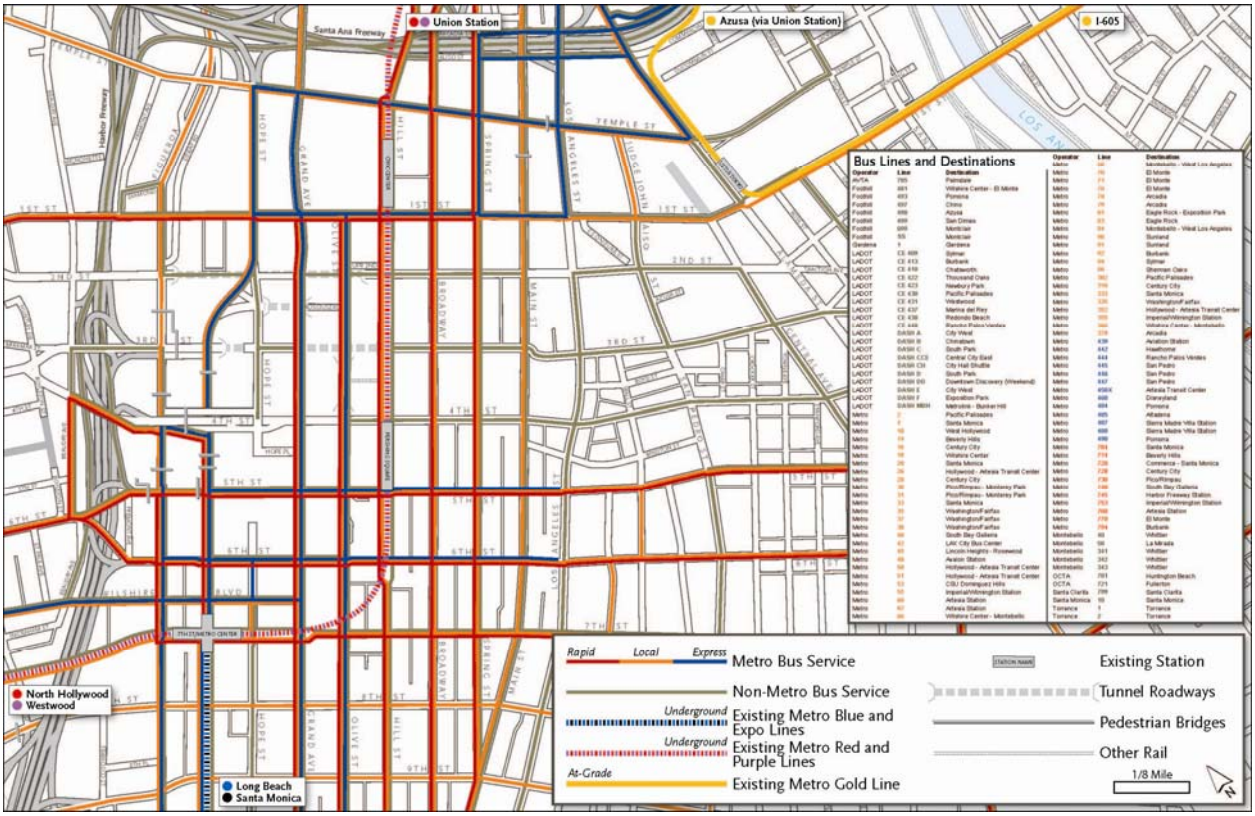

Figure 5-1. No Build Alternative

5.1.1 Direct Impacts

There will be no new transit projects constructed or operated in the project area under this alternative. No new streetscape improvements will be made. Therefore, there will be no direct visual impacts to scenic vistas, scenic resources, nighttime lighting, and shade and shadow impacts. Additionally, because the streetscape will remain unchanged, the existing visual character of the project area will not be degraded.

5.1.2 Indirect Impacts

No indirect construction or operation impacts to scenic vistas, scenic resources, nighttime lighting, and shading and shadowing would occur with the No Build Alternative because there would be no construction or new rail operations. Additionally, because the streetscape will remain unchanged, the existing visual character of the project area will not be indirectly degraded or enhanced.

5.1.3 Cumulative Impacts

No cumulative impacts would result from the No Build Alternative because there would be no direct or indirect impacts under this alternative.

5.2 Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative

The TSM Alternative would include new express shuttle bus lines linking 7th Street/Metro Center Station and Union Station. Enhanced bus stops would be located every two to three blocks to maximize coverage of the area surrounding the routes. The TSM Alternative shuttle bus routes are shown in Figure 5-2.

5.2.1 Direct Impacts

The enhanced bus stops constructed under the TSM Alternative would consist of select streetscape improvements, including bus stops, seating opportunities for those waiting for buses, and shelters. These improvements are shown in Figures 5-3a and 5-3b. Streetscape improvements would be consistent with existing enhanced bus stops and shelters already located throughout the project area and Greater Los Angeles. Views to scenic resources along the TSM Alternative alignment would not be obstructed due to the small scale and size of these bus stops and shelters and their location within an existing heavily urbanized environment.

Adding bus stops and shelters within the Civic Center Historic District and near the Little Tokyo Historic District would not alter the visual character of these districts. Context sensitive design of bus shelters would be applied to avoid any potential visual effects. Therefore, no significant visual impacts to scenic vistas, scenic resources, nighttime lighting, and shade and shadow impacts would occur.

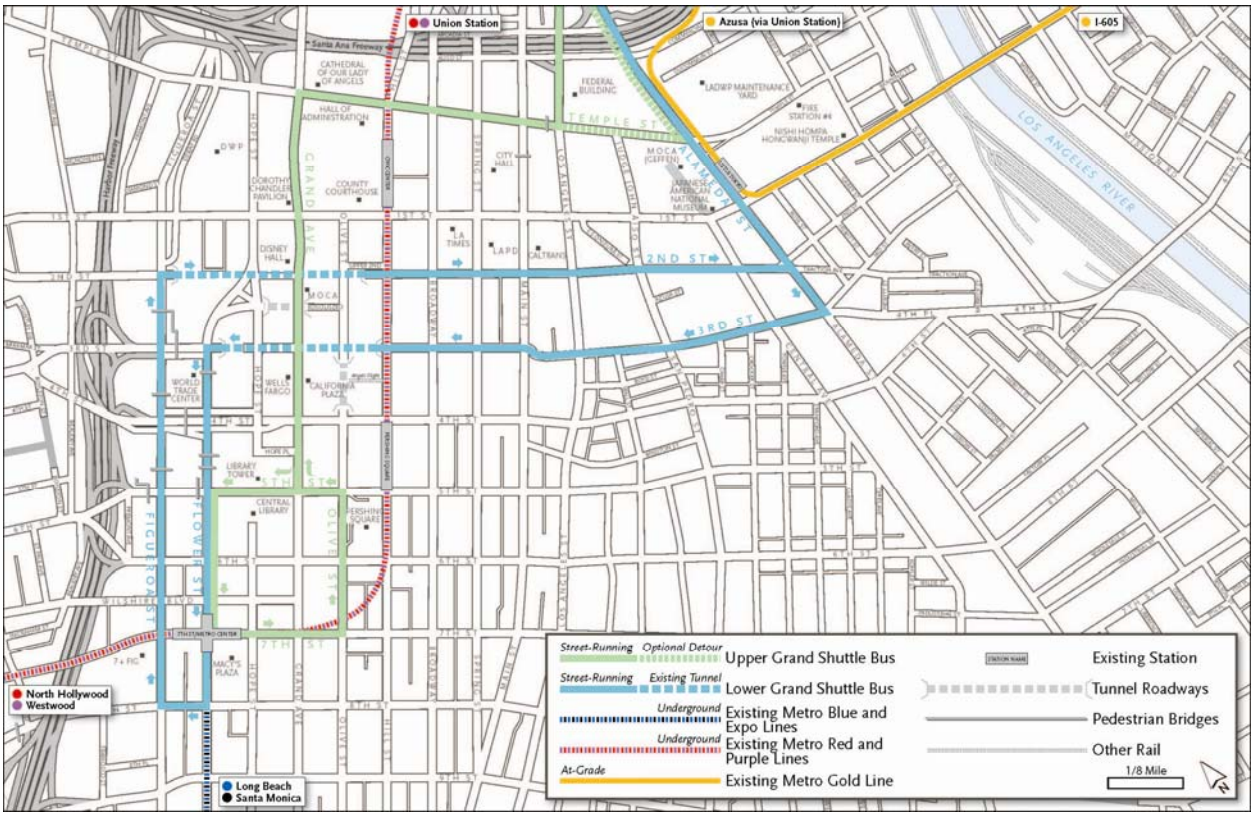

Figure 5-2. Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative

5.2.2 Indirect Impacts

No indirect construction or operation impacts to scenic vistas, scenic resources, nighttime lighting, and shading and shadowing would occur under the TSM Alternative because there would be no major construction or new light rail operation. Additionally, because the streetscape would remain unchanged except for new and expanded bus stops, the existing visual character of the project area would not be indirectly degraded.

5.2.3 Cumulative Impacts

No cumulative impacts would result from the TSM Alternative because there would be no direct or indirect impacts.

Figure 5-3a and Figure 5-3b. Enhanced Bus Stops

5.3 At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative

The At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative extends from the underground 7th Street/Metro Center Station, heads north under Flower Street, resurfaces to at grade north of 4th Street, crosses 3rd Street at grade, enters Bunker Hill, and turns northeast through a new entrance to the existing 2nd Street tunnel. The new underground portions of the alignment would be constructed using the cut-and-cover method.

After entering the 2nd Street tunnel, the alignment continues along 2nd Street and splits into an at-grade couplet configuration traveling north on Main and Los Angeles Streets (one track on each roadway). The alignment then heads east on Temple Street, realigns into a dual-track configuration just east of Los Angeles Street, and connects to the Metro Gold Line in a three-way junction north of the Little Tokyo/Arts District Station on Alameda Street. An automobile underpass and a potential pedestrian overpass would be constructed at the intersection of Temple and Alameda Streets to reduce pedestrian-train and automobile-train conflicts associated with the high volume of auto and truck traffic that would traverse the Regional Connector alignment.

A pedestrian bridge may also be constructed from the 2nd/Hope Street Station to Upper Grand Avenue in the Bunker Hill area. The At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative is shown in Figure 5-4. As discussed in Section 4, there are no scenic vistas identified in the project area and therefore no scenic vista impacts would occur. Other potential visual and aesthetic impacts associated with implementation of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative are discussed in the following subsections.

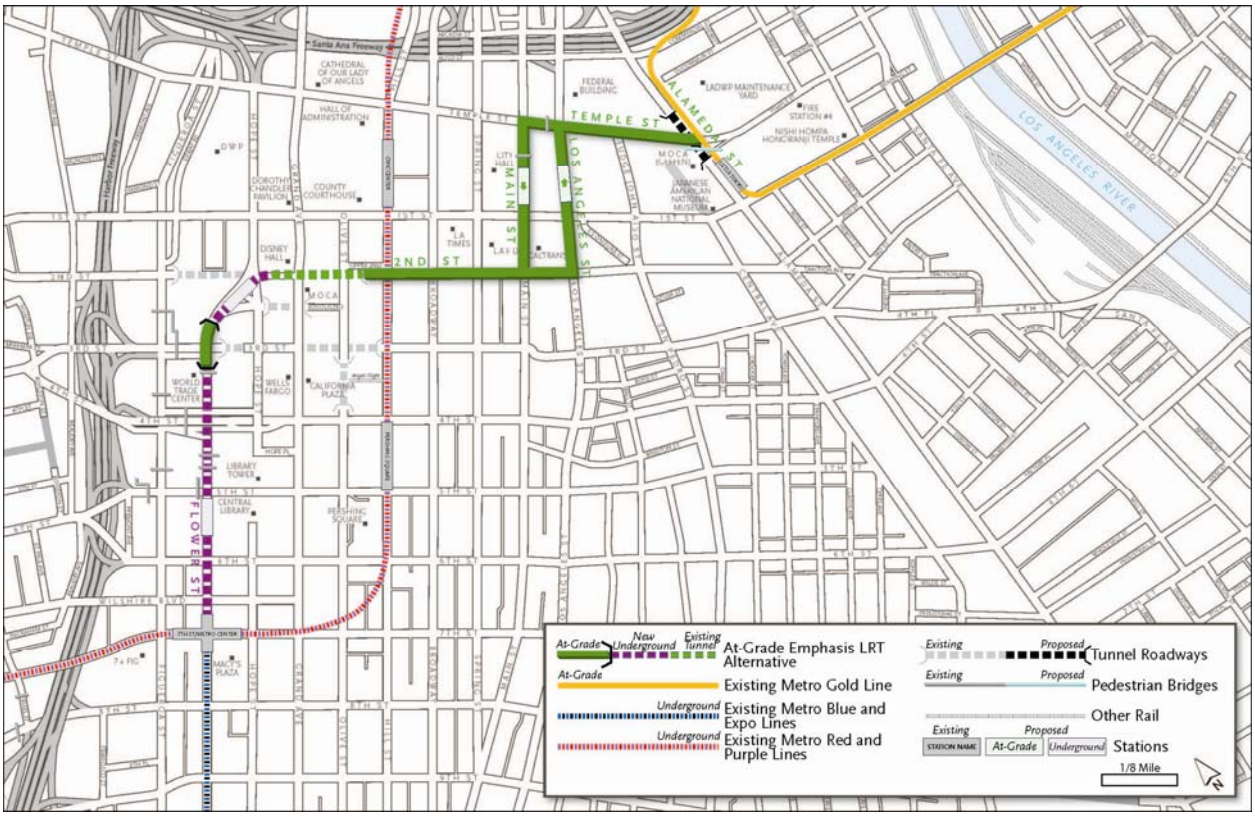

Figure 5-4. At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative

5.3.1 Direct Construction Impacts

Construction of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would involve both at-grade and underground construction activities. At-grade construction would include installing tracks and guideway structures and constructing station platforms and ancillary facilities along roadways in the Historic Core, Civic Center, and Little Tokyo areas of downtown Los Angeles. At-grade construction activities would also include streetscape improvements along the entire alignment.

For above-ground construction, activities, equipment, and staging locations would be visible to nearby land uses and passersby. Proposed construction staging locations for the at-grade portion of this alternative include the Main/1st Street station, the Los Angeles/1st Street station, and the Temple and Alameda junction. At each of these three staging locations, construction equipment, worker vehicles, and construction trailers would be visible to nearby land uses and passersby for a period of two to three years.

For underground construction activities, tracks, guideways, and ancillary facilities would be installed by cut-and-cover construction techniques. Cut-and-cover construction would be conducted primarily below ground along approximately 1,600 feet of Flower Street north of

the existing 7th Street/Metro Center Station and extend to the proposed 2nd/Hope Street station. At any given time, two to three blocks would be closed during cut-and-cover construction activities. Above-ground activities associated with cut-and-cover construction would be visible to nearby land uses and passersby; however, the bulk of construction would occur below ground and, therefore, would not obstruct views or substantially alter the visual character of the Flower Street corridor in the Financial District.

Also associated with underground construction are construction staging areas. Staging locations are proposed at the Flower/6th/5th Street station site and the 2nd/Hope Street station site. Construction staging locations would be visible to nearby land uses and passersby; however, the construction sites themselves would be sheltered from direct public view by temporary construction walls.

After underground construction activities are complete, pedestrian station entrances would be constructed using methods involving placement of concrete inverts, walls, and walkways. Station entrance locations are generally used as access points to the underground station, including during the construction process. Exterior entrances would be constructed after the station structure has been completed.

Table 5-1 summarizes construction impacts on scenic resources associated with construction of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative.

Table 5-1. Scenic Resources Potentially Affected by Construction of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative

Resources	Cut and Cover for Guideway	Construction Staging	Stations and Portals	Tunnel Boring
Financial District				
Fine Arts Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
818 Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
Roosevelt Lofts	NO	NO	NO	NO
Pegasus	LTS	NO	NO	NO
811 Wilshire Blvd	LTS	NO	NO	NO
Engine Co. No. 28	LTS	NO	NO	NO

Table 5-1. Scenic Resources Potentially Affected by Construction of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative				
Resources	**Cut and Cover for Guideway**	**Construction Staging**	**Stations and Portals**	**Tunnel Boring**
Standard Hotel	LTS	NO	NO	NO
California Club	LTS	NO	NO	NO
LA Central Library & Maguire Gardens	LTS	LTS	LTS	NO
City National Plaza	LTS	LTS	LTS	NO
Citigroup Center Plaza	LTS	LTS	LTS	NO
Bunker Hill				
Walt Disney Concert Hall	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
2nd Street Tunnel	LTS	LTS	LTS	NO
Grassy Open Space at General Thaddeus Kosciuszko Way	LTS	LTS	LTS	NO
Historic Core				
LA Law Center	NO	NO	NO	NO
Times Annex	NO	NO	NO	NO
Times Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
Higgins Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
St. Vibiana's Cathedral	NO	NO	NO	NO
Redwing Shoes	NO	NO	NO	NO
Civic Center				

Table 5-1. Scenic Resources Potentially Affected by Construction of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative				
Resources	**Cut and Cover for Guideway**	**Construction Staging**	**Stations and Portals**	**Tunnel Boring**
Civic Center Historic District	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
City Hall South	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
Los Angeles City Hall	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
U.S. Courthouse	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
Fletcher Bowron Square	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
Parker Center	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
Tinker Toy Parking Structure	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
Little Tokyo				
Little Tokyo Historic District	NO	LTS	NO	NO
Union Center Arts	NO	LTS	NO	NO

NO = No impact
LTS = Less than significant impact

5.3.1.1 Scenic Resource Impacts

There would be temporary impacts to views of historic buildings during construction. Construction staging areas and temporary construction walls surrounding these staging areas, movement of construction equipment, and stockpiling could temporarily hinder views of historic buildings from selected locations in downtown Los Angeles.

To summarize findings shown in Table 5-1, buildings and/or recognized visual resources could potentially be affected by construction activities associated with installation of tracks and poles, station construction, cut-and-cover activities, and pedestrian and train portal construction. These construction activities are discussed in more detail in the following subsections.

Installation of Tracks and Poles

Above-ground portions of the trackwork construction would involve demolition of the roadway section being displaced by the LRT trackway, preparation of the track bed, construction of the supporting track slab, and laying of rail. Foundations for overhead wire poles may be installed with the track. Given the urban context, approximately two-block segments of roadway are likely to be reserved at a time for construction activities. Construction durations for a two-block segment are estimated to be two to four months to complete trackwork in each roadway segment.

These activities would occur in the vicinity of the Los Angeles Law Center, the Times Annex, the Higgins Building, Saint Vibiana's Cathedral, City Hall and the open space area located immediately south of the building, the United States Courthouse, Fletcher Bowron Square/Los Angeles Mall, Parker Center, and the Tinker Toy Parking Structure. Given the temporary and short-term (two to four months) nature of construction activities immediately adjacent to these visual resources, no permanent or adverse impacts would occur to these scenic resources. All construction activities would remain off-site from the resources, and views of these resources within the surrounding area would remain intact. Therefore, impacts associated with installation of tracks and poles along the above-ground portions of this alternative would be less than significant.

Installation activities for tracks and poles along the underground portions of this alternative would not be visible to nearby land uses or passersby. Therefore, no visual impacts would result to scenic resources along Flower Street in the Bunker Hill and Financial District areas of downtown Los Angeles.

Above-ground Station Construction

The at-grade stations on Main Street and Los Angeles Street would be constructed simultaneously with other segments of the alternative. These would be single, high floor station platforms constructed from standard building materials such as concrete, steel, aluminum, and heavy plastic. The stations would be similar in size and scale to the existing Metro Blue Line and Gold Line stations.

Buildings located in the vicinity of station locations include City Hall South, the Los Angeles City Hall building and open space plaza south of the building, and Parker Center. Impacts to views of scenic buildings and resources along Main Street and Los Angeles Street just north of 1st Street, and to the resources themselves, would be less than significant due to the location of the platforms within existing street rights-of-way and the limited height, size, and scale of these platforms.

Underground Stations and Pedestrian Portals

Two underground stations would be constructed along the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative alignment: the Flower/6th/5th Street station and the 2nd/Hope Street station. Similar to construction of the tunnel and trackwork for the underground portion of this alternative, stations would be constructed using cut-and-cover techniques. Buildings and scenic resources located within the immediate proximity of the proposed Flower/6th/5th Street underground station and pedestrian portal include the Central Library and Maguire Gardens, the City National Plaza, and the Citigroup Center Plaza. No identified scenic resources or buildings are located immediately adjacent to the proposed 2nd/Hope Street station.

Most station construction activities would occur below ground, and therefore would not be visible to nearby buildings, land uses, and passersby. Following underground construction, the ground surface would be completed and pedestrian portals would be finished. Therefore, construction activities for the underground stations, ancillary facilities, and pedestrian portals for this alternative would be primarily invisible to nearby land uses; impacts to surrounding visual resources would be less than significant.

Train Portal

Under the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative, one train portal would be constructed along the southern wall in the central portion of the 2nd Street Tunnel. Creating the portal in the 2nd Street Tunnel would require major construction work and closure of the tunnel during portal construction. Views of the central portion of this tunnel, where the bulk of construction activities would occur, are limited and available only to drivers using the tunnel. Therefore, by closing the tunnel during construction activities, visual impacts associated with portal construction in the 2nd Street Tunnel would be limited and no impacts would occur.

5.3.1.2 Visual Character Impacts

Both above and below ground construction activities—including installation of the tracks and poles, station construction, and pedestrian and train portal construction—would temporarily alter the existing visual character of downtown Los Angeles. Areas of downtown Los Angeles through which the underground portions of the alternative would pass consist of high-rise and high-density development.

Wide sidewalks and avenues provide pedestrians and vehicles with views along corridors in the project area. Construction activities would result in two- to four-month street and sidewalk closures on a two-block basis. Construction staging areas with tall walls surrounding construction sites would be placed in specific locations for periods ranging from 12 to 48 months. Construction activities would result in overall congestion and temporary obstructions to views currently experienced along corridors. There would not be a significant effect on visual character of the historic districts because potential impacts to historic buildings that contribute to these districts would be less than significant.

Construction activities occurring in roadways and sidewalks would have the potential to temporarily disrupt views along the corridors as well as impede views of historic resources, visual resources, and viewshed corridors. However, no recognized or valued views are located in the project area. Viewers would see construction-related activities and equipment, and the urban streetscape would be temporarily altered. However, the project would be constructed in a heavily urbanized environment where construction activities are not uncommon. Construction of the project would not noticeably reduce visual quality or alter viewing context. Therefore, temporary construction impacts would be less than significant.

5.3.1.3 Nighttime Illumination Impacts

During construction, nighttime lighting would be introduced into the project area at construction staging locations. Lighting would predominantly consist of security lighting, and light would be directed on-site. As such, nighttime lighting impacts would be less than significant during construction of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative.

5.3.1.4 Shade and Shadow Impacts

The At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would involve both at-grade and underground construction. Heights of structures and construction-related facilities and equipment located above ground would be limited; as such, the potential for construction activities to result in shading and shadows beyond those currently created by the high- and mid-rise buildings along the alignment's corridors would be minimal. No shade or shadow impacts would result from construction of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative.

5.3.2 Indirect Construction Impacts

Construction of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would result in limited localized visual impacts on the Financial District, Bunker Hill, Historic Core, Civic Center, and Little Tokyo areas of downtown.

5.3.2.1 Scenic Resource Impacts

Construction activities for the proposed project would be localized and not result in any indirect impacts to scenic resources beyond those discussed in the Cultural Resources – Built Environment Technical Memorandum. No indirect visual impacts to scenic resources would occur as a result of construction.

5.3.2.2 Visual Character Impacts

Construction activities for the proposed project would be localized and not result in any indirect impacts to visual character beyond those discussed in the Built Environment Technical Memorandum. No indirect impacts to visual character would occur as a result of construction activities.

5.3.2.3 Nighttime Illumination Impacts

During construction, nighttime lighting would be introduced into the immediate project area at construction staging locations, along Flower Street at cut-and-cover construction sites, and along the two-block at-grade segments on 2nd, Los Angeles, Main, and Temple Streets. The project is located in an urban environment with substantial existing nighttime lighting. All lighting associated with project construction activities would be localized. Therefore, no indirect nighttime lighting impacts would occur from construction of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative.

5.3.2.4 Shade and Shadow Impacts

The At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would involve both at-grade and underground construction. Heights of structures and construction-related facilities and equipment located above ground would be limited and localized to the areas immediately surrounding the facilities themselves; therefore, no indirect shade and shadow impacts would result from construction activities.

5.3.3 Direct Operational Impacts

Operation of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would include both underground and at-grade segments of the project. Underground operations would occur beneath Flower Street, extending north from the existing 7th Street/Metro Center Station through the Financial District and Bunker Hill to the 2nd Street Tunnel. At the 2nd Street Tunnel the line would continue at-grade in an easterly direction through the Historic Core and Civic Center and ultimately connect with the existing Little Tokyo/Arts District Station.

Three new stations are proposed: one at-grade couplet and two underground stations. The at-grade couplet station would be located in the existing street rights-of-way on Los Angeles Street and Main Street and include single, high floor station platforms. The underground stations, at Flower/6th/5th Streets and 2nd/Hope Streets, would be accessed by pedestrian portals with above-ground entrances. Table 5-2 summarizes impacts on scenic resources associated with operation of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative.

Table 5-2. Scenic Resources Potentially Affected by Operation of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative

Resources	Poles and Track	Stations	Pedestrian Portals	Train Portals
Financial District				
Fine Arts Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
818 Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
Roosevelt Lofts	NO	NO	NO	NO
Pegasus	NO	NO	NO	NO
811 Wilshire Blvd	NO	NO	NO	NO
Engine Co. No. 28	NO	NO	NO	NO
Standard Hotel	NO	NO	NO	NO
California Club	NO	NO	NO	NO
LA Central Library & Maguire Gardens	NO	NO	LTS	NO
City National Plaza	NO	NO	LTS	NO
Citigroup Center Plaza	NO	NO	LTS	NO
Bunker Hill				
Walt Disney Concert Hall	NO	NO	NO	NO
2nd Street Tunnel	NO	NO	LTS	LTS
Grassy Open Space at General Thaddeus Kosciuszko Way	NO	NO	LTS	LTS
Historic Core				
LA Law Center	LTS	NO	NO	NO
Times Annex	LTS	NO	NO	NO

Table 5-2. Scenic Resources Potentially Affected by Operation of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative				
Resources	**Poles and Track**	**Stations**	**Pedestrian Portals**	**Train Portals**
Times Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
Higgins Building	LTS	NO	NO	NO
St. Vibiana's Cathedral	LTS	NO	NO	NO
Redwing Shoes	NO	NO	NO	NO
Civic Center				
Civic Center Historic District	LTS	LTS	NO	NO
City Hall South	LTS	LTS	NO	NO
Los Angeles City Hall	LTS	LTS	NO	NO
U.S. Courthouse	LTS	LTS	NO	NO
Fletcher Bowron Square	LTS	LTS	NO	NO
Parker Center	LTS	LTS	NO	NO
Tinker Toy Parking Structure	LTS	LTS	NO	NO
Little Tokyo				
Little Tokyo Historic District	LTS	NO	NO	NO
Union Center Arts	NO	NO	NO	NO

NO = No impact
LTS = Less than significant impact

5.3.3.1 Scenic Resource Impacts

Views of several historic buildings in the Historic Core and Civic Center could be minimally disrupted during project operations due to the presence of overhead contact wire and catenary poles. Table 5-2 summarizes potential impacts to scenic resources along the route of the proposed At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative.

Historic buildings within the Historic Core include the Los Angeles Law Center, Times Annex, Higgins Building, and Redwing Shoes. Historic buildings within the Civic Center include City Hall South, Los Angeles City Hall, the U.S. Courthouse, Fletcher Bowron Square/Los Angeles Mall, Parker Center, and the Tinker Toy parking structure. Of these buildings, the first three are large in scale and would experience only minimally visual impacts by the overhead contact systems and catenary poles. Even the three-story Redwing Shoes building is tall enough to experience only minor impacts from the overhead wires and catenary poles, which would be approximately two stories in height. This minimal impact would be visible only from the far side of the street beyond the overhead contact system. Viewers on the same side of the street as the building would experience no visual impact.

The overhead catenary system features would not degrade views of historic buildings in the Historic Core, nor would they contrast with the buildings' form, size, color, or texture. Therefore, operation impacts to these buildings in the Historic Core would be less than significant under the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative.

Views of several historic buildings located in the Civic Center would potentially be minimally disrupted during project operations due to the presence of overhead contact wire and catenary poles. These include City Hall South, Los Angeles City Hall, the U.S. Courthouse, Fletcher Bowron Square/Los Angeles Mall, Parker Center, and the Tinker Toy parking structure. All of these buildings are tall and would be only minimally impacted by the proposed overhead contact system and catenary poles, which would be approximately two stories high.

The potential effect of the LRT facilities on these historic buildings is described in the Cultural Resources – Built Environment Technical Memorandum. The LRT facilities would be consistent with the historical context of many of the structures and reminiscent of the historic system of trolleys and street cars. These buildings are all institutional in scale, and their large sizes would visually outweigh the minor intrusion of the LRT facilities. The LRT facilities would not degrade views of historic buildings in the Civic Center, nor would they contrast with the buildings' form, size, color, or texture. Therefore, visual impacts to these resources would be less than significant.

Three Civic Center buildings along the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative alignment would experience minimal to no potential visual impacts from station platforms and associated appurtenances. These include City Hall South, Los Angeles City Hall, and Parker Center. These buildings are much greater in scale than the light rail platforms and, therefore, would experience only minimal visual disturbance at the first floor level.

The stations would not degrade views of historic buildings in the Civic Center, nor would they contrast with the buildings' form, size, color or texture. Therefore, visual resource impacts would be less than significant.

One building in the project area, the Los Angeles Central Library (and the adjacent Maguire Gardens), may experience potential visual impacts from entrances to underground stations. The entrance to the proposed Flower/6th/5th Street station would be located in a widened sidewalk area and have low visual impact on the Central Library. Pedestrians walking along the west side of Flower Street would experience low visual impacts looking across the street toward Maguire Gardens. People walking along the east side of Flower Street would not experience any visual impacts. The entrance would not degrade views of the Central Library, nor would it contrast greatly with its appearance. Therefore, visual impacts to the Los Angeles Central Library and Maguire Gardens would be less than significant.

Train portals would be located:

- Within Flower Street between 3rd Street and 4th Street
- On Bunker Hill
- On 2nd Street between Olive Street and Hill Street (existing 2nd Street Tunnel portal)
- Inside the 2nd Street Tunnel (where the new tunnel from the south punches into the existing 2nd Street Tunnel)

The proposed train portals would not be tall enough to degrade views of any historic buildings, nor would they contrast visually with the buildings. As such, no impacts from train portals would occur.

In the Bunker Hill area, there may be a pedestrian bridge constructed from the 2nd/Hope Street Station to Upper Grand Avenue above the existing General Thaddeus Koscuiszko Way right-of-way. The bridge would not be visible from any historic buildings, and thus no adverse visual impacts to historic buildings would occur.

Several scenic resources are near the underground portion of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative alignment, but there would be no visible project facilities nearby. These include the Fine Arts Building, the 818 Building, Roosevelt Lofts, Pegasus, 811 Wilshire Boulevard, Engine Company Number 28, the Standard Hotel, and the California Club. No features of the proposed project would be visible to these buildings and therefore no visual impacts would occur.

Other buildings within the Area of Potential Visual Impact are located too far from the at-grade portions of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative alignment to be visually affected. These include the Times Building, St. Vibiana's Cathedral, Union Arts Center, and San Pedro Farm Building. Therefore, no visual impacts to these buildings would occur.

5.3.3.2 Visual Character Impacts

The At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would be located in a heavily urbanized environment and adding a fixed guideway, whether at grade or underground, would not noticeably reduce visual quality or alter the viewing context in the Financial District, Bunker Hill, Historic Core, Civic Center, or Little Tokyo areas of downtown Los Angeles. The introduction and operation of these improvements would contribute to the existing urban character and high-density, pedestrian friendly environment that already exists in downtown Los Angeles. There would not be a significant effect on the visual character of the historic districts because potential impacts to historic buildings that contribute to the historic districts would be less than significant. Therefore, visual character impacts associated with the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would be less than significant.

5.3.3.3 Nighttime Illumination Impacts

The At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would introduce new nighttime lighting to the immediate project area and at station locations. Nighttime lighting would primarily consist of security lighting and would be similar to the existing lighting located throughout downtown Los Angeles. Therefore, no new nighttime lighting impacts would result from implementation or operation of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative.

5.3.3.4 Shade and Shadow Impacts

Operation of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would involve light rail trains running both at-grade and underground. Above-ground structures, including station platforms and catenary structures (which include poles and wires), would be limited to approximately two stories in height; therefore, the potential for the project to result in increased shading and shadows beyond those currently created by the high- and mid-rise buildings along the alignment corridors would be minimal. No shade or shadow impacts would result from implementation or operation of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative.

5.3.4 Indirect Operational Impacts

5.3.4.1 Scenic Resource Impacts

The At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would not result in indirect operational impacts to the visual environment of downtown historic buildings.

5.3.4.2 Visual Character Impacts

Implementation and operation of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would be localized and would not result in indirect impacts to visual character beyond those discussed in the Built Environment Technical Memorandum. No indirect impacts to visual character would occur.

5.3.4.3 Nighttime Illumination Impacts

New nighttime lighting would be introduced into the immediate project area and at station locations as a result of implementation of this alternative. All project-related lighting would be localized. Therefore, no indirect nighttime lighting impacts would result from operation of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative.

5.3.4.4 Shade and Shadow Impacts

Implementation and operation of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would include both at-grade and underground operations. Structures located above ground, including station platforms and catenary structures, would be limited in height. Therefore, the potential for this alternative to result in shading and shadows beyond those currently created by the high- and mid-rise buildings along the alignment's corridors is limited. No indirect shade or shadow impacts would result from implementation or operation of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative.

5.3.5 Cumulative Construction Impacts

5.3.5.1 Scenic Resource Impacts

Construction projects besides the proposed LRT project are planned throughout the downtown Los Angeles area. Construction of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would not result in either direct or indirect significant impacts to scenic resources. Therefore, construction of the proposed project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable visual resource impact. Nor would the project, in combination with other future construction projects in the downtown Los Angeles area, result in significant cumulative visual impacts to scenic resources.

5.3.5.2 Visual Character Impacts

The proposed project is located in greater downtown Los Angeles, which is a dynamic environment where new projects are being constructed on an on-going basis. Construction projects are seen throughout the project vicinity and, in addition to construction of the proposed LRT project, additional development projects are planned throughout the downtown Los Angeles area.

Construction of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would not result in either direct or indirect significant impacts to scenic resources. Therefore, construction of this alternative would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable visual character impact. Nor would the project, in combination with other future projects in the downtown Los Angeles area. result in significant cumulative visual impacts to the visual character of downtown.

5.3.5.3 Nighttime Illumination Impacts

The At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would not result in direct or indirect nighttime illumination impacts during construction. Therefore, the alternative would not result in, or contribute to, cumulatively considerable nighttime illumination impacts.

5.3.5.4 Shade and Shadow Impacts

The At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would not result in direct or indirect shade and shadow impacts during construction. Therefore, the alternative would not result in, or contribute to cumulatively considerable shade and shadow impacts.

5.3.6 Cumulative Operational Impacts

5.3.6.1 Scenic Resource Impacts

Other development projects are planned throughout the downtown Los Angeles area in addition to the operation of the LRT project. Operation of this LRT alternative would not result in either direct or indirect significant impacts to scenic resources. Therefore, implementation of the alternative would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable visual resource impact. Nor would the project, in combination with other future construction projects in the downtown Los Angeles area, result in significant cumulative visual impacts to scenic resources.

5.3.6.2 Visual Character Impacts

The proposed project is located in greater downtown Los Angeles, which is a dynamic environment where new projects are being implemented on an on-going basis. Additional development projects are planned throughout the downtown Los Angeles area. Operation of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would not result in either direct or indirect significant impacts to scenic resources. Therefore, operation of this alternative would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable visual resource impact. Nor would the alternative, in combination with other future projects in the downtown Los Angeles area, result in significant cumulative visual impacts to the visual character of downtown.

5.3.6.3 Nighttime Illumination Impacts

The At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would not result in direct or indirect nighttime illumination impacts from operations. Therefore, the alternative would not result in or contribute to significant cumulative nighttime illumination impacts.

5.3.6.4 Shade and Shadow Impacts

The At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would not result in direct or indirect shade and shadow impacts from operations. Therefore, the alternative would not result in or contribute to significant cumulative shade and shadow impacts.

5.4 Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative

The Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would connect directly to the tracks at 7th Street/Metro Center Station, continue north underneath Flower Street to 3rd Street, and then northeast to 2nd and Hope Streets. Tracks would then proceed east underneath the 2nd Street tunnel and 2nd Street to Central Avenue, where they would then veer north into a new portal on the private property bounded by 1st Street, Alameda Street, 2nd Street, and Central Avenue.

The tracks would then enter the intersection of 1st and Alameda Streets in the same type of three-way junction planned for the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative, with a potential pedestrian overpass and a vehicular underpass for through traffic on Alameda Street. A pedestrian bridge may also be constructed from the 2nd/Hope Street station to Upper Grand Avenue in the Bunker Hill area.

The proposed Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative alignment is shown in Figure 5-5. No identified scenic vistas are within the project area and therefore no scenic vista impacts would occur. Potential visual and aesthetic impacts associated with implementation of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative are discussed in the following subsections of this technical memorandum.

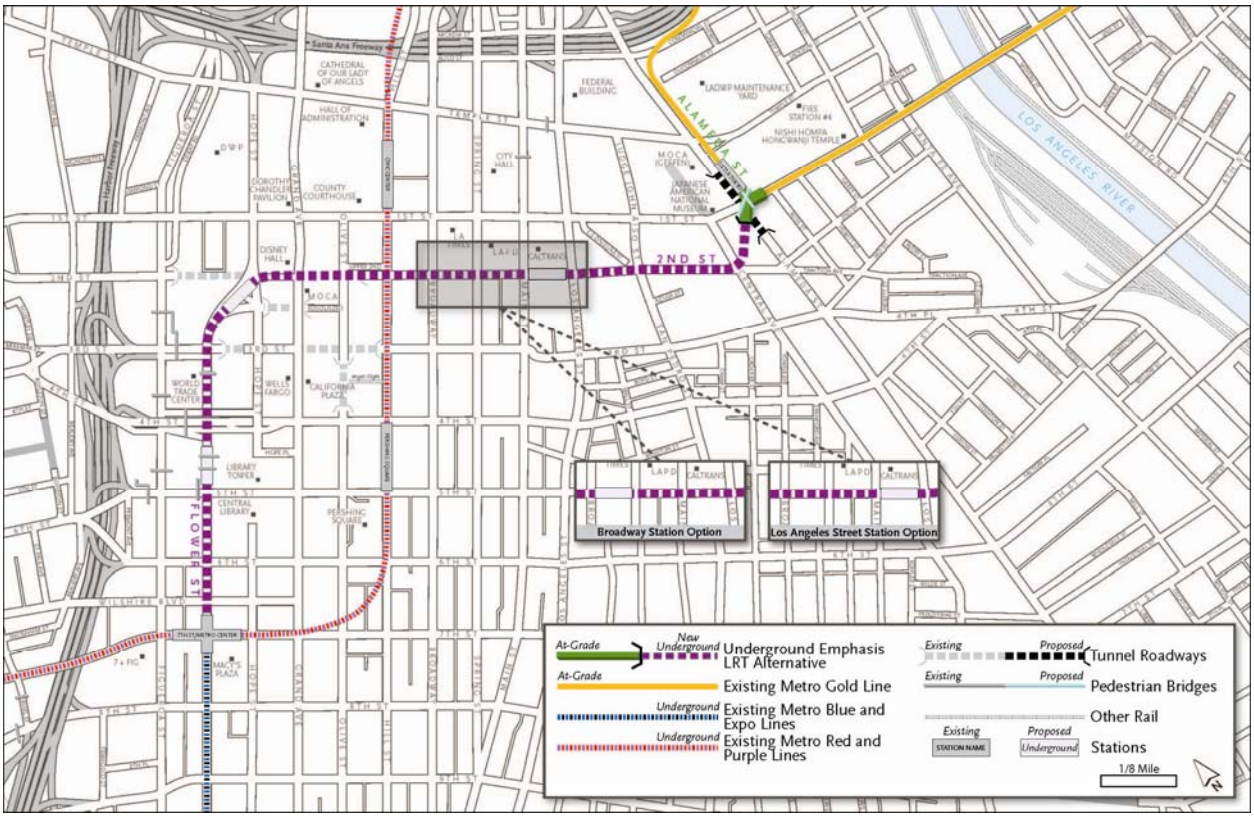

Figure 5-5. Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative

5.4.1 Direct Construction Impacts

The Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would involve primarily underground construction due to the proposed configuration of the alignment. The portion of the alignment located beneath Flower Street, through the Financial District and Bunker Hill, would involve 2,200 feet of cut-and-cover tunneling and the portion of the alignment along 2nd Street, through the Historic Core and Little Tokyo, would be constructed using a Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM). Where cut-and-cover construction occurs, portions of two- to three-block segments of Flower Street through the Financial District and Bunker Hill would be closed at any given time.

The TBM could be launched from two potential sites: the proposed 2nd/Hope Street station site on the western end of alignment, or the block at the 1st Street and Alameda Street junction on the eastern end of the alignment. The selected launch site would be one of the three proposed construction staging locations. The other two construction staging sites would be at the proposed Flower/5th/4th Street station site and either the 2nd Street station – Los Angeles Street option or the 2nd Street station – Broadway option, depending on which is selected.

Nearby land users and passersby would have visual access to cut-and-cover construction, construction staging locations, and potential TBM launch sites. However, most construction would occur below ground, and temporary construction walls would prevent direct public view of construction staging and TBM launch sites. TBM operation would be entirely below ground and not visible to nearby land uses or passersby in the Historic Core and Little Tokyo areas of downtown Los Angeles.

After construction of the three stations is completed, pedestrian access portals would be constructed using methods involving placement of concrete inverts, walls, and walkways. Station entrances to access underground stations and ancillary facilities would be constructed above ground and over the pedestrian portals. Table 5-3 summarizes potential impacts on scenic resources associated with construction of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative.

Table 5-3. Scenic Resources Potentially Affected by Construction of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative				
Resources	**Cut and Cover for Guideway**	**Construction Staging**	**Stations and Portals**	**Tunnel Boring**
Financial District				
Fine Arts Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
818 Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
Roosevelt Lofts	NO	NO	NO	NO
Pegasus	LTS	NO	NO	NO
811 Wilshire Blvd	LTS	NO	NO	NO
Engine Co. No. 28	LTS	NO	NO	NO
Standard Hotel	LTS	NO	NO	NO
California Club	LTS	NO	NO	NO
LA Central Library & Maguire Gardens	LTS	LTS	LTS	NO
City National Plaza	LTS	LTS	LTS	NO
Citigroup Center Plaza	LTS	LTS	LTS	NO
Bunker Hill				
Walt Disney Concert Hall	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
2nd Street Tunnel	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
Grassy Open Space at General Thaddeus Kosciuszko Way	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
Historic Core				
LA Law Center	NO	LTS	LTS	NO

Table 5-3. Scenic Resources Potentially Affected by Construction of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative				
Resources	**Cut and Cover for Guideway**	**Construction Staging**	**Stations and Portals**	**Tunnel Boring**
Times Annex	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
Times Building	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
Higgins Building	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
St. Vibiana's Cathedral	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
Redwing Shoes	NO	NO	NO	NO
Civic Center				
Tinker Toy Parking Structure	NO	NO	NO	NO
Little Tokyo				
Little Tokyo Historic District	LTS	LTS	NO	LTS
Union Center Arts	LTS	LTS	NO	LTS
Koyasan Buddhist Temple	LTS	LTS	NO	LTS
Brunswick Square	LTS	LTS	NO	LTS
Señor Fish	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS

NO = No impact.
LTS = Less than significant impact

5.4.1.1 Scenic Resource Impacts

There would be temporary impacts to views of historic buildings during construction. Construction staging areas and temporary construction walls surrounding these staging and stockpiling areas, as well as movement of construction equipment, could temporarily hinder views of historic buildings from selected locations in downtown Los Angeles.

Table 5-3 summarizes findings regarding buildings and/or recognized visual resources that could potentially be affected by installation of tracks and poles, cut-and-cover activities, and construction of station and pedestrian portals.

Installation of Tracks and Poles

Above-ground portions of the trackwork under the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would be much less than the At-Grade Emphasis Alternative and limited to the vicinity of 1st Street and Alameda Street in Little Tokyo. Trackwork construction would involve demolition of the roadway section being displaced by the LRT trackway, preparation of the track bed, construction of the supporting track slab, and laying of rail. These activities would occur near the Little Tokyo Historic District.

Given the temporary and short-term nature of construction activities related to installation of tracks and poles (between two and four months) and the distance to the nearest scenic resource (approximately one block), no permanent or adverse impacts would occur to these scenic resources. Construction activities would occur only on affected streets, and resources and views of these resources within the surrounding area would remain intact. Therefore, potential impacts associated with installation of tracks and poles along the above-ground portion of this alternative would be less than significant.

Installation of tracks and poles along the underground portions of this alternative would not be visible to nearby land uses or passersby. Therefore, no visual impacts would result to scenic resources along Flower Street in the Bunker Hill and Financial District areas of downtown Los Angeles or along 2nd Street through Bunker Hill and the Historic Core.

Underground Station Sites and Pedestrian Portals

The Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would include construction of three underground stations at three of the four identified construction staging sites along the alignment: the Flower/5th/4th Street station, the 2nd/Hope Street station, and either the 2nd Street station – Los Angeles Street or 2nd Street station – Broadway Options. Stations would be constructed using cut-and-cover techniques similar to construction of the tunnel and trackwork for the underground portion of this alternative.

Buildings and scenic resources located within the immediate proximity of the proposed Flower/5th/4th Street station and pedestrian portal include the Central Library and Maguire Gardens, City National Plaza, and Citigroup Center Plaza. No identified scenic resources or buildings are located immediately adjacent to the 2nd/Hope Street station. In the immediate vicinity of both 2nd Street station options are the Times Annex building, Higgins Building, and St. Vibiana's Cathedral.

Most station construction would occur below ground, and therefore would not be visible to nearby buildings, land uses, and passersby. After underground construction is complete, the

ground surface would be restored and the pedestrian portals finished. Therefore, construction activities for the underground stations, ancillary facilities, and pedestrian portals for this alternative would be primarily invisible to nearby land uses; impacts to surrounding visual resources would be less than significant.

Train Portal

Construction of the train portal just west of Alameda Street would result in removal of the Señor Fish building. Removal of this structure would result in a less than significant visual impact to the Little Tokyo area because of the building's modest size and reduced level of historical significance. Through appropriate urban design, the portal area structures and surrounding streetscape and landscaping would comply with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*. Furthermore, design of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would incorporate historical and visual references to the surrounding Little Tokyo and Arts District neighborhoods that complement these important communities.

5.4.1.2 Visual Character Impacts

Construction activities—including cut-and-cover construction, installation of the tracks and poles in the at-grade segment of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative, and station and pedestrian portal construction—would temporarily alter the existing visual character of downtown Los Angeles. The areas of downtown Los Angeles through which the underground portions of this alignment would pass currently consist of high- and mid-rise buildings and high-density construction.

The at-grade portion of this alternative would be limited to the area of the 1st Street and Alameda Street junction in the immediate vicinity of the existing Little Tokyo/Arts District Station. The Little Tokyo Historic District is about one block away. Wide sidewalks and avenues in the project area provide pedestrians and vehicles with views along the alignment. Construction activities would result in partial two- to three-block closures of the street and sidewalks along Flower Street through the Financial District and Bunker Hill. Construction staging areas and their associated construction walls would be visible for a period ranging from 12 to 48 months. During construction of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative, activities occurring above ground in the roadways and along sidewalks would have the potential to temporarily disrupt views along the corridors and impede views of historic resources, visual resources, and viewshed corridors. No recognized or valued views have been identified in the project area. Viewers would see construction equipment and construction-related activities, and the urban streetscape would be temporarily altered. However, the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would be constructed in a heavily urbanized environment where construction activities are not uncommon, and would not noticeably reduce visual quality or alter viewing context. Therefore, temporary construction impacts would be less than significant.

5.4.1.3 Nighttime Lighting Impacts

During construction, nighttime lighting would be introduced into the project area at construction staging locations. Lighting would predominantly consist of security lighting, and would be directed on-site. Therefore, nighttime lighting impacts would be less than significant during construction of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative.

5.4.1.4 Shade and Shadow Impacts

Construction of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would occur primarily underground. Heights of structures and construction-related facilities located above ground would be limited to no more than two stories. Therefore, the potential for construction activities to result in shading and shadows beyond those currently created by the high- and mid-rise buildings along the alignment corridors is limited. No shade or shadow impacts would result from construction of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative.

5.4.2 Indirect Construction Impacts

Construction of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would result in limited localized visual impacts on the Financial District, Bunker Hill, Historic Core, and Little Tokyo areas of downtown.

5.4.2.1 Scenic Resource Impacts

Construction activities for the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would be localized and not result in any indirect impacts to scenic resources beyond those discussed in the Cultural Resources – Built Environment Technical Memorandum. Construction of this alternative would not create indirect visual impacts to scenic resources.

5.4.2.2 Visual Character Impacts

Construction activities for the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would be localized and not result in any indirect impacts to visual character beyond those discussed in the Cultural Resources – Built Environment Technical Memorandum. Construction of this alternative would not create indirect impacts to visual character.

5.4.2.3 Nighttime Illumination Impacts

During construction, nighttime lighting would be introduced into the immediate project area at construction staging locations. All lighting impacts would be localized and, therefore, would not result in indirect nighttime lighting impacts.

5.4.2.4 Shade and Shadow Impacts

Construction of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would occur primarily underground. Above-ground construction and related facilities and equipment would be limited in height and extent, and any related shadows would be localized to the areas

immediately surrounding these facilities. Therefore, no indirect shade and shadow impacts would result from construction activities.

5.4.3 Direct Operational Impacts

The Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would operate primarily underground, with a short at-grade segment in Little Tokyo near the existing Little Tokyo/Arts District Station. Underground operations would occur beneath Flower Street, extending north from the existing 7th Street/Metro Center Station through the Financial District and Bunker Hill to 2nd Street. At 2nd Street the line would continue underground in an easterly direction through the Historic Core and Little Tokyo before traveling up to an at-grade elevation and joining with the existing Little Tokyo/Arts District Station at the 1st and Alameda Street junction.

The Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would require construction of three new underground stations: the Flower/5th/4th Street station, the 2nd/Hope Street station, and either the 2nd Street station – Los Angeles Street or the 2nd Street station – Broadway Option. Above-ground entrances would provide access to pedestrian portals. With the exception of these above-ground entrances and the at-grade portion of the alignment at the 1st and Alameda Street junction, all operations of this alternative would be located underground. Table 5-4 summarizes potential impacts to scenic resources associated with operation of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative.

Table 5-4. Scenic Resources Potentially Affected by Operation of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative

Resources	Poles and Track	Stations	Pedestrian Portals	Train Portals
Financial District				
Fine Arts Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
818 Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
Roosevelt Lofts	NO	NO	NO	NO
Pegasus	NO	NO	NO	NO
811 Wilshire Blvd	NO	NO	NO	NO
Engine Co. No. 28	NO	NO	NO	NO

Table 5-4. Scenic Resources Potentially Affected by Operation of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative				
Resources	**Poles and Track**	**Stations**	**Pedestrian Portals**	**Train Portals**
Standard Hotel	NO	NO	NO	NO
California Club	NO	NO	NO	NO
LA Central Library & Maguire Gardens	NO	NO	LTS	NO
City National Plaza	NO	NO	LTS	NO
Citigroup Center Plaza	NO	NO	LTS	NO
Bunker Hill				
Walt Disney Concert Hall	NO	NO	NO	NO
2nd Street Tunnel	NO	NO	NO	NO
Grassy Open Space at General Thaddeus Kosciuszko Way	NO	NO	NO	NO
Historic Core				
LA Law Center	NO	NO	NO	NO
Times Annex	NO	NO	LTS	NO
Times Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
Higgins Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
St. Vibiana's Cathedral	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
Redwing Shoes	NO	NO	NO	NO
Civic Center				
Tinker Toy Parking Structure	NO	NO	NO	NO
Little Tokyo				

Table 5-4. Scenic Resources Potentially Affected by Operation of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative

Resources	Poles and Track	Stations	Pedestrian Portals	Train Portals
Little Tokyo Historic District	LTS	NO	NO	LTS
Union Center Arts	LTS	NO	NO	LTS
Koyasan Buddhist Temple	LTS	NO	NO	LTS
Brunswick Square	LTS	NO	NO	LTS

NO = No impact.
LTS = Less than significant impact

5.4.3.1 Scenic Resource Impacts

Operation of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would result in only minimal potential visual impacts to scenic resources. Potential impacts to identified scenic resources along the route of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative are summarized in Table 5-4.

Other than pedestrian access and egress through pedestrian portals at the Flower/5th/4th Street station, 2nd/Hope Street station, and either the 2nd Street station – Los Angeles Street Option or 2nd Street station – Broadway Option, most operational activities associated with this alternative would occur underground. Therefore, there would be no degradation of views of historic buildings and little or no contrasting visual conditions. There would be no visual impacts as a result of the new trackway and systems appurtenances, which would be located underground except where the trackway returns to street level at the intersection of 1st and Alameda Streets. These impacts would be the same regardless of which 2nd Street station option is selected.

The only above-ground features of this alternative would be station entrances within the Financial District, Bunker Hill, and Historic Core areas of downtown Los Angeles. Identified scenic buildings and scenic resources are located within close proximity of only two of the proposed station locations. These include the Los Angeles Central Library and Maguire Gardens, City National Plaza, and Citigroup Center Plaza near the proposed Flower/5th/4th Street station, and the Times Annex building and St. Vibiana's Cathedral near the proposed 2nd Street station options.

The Los Angeles Central Library and Maguire Gardens would experience low visual impacts by locating the underground station entrance in a widened sidewalk area adjacent to the northern half of the garden. Pedestrians walking along the west side of Flower Street would

experience low visual impacts looking across the street toward Maguire Gardens. People walking along the east side of Flower Street would not experience any visual impacts.

The pedestrian portal and station entrance would not degrade views of the Central Library, nor would it contrast heavily with the building. Therefore, potential visual impacts to the Central Library and Maguire Gardens would be less than significant.

In the Bunker Hill area, there may be a pedestrian bridge constructed from the 2nd/Hope Street station to Upper Grand Avenue above the existing General Thaddeus Koscuiszko Way right-of-way. The bridge would not be visible from any historic buildings, and thus no adverse visual impacts to historic buildings would occur.

There would be station entrances at up to four potential locations within one block of the Times Annex for the 2nd Street station - Broadway Option, though not all of the potential locations would be developed. None of these entrances would be immediately adjacent to the Times Annex site. Three would be located on the south side of 2nd Street. Of these, only one would be directly across 2nd Street from the Times Annex property. This station entrance would be located in the northeastern corner of the parking lot at the southwest corner of Spring and 2nd Streets.

None of these station entrances would adversely affect views of the Times Annex Building from the pedestrian right-of-way. Therefore, potential visual impacts to this building would be less than significant.

There would be three pedestrian portal locations within one-half block of St. Vibiana Cathedral, assuming the 2nd Street station – Los Angeles Street option is selected. However, only one of these portals would be proximate to St. Vibiana Cathedral. This pedestrian portal would be located in the triangular space between the St. Vibiana property and the Little Tokyo Library, adjacent to the sidewalk. The view of St. Vibiana from the public right-of-way is of the institutional/office side of the building, and visual impacts would be less than significant.

At the easternmost terminus of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative alignment, the underground alignment would ascend up through a portal to meet the existing at-grade Metro Gold Line alignment at the 1st Street and Alameda Street junction. This portal would be located on the block bounded by Alameda Street on the east, Central Avenue on the west, 2nd Street on the south, and 1st Street on the north. Within this block, the light rail tracks would rise to the surface, then cross the intersection of 1st and Alameda Street at grade. Alameda Street would pass below 1st Street in a new underpass that would begin more than one-half block south of 1st Street and continue one-half block north of 1st Street.

At-grade overhead contact systems, catenary poles, and trackway (standard features required for a light rail system to operate) would be located only at the easternmost end of the

Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative alignment. The block bordered by Alameda Street, 2nd Street, 1st Street, and Central Avenue is the only block that would have exposed overhead contact wires, catenary poles, and track.

Older buildings on this block include the Señor Fish and John A. Roebling structures. The Cultural Resources – Built Environment Technical Memorandum describes these buildings and potential project impacts. The portal area structures and surrounding streetscape and landscaping would incorporate historical and visual references to the surrounding Little Tokyo and Arts District neighborhoods, complementing these important communities.

Given that most features associated with the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would be located below ground, and that only one city block would experience potential visual changes associated with the above-ground operations of this alternative, no significant visual impacts to scenic resources would occur. Therefore, any potential impacts to visual resources would be less than significant.

5.4.3.2 Visual Character Impacts

The Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative is located in a heavily urbanized environment, and adding primarily underground structures and a limited fixed guideway would not noticeably reduce visual quality or alter the viewing context in the Financial District, Bunker Hill, Historic Core, and Little Tokyo areas of downtown Los Angeles. Construction and operation of these features would contribute to the existing urban character and high-density, pedestrian friendly environment that already exists in downtown Los Angeles.

The alternative's alignment and proposed pedestrian portals are located outside the Civic Center and Little Tokyo Historic Districts. Additionally, the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would be primarily underground and not visually accessible to the public. Therefore, potential visual character impacts associated with the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would be less than significant.

5.4.3.3 Nighttime Lighting Impacts

With operation of a new underground LRT project, limited new nighttime lighting would be introduced into the project area. Lighting would predominantly consist of security lighting at pedestrian portal locations, and would be directed on-site. Therefore, no nighttime lighting impacts would occur during operation of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative.

5.4.3.4 Shade and Shadow Impacts

Operation of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would introduce limited, new above-ground structures in the already heavily urbanized Financial District, Bunker Hill, Historic Core, and Little Tokyo areas of downtown Los Angeles. The only above-ground structures would be pedestrian portals to underground stations and one block with at-grade light rail

operations and associated structures and facilities. Heights of structures located above ground would be limited to approximately two stories. Therefore, the potential for shading and shadows beyond those currently created by the high- and mid-rise buildings along the alignment's corridors would be limited. No shade or shadow impacts would result from construction of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative.

5.4.4 Indirect Operational Impacts

5.4.4.1 Scenic Resource Impacts

All potential impacts to scenic resources would be localized. Therefore, no indirect impacts to the downtown historic buildings' visual environment would occur from operation of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative.

5.4.4.2 Visual Character Impacts

Changes in visual character from operation of this alternative would be localized and not result in any indirect impacts to visual character beyond those discussed above and within the Cultural Resources – Built Environment Technical Memorandum. No indirect impacts to visual character would occur.

5.4.4.3 Nighttime Illumination Impacts

New nighttime lighting would be introduced into the immediate project area and at pedestrian portal locations. Nighttime lighting, however, would primarily consist of security lighting and would be localized. Therefore, no indirect nighttime lighting impacts would result from implementation and operation of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative.

5.4.4.4 Shade and Shadow Impacts

Operation of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would primarily occur underground. Placement of structures above ground would be limited to facilities associated with pedestrian portals to stations and one block with at-grade light rail operations and associated structures and facilities. The shading and shadows associated with these structures would be localized to the immediate vicinity of the facilities themselves. Therefore, no indirect shade or shadow impacts would result from operation of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative.

5.4.5 Cumulative Construction Impacts

5.4.5.1 Scenic Resource Impacts

Other construction projects are planned throughout the downtown Los Angeles area. Construction of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would not result in either direct or indirect significant impacts to scenic resources. Therefore, construction of the proposed project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable visual resource impact, nor would it, in combination with other future construction projects in the downtown Los Angeles area, result in significant cumulative visual impacts to scenic resources.

5.4.5.2 Visual Character Impacts

The proposed project is located in greater downtown Los Angeles, which is a dynamic environment where new projects are constructed on an ongoing basis. Additional development projects are planned throughout the downtown Los Angeles area. Construction of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would not result in either direct or indirect significant impacts to scenic resources. Therefore, construction of the proposed alternative would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable visual resource impact, nor would it, in combination with other future projects in the downtown Los Angeles area, result in significant cumulative impacts to the visual character of downtown.

5.4.5.3 Nighttime Illumination Impacts

Construction of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would not result in nighttime illumination impacts; therefore, it would not result in or contribute to significant cumulative nighttime illumination impacts.

5.4.5.4 Shade and Shadow Impacts

Construction of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would not result in shade and shadow impacts; therefore, this alternative would not result in or contribute to significant cumulative shade and shadow impacts.

5.4.6 Cumulative Operational Impacts

5.4.6.1 Scenic Resource Impacts

Other development projects are planned throughout the downtown Los Angeles area. Operation of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would not result in either direct or indirect significant impacts to scenic resources. Therefore, operation of this alternative would not contribute to cumulatively considerable visual resource impacts. Nor would the alternative, in combination with other future development projects in the downtown Los Angeles area, result in significant cumulative visual impacts to scenic resources.

5.4.6.2 Visual Character Impacts

The Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative alignment is located in greater downtown Los Angeles, which is a dynamic environment where new projects are being implemented on an ongoing basis. Development of additional projects is planned throughout downtown. Operation of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would not result in direct or indirect significant impacts to scenic resources. Therefore, operation of the proposed project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable visual resource impact. Nor would it result in significant cumulative impacts to the visual character of downtown in combination with other future projects in the downtown Los Angeles area.

5.4.6.3 Nighttime Illumination Impacts

The Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would not result in direct or indirect nighttime illumination impacts from operations. Therefore, it would not result in or contribute to significant cumulative nighttime illumination impacts.

5.4.6.4 Shade and Shadow Impacts

The Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would not result in direct or indirect shade and shadow impacts. Therefore, it would not result in or contribute to significant cumulative shade and shadow impacts.

5.5 Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1

Alignment of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 is very similar to the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative. Therefore, only specific differences between the two alternatives are addressed in this section.

The proposed alignment for the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 is the same as the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative from the 7th Street/Metro Center Station to 2nd Street and Central Avenue. East of 2nd Street and Central Avenue, the tracks would veer northeast under the property bounded by 1st Street, Alameda Street, 2nd Street, and Central Avenue, where the alignment would connect with a new underground station within this block. The tracks would continue from the station under the 1st and Alameda Streets intersection into a new underground three-way junction.

Leaving the junction, one set of tracks would continue north underground along the eastern side of Alameda Street, beneath Temple Street, and surface in the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power yard. The other set of tracks leaving the three-way junction would rise to the east within 1st Street to accommodate a new portal as well as the Metro Gold Line tracks.

The Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 alignment is shown in Figure 5-6. No identified scenic vistas are within the project area; therefore, no scenic vista impacts would occur. Potential visual and aesthetic impacts associated with implementation of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 are discussed in the following paragraphs.

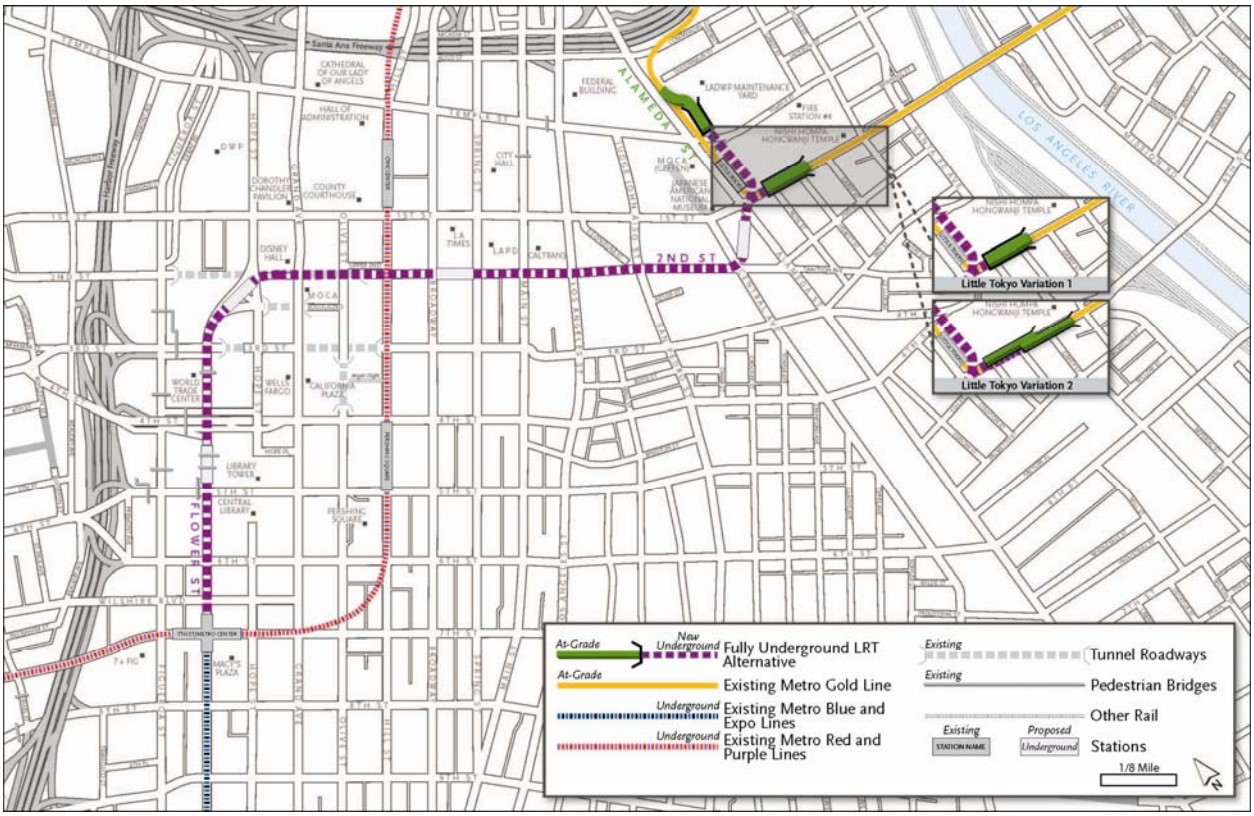

Figure 5-6. Fully Underground LRT Alternatives – Little Tokyo Variations 1 and 2

5.5.1 Direct Construction Impacts

The Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would require mostly underground construction due to the proposed configuration of the alignment. A cut-and-cover section would begin west of Central Avenue through the block bounded by 1st, 2nd, and Alameda Streets, and Central Avenue.

A center platform station would be constructed under this block, with tracks to the north and east proceeding at the same grade. The tracks leaving this block would split into two different directions. One set of tracks would head east within 1st Street, where it would rise up to an at-grade elevation and join the Metro Gold Line to I-605 about one and a half blocks east of Alameda. The other set of tracks would head northerly east of and parallel to Alameda Street, joining the Metro Gold Line to Azusa and heading north to Union Station. Both north and east portals would be wide enough to accommodate out-bound and in-bound trains in a single structure.

Nearby land users and passersby would have visual access to cut-and-cover construction, construction staging locations, and TBM launch sites. However, most of the construction

associated with this alternative would be below ground and the construction staging sites themselves would be sheltered from direct view by temporary construction walls. TBM construction activities would be entirely below ground and would not be visible to nearby land users or passersby in the Little Tokyo area of downtown Los Angeles.

Metro has identified the entire block for acquisition to stage construction and build a new underground station, station entrances, and ancillary facilities. Metro may also use the site to launch TBMs and transport material from the tunnels.

Metro intends to maintain some of the existing businesses acquired on Central Avenue between 1st and 2nd Streets that would not directly be impacted by construction. This would represent a worst-case scenario. Reductions in acquisition may occur based on further engineering analysis during the preliminary engineering and final design stages. Compared to the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative, construction of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would require removal of two additional businesses and their associated parking. This construction scenario would not have a different visual effect than already described.

Table 5-5. Scenic Resources Potentially Affected by Construction of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1

Resources	Cut-and-Cover for Guideway	Construction Staging	Stations and Portals	Tunnel Boring
Financial District				
Fine Arts Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
818 Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
Roosevelt Lofts	NO	NO	NO	NO
Pegasus	LTS	NO	NO	NO
811 Wilshire Blvd	LTS	NO	NO	NO
Engine Co. No. 28	LTS	NO	NO	NO
Standard Hotel	LTS	NO	NO	NO
California Club	LTS	NO	NO	NO

Table 5-5. Scenic Resources Potentially Affected by Construction of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1				
Resources	**Cut-and-Cover for Guideway**	**Construction Staging**	**Stations and Portals**	**Tunnel Boring**
LA Central Library & Maguire Gardens	LTS	LTS	LTS	NO
City National Plaza	LTS	LTS	LTS	NO
Citigroup Center Plaza	LTS	LTS	LTS	NO
Bunker Hill				
Walt Disney Concert Hall	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
2nd Street Tunnel	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
Grassy Open Space at General Thaddeus Kosciuszko Way	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
Historic Core				
LA Law Center	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
Times Annex	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
Times Building	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
Higgins Building	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
St. Vibiana's Cathedral	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
Redwing Shoes	NO	NO	NO	NO
Civic Center				
Tinker Toy Parking Structure	NO	NO	NO	NO
Little Tokyo				
Little Tokyo Historic District	LTS	LTS	NO	LTS

Table 5-5. Scenic Resources Potentially Affected by Construction of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1				
Resources	**Cut-and-Cover for Guideway**	**Construction Staging**	**Stations and Portals**	**Tunnel Boring**
Union Center Arts	LTS	LTS	NO	LTS
Koyasan Buddhist Temple	LTS	LTS	NO	LTS
Brunswick Square	LTS	LTS	NO	LTS
Señor Fish	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
Arts District				
Nishi Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple	LTS	LTS	LTS	NO
900 East 1st Street	NO	NO	NO	NO
1ST Street Viaduct	NO	NO	NO	NO

NO = No impact
LTS = Less than significant impact

5.5.1.1 Scenic Resource Impacts

Construction staging areas and associated temporary construction walls would be located on the block bounded by 1st, 2nd, and Alameda Streets, and Central Avenue. These areas would not be visible to anyone but those in the vicinity of this block. There would be no impact to scenic resources in this vicinity because there are no nearby resources. There would be no potential impacts to views of historic buildings during construction because the existing historic resources along 1st Street are too far to the east.

Nearby historic resources include a brick building located at 900 East 1st Street and the 1st Street Viaduct. These two structures are each located more than one and a half blocks east of the portal entrance of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1, and therefore would not experience potential visual impacts.

The Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Temple, an important community/cultural resource, is located at approximately 800 East 1st Street. Construction of the portal within 1st Street would

involve cut-and-cover methods and occur in the vicinity of the temple. There would be moderate potential visual impacts during construction near this Buddhist temple.

Table 5-5 includes the only buildings and/or recognized visual resources that could potentially be affected by construction activities associated with installation of tracks and poles, cut-and-cover activities, station construction, and pedestrian and LRT portals. These findings would be the same regardless of whether the entire block or only a portion of the block at 1st, 2nd, and Alameda Streets, and Central Avenue is acquired during construction.

Installation of Tracks and Poles

Installation of tracks and poles along the underground portions of this alternative would not be visible to nearby land users or passersby. Above-ground trackwork already exists at the eastern end of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 as part of the Metro Gold Line. This alternative would include construction of tracks and poles to link the Regional Connector to existing structures. The only locations where construction of tracks and poles would be visible would be associated with the train portals in 1st Street and between Temple and Commercial Streets just east of Alameda Street. At these locations, the tracks and poles would transition from fully underground, sloping uphill out of the tunnel portals, to at-grade level with the existing tracks. Therefore, no or very low visual impacts would result to scenic resources along 1st or Alameda Streets during construction.

Underground Station Sites and Pedestrian Portals

The Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would require one more underground station than the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative. This additional station would be located under the block bounded by 1st, 2nd, and Alameda Streets, and Central Avenue. The station would be constructed using cut-and-cover techniques.

Construction of this underground station would result in removal of the Señor Fish building. Removal of this structure would result in a less than significant visual impact to the Little Tokyo area because of the building's modest size and its reduced level of historical significance. Through Appropriate urban design of pedestrian portals and surrounding streetscape and landscaping would incorporate historical and visual references of the surrounding Little Tokyo and Arts District neighborhoods that complement these important communities.

No other scenic resources or buildings are located immediately adjacent to the proposed 2nd Street/Central Avenue station. Most of the station construction would occur below ground, and therefore would not be visible to nearby buildings, land users, or passersby. After underground construction is complete, the pedestrian portals would be finished and the ground surface restored. Therefore, construction of the underground station, ancillary facilities, and pedestrian portals—as with all other proposed underground stations—would

be primarily invisible to nearby land uses. Potential impacts to visual resources would be less than significant.

5.5.1.2 Visual Character Impacts

Construction of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would include cut-and-cover methods, installation of tracks and poles in the at-grade locations within this alternative, and station and pedestrian portal construction. These activities would temporarily alter the existing visual character of downtown Los Angeles. Areas of downtown Los Angeles through which the underground portions of this alignment would pass currently consist of high- and mid-rise buildings and high-density construction. The at-grade portion of this alternative would be limited to the transition areas at the 1st Street and Alameda Street portals, interfacing with the existing at-grade LRT trackway of the Metro Gold Line. The Little Tokyo Historic District would be more than a block away from the proposed train portals and almost a block from the pedestrian portals to the proposed underground station. Construction staging areas and the surrounding walls would be visible for a period ranging from 12 to 48 months.

No recognized or valued views are located in the project area. During construction, activities occurring above ground in roadways and along sidewalks could potentially temporarily disrupt views along the corridors and impede views of historic resources and visual resources. Viewers would see construction-related equipment and activities, and the urban streetscape would be temporarily altered. However, the project would be constructed in a heavily urbanized environment where construction activities are not uncommon. Therefore, project construction would not noticeably reduce visual quality or alter viewing context. Furthermore, temporary construction impacts on visual character would be less than significant.

5.5.1.3 Nighttime Lighting Impacts

During construction, nighttime lighting would be introduced into the project area at the construction staging locations. Lighting would predominantly consist of security lighting and be directed on-site. Therefore, nighttime lighting impacts would be less than significant during construction of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1.

5.5.1.4 Shade and Shadow Impacts

The Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would primarily involve underground construction. In addition, the heights of structures and construction-related facilities located above ground would be limited to no more than two stories. Therefore, the potential for construction activities to result in shading and shadows beyond those currently created by the high- and mid-rise buildings along the alignment corridor is limited. Along 1st Street, east of Alameda Street, several of the existing buildings on the south side of the street that cast shade are two stories high. No shade or shadow impacts would result from construction of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1.

5.5.2 Indirect Construction Impacts

5.5.2.1 Scenic Resource Impacts

Construction of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would result in limited localized visual impacts on the Little Tokyo and Arts District areas of downtown. Construction activities would be localized and would not result in any indirect impacts to scenic resources beyond those discussed in the Cultural Resources – Built Environment Technical Memorandum. No indirect visual impacts to scenic resources would occur as a result of construction activities.

5.5.2.2 Visual Character Impacts

Construction of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would be localized and not result in any indirect impacts to visual character beyond those discussed in the Cultural Resources – Built Environment Technical Memorandum. No indirect impacts to visual character would occur as a result of construction activities.

5.5.2.3 Nighttime Illumination Impacts

During construction, nighttime security lighting would be introduced into the immediate project area at construction staging locations. All potential lighting impacts would be localized and therefore would not result in indirect nighttime lighting impacts.

5.5.2.4 Shade and Shadow Impacts

Construction of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would mostly occur underground. Above ground construction and related facilities and equipment, including portals, would be limited, and resulting shadows would be localized to the immediate area. Therefore, no indirect shade and shadow impacts would result from construction activities.

5.5.3 Direct Operations Impacts

The Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would operate primarily underground with short at-grade segments in the Little Tokyo and Arts District vicinity where the alignment transitions to connect to the existing Metro Gold Line tracks. These transition areas would be adjacent to proposed portals in 1st Street and parallel to Alameda Street. Construction of above-ground entrances to provide access to pedestrian portals at underground stations, including at the proposed 2nd Street/Central Avenue station, would be the same as the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative. With the exception of these above-ground entrances and the at-grade portion of the alignment at the 1st Street and Alameda Street train portals, all operations of this alternative would be located underground. Table 5-6 summarizes potential impacts to scenic resources associated with operation of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1.

Table 5-6. Scenic Resources Potentially Affected by Operation of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1				
Resources	**Poles and Track**	**Stations**	**Pedestrian Portals**	**Train Portals**
Financial District				
Fine Arts Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
818 Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
Roosevelt Lofts	NO	NO	NO	NO
Pegasus	NO	NO	NO	NO
811 Wilshire Blvd	NO	NO	NO	NO
Engine Co. No. 28	NO	NO	NO	NO
Standard Hotel	NO	NO	NO	NO
California Club	NO	NO	NO	NO
LA Central Library & Maguire Gardens	NO	NO	LTS	NO
City National Plaza	NO	NO	LTS	NO
Citigroup Center Plaza	NO	NO	LTS	NO
Bunker Hill				
Walt Disney Concert Hall	NO	NO	NO	NO
2nd Street Tunnel	NO	NO	NO	NO
Grassy Open Space at General Thaddeus Kosciuszko Way	NO	NO	NO	NO
Historic Core				
LA Law Center	NO	NO	NO	NO
Times Annex	NO	NO	LTS	NO

Table 5-6. Scenic Resources Potentially Affected by Operation of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1				
Resources	**Poles and Track**	**Stations**	**Pedestrian Portals**	**Train Portals**
Times Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
Higgins Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
St. Vibiana's Cathedral	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
Redwing Shoes	NO	NO	NO	NO
Civic Center				
Tinker Toy Parking Structure	NO	NO	NO	NO
Little Tokyo				
Little Tokyo Historic District	LTS	NO	NO	LTS
Union Center Arts	LTS	NO	NO	LTS
Koyasan Buddhist Temple	LTS	NO	NO	LTS
Brunswick Square	LTS	NO	NO	LTS
Arts District				
Nishi Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple	LTS	NO	NO	LTS
900 East 1st Street	NO	NO	NO	NO
1ST Street Viaduct	NO	NO	NO	NO

NO = No impact
LTS = Less than significant impact

5.5.3.1 Scenic Resource Impacts

Operation of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would result in only minimal potential visual impacts to scenic resources. Other than pedestrian access and egress through pedestrian portals at the proposed underground stations, most operational

activities would occur underground, with no degradation of views of historic buildings and little or no contrasting visual conditions. There would be no visual impacts as a result of the new trackway and systems appurtenances, which would be located underground, except where the trackway returns to grade in 1st Street and at the Alameda Street train portal.

In the Bunker Hill area, there may be a pedestrian bridge constructed from the 2nd/Hope Street station to Upper Grand Avenue above the existing General Thaddeus Koscuiszko Way right-of-way. The bridge would not be visible from any historic buildings, and thus no adverse visual impacts to historic buildings would occur.

Within the Little Tokyo and Arts District areas, the only above-ground features associated with the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would be station pedestrian entrances, and the train portals in 1st Street and next to Alameda Street. Two identified visual resources near the eastern end of the alignment are the 900 East 1st Street building and the 1st Street viaduct, both of which are located too far east along 1st Street to experience any impacts.

The Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple at 800 East 1st Street, an important community and cultural resource, would experience low visual impacts from the train portal just west of this location. Pedestrians walking along the north or south sides of 1st Street would experience low to moderate visual impacts looking into the street corridor toward the train portal. People walking along the east side of Alameda on the block between Temple and Commercial Streets would experience low visual impacts when looking east into the block at the train portal.

There would be station entrances at up to four potential locations within one block of the proposed 2nd Street/Central Avenue station, though not all of the potential locations would necessarily be used. None of these would adversely affect views due to their relatively small size.

At-grade overhead contact systems, catenary poles, and trackway for the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 (standard features required for a light rail system to operate) would be located only at the easternmost train portal (1st Street) and northernmost train portal (located on the block east of and adjacent to Alameda Street, north of Temple Street). The rest of the alignment and potential visual effects would be the same as described for the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative. Given that the majority of the features associated with the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would be located below ground, potential impacts to scenic resources would be less than significant.

5.5.3.2 Visual Character Impacts

Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 is located in a heavily urbanized environment, and adding primarily underground structures and a limited fixed guideway

would not noticeably reduce visual quality or alter the viewing context in the Little Tokyo or Arts District areas of downtown Los Angeles. Implementation and operation of the alternative would contribute to the existing urban character and high-density, pedestrian friendly environment that already exists in downtown Los Angeles.

The Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would be primarily underground and thereby not visually accessible to the public. Therefore, potential visual character impacts associated with the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would be less than significant.

5.5.3.3 Nighttime Lighting Impacts

With operation of a new underground LRT project, limited new nighttime lighting would be introduced into the project area. Lighting would predominantly consist of security lighting at pedestrian portal locations, and nighttime lighting would be directed on site. Therefore, no nighttime lighting impacts would occur during operation of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1.

5.5.3.4 Shade and Shadow Impacts

Operation of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would introduce limited new above-ground structures in the already heavily urbanized Little Tokyo and Arts District areas of downtown Los Angeles. The only new above-ground structures would be pedestrian portals to underground stations and two train portals located in 1st Street and east of and adjacent to Alameda Street north of Temple Street. Heights of structures located above ground would be limited to approximately two stories; therefore, the potential for shading and shadows beyond those currently created by the buildings along the alignment's corridors would be limited. No shade or shadow impacts would result from operation of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1.

5.5.4 Indirect Operational Impacts

5.5.4.1 Scenic Resource Impacts

All potential impacts to scenic resources would be localized. Therefore, no indirect impacts would occur to scenic resources from operation of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1.

5.5.4.2 Visual Character Impacts

Potential changes in visual character from operation of this alternative would be localized and therefore not result in any indirect impacts to visual character beyond those discussed above and within the Cultural Resources - Built Environment Technical Memorandum. No indirect impacts to visual character would occur.

5.5.4.3 Nighttime Illumination Impacts

New nighttime lighting would be introduced into the immediate project area and at pedestrian portal locations. Nighttime lighting, however, would primarily consist of security lighting and improved pedestrian streetscape lighting where necessary, and effects would be localized. Therefore, no indirect nighttime lighting impacts would result from implementation or operation of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1.

5.5.4.4 Shade and Shadow Impacts

Operation of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would be primarily limited to underground LRT operations. Placement of structures above ground would be limited to facilities associated with pedestrian portals to stations and the two train portals discussed previously. Shade and shadows associated with these structures would be localized to the immediate vicinity of the facilities themselves. Therefore, no indirect shade or shadow impacts would result from operation of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1.

5.5.5 Cumulative Construction Impacts

5.5.5.1 Scenic Resource Impacts

Other construction projects are planned throughout the downtown Los Angeles area. Construction of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would not result in either direct or indirect significant impacts to scenic resources. Therefore, construction of this alternative would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable visual resource impact, nor would it, in combination with other future construction projects in the downtown Los Angeles area, result in significant cumulative visual impacts to scenic resources.

5.5.5.2 Visual Character Impacts

Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 is located in greater downtown Los Angeles, which is a dynamic environment where new projects are constructed on an ongoing basis. Additional development projects are planned throughout the downtown Los Angeles area. Construction of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would not result in either direct or indirect significant impacts to visual character. Therefore, construction of this alternative would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable visual resource impact, nor would it, in combination with other future projects in the downtown Los Angeles area, result in significant cumulative impacts to the visual character of downtown.

5.5.5.3 Nighttime Illumination Impacts

Construction of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would not result in nighttime illumination impacts. Therefore, this alternative would not result in or contribute to significant cumulative nighttime illumination impacts.

5.5.5.4 Shade and Shadow Impacts

Construction of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would not result in shade and shadow impacts. Therefore, this alternative would not result in or contribute to significant cumulative shade and shadow impacts.

5.5.6 Cumulative Operational Impacts

5.5.6.1 Scenic Resource Impacts

Other development projects besides the Regional Connector Transit Corridor project are planned throughout the downtown Los Angeles area. Operation of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would not result in either direct or indirect significant impacts to scenic resources. Therefore, operation of this alternative would not contribute to cumulatively considerable scenic resource impacts, nor would it, in combination with other future development projects in the downtown Los Angeles area, result in significant cumulative visual impacts to scenic resources.

5.5.6.2 Visual Character Impacts

The Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 is located in greater downtown Los Angeles, which is a dynamic environment where new projects are being implemented on an ongoing basis. Additional development projects are planned throughout downtown. Operation of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would not result in either direct or indirect significant impacts to visual character. Therefore, operation of this alternative would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable visual resource impact, nor would it, in combination with other future projects in the downtown Los Angeles area, result in significant cumulative impacts to the visual character of downtown.

5.5.6.3 Nighttime Illumination Impacts

Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would not result in direct or indirect nighttime illumination impacts from operation. Therefore, this alternative would not result in or contribute to significant cumulative nighttime illumination impacts.

5.5.6.4 Shade and Shadow Impacts

Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would not result in direct or indirect shade and shadow impacts. Therefore, this alternative would not result in or contribute to significant cumulative shade and shadow impacts.

5.6 Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2

The Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 is the same as the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 for most of its alignment. Therefore, only differences in potential impacts between these two alternatives are addressed in this section.

The proposed alignment for the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 is the same as Variation 1 from the 7th Street/Metro Center Station to the proposed 2nd Street/Central Avenue station. One exception is that, as the tunnels turn northeast from 2nd Street, the northbound tunnel would descend and the southbound tunnel would rise so that the southbound tunnel would be stacked on top of the northbound tunnel. The 2nd Street/Central Avenue station would have two underground levels, each with a single-track platform. The tracks would then leave the 2nd Street/Central Avenue station and proceed northeast under the intersection of 1st and Alameda Streets, where a two-level underground junction would be constructed.

Another difference between Little Tokyo Variations 1 and 2 is that there are two train portals that would extend farther east on 1st Street under Little Tokyo Variation 2. The Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 alignment is shown in Figure 5-6.

No scenic vistas were identified within the project area; therefore, no impacts to scenic vistas would occur. Potential visual and aesthetic impacts associated with implementation of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 are discussed in the following subsections.

5.6.1 Direct Construction Impacts

Construction of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would mostly occur underground due to the proposed configuration of the alignment. The cut-and-cover section would begin west of Central Avenue through the block bounded by 1st, 2nd, and Alameda Streets and Central Avenue. A single-track, stacked platform station would be constructed underground at this site.

One set of tracks would travel east within 1st Street, rise up to street level over a three-block stretch, and join the Metro Gold Line to East Los Angeles. The other set of tracks would travel north, just east of and parallel to Alameda Street, to join the tracks heading north to Union Station between Temple and Commercial Streets. The north portal would be wide enough to accommodate out-bound and in-bound trains in a single structure. The east portals would separate eastbound and westbound tracks into two distinct structures.

Nearby land uses and passersby would have visual access to cut-and-cover construction, construction staging locations, and TBM launch locations; however most construction would

be below ground and temporary construction walls would shelter construction staging sites from direct view by the public. TBM construction activities would be entirely below ground and would not be visible to nearby land users or passersby in the Little Tokyo area.

Metro has identified the entire block for acquisition to stage construction and build a new underground station, station entrances, and ancillary facilities. Metro may use the site to launch tunnel boring machines and transport material from the tunnels.

Metro intends to maintain some of the existing businesses acquired on Central Avenue between 1st and 2nd Streets that are not directly impacted by construction activities. This would represent a worst-case scenario. Fewer acquisitions may occur based on further engineering analysis during the preliminary engineering and final design stages. This would result in removal of two more businesses and associated parking than the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative. This construction scenario would not have a different visual effect than described in this technical memorandum.

Table 5-7. Scenic Resources Potentially Affected by Construction of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2

Resources	Cut-and-Cover for Guideway	Construction Staging	Stations and Portals	Tunnel Boring
Financial District				
Fine Arts Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
818 Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
Roosevelt Lofts	NO	NO	NO	NO
Pegasus	LTS	NO	NO	NO
811 Wilshire Blvd	LTS	NO	NO	NO
Engine Co. No. 28	LTS	NO	NO	NO
Standard Hotel	LTS	NO	NO	NO
California Club	LTS	NO	NO	NO
LA Central Library & Maguire Gardens	LTS	LTS	LTS	NO

Table 5-7. Scenic Resources Potentially Affected by Construction of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2				
Resources	**Cut-and-Cover for Guideway**	**Construction Staging**	**Stations and Portals**	**Tunnel Boring**
City National Plaza	LTS	LTS	LTS	NO
Citigroup Center Plaza	LTS	LTS	LTS	NO
Bunker Hill				
Walt Disney Concert Hall	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
2nd Street Tunnel	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
Grassy Open Space at General Thaddeus Kosciuszko Way	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
Historic Core				
LA Law Center	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
Times Annex	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
Times Building	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
Higgins Building	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
St. Vibiana's Cathedral	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
Redwing Shoes	NO	NO	NO	NO
Civic Center				
Tinker Toy Parking Structure	NO	NO	NO	NO
Little Tokyo				
Little Tokyo Historic District	LTS	LTS	NO	LTS
Union Center Arts	LTS	LTS	NO	LTS
Koyasan Buddhist Temple	LTS	LTS	NO	LTS

Table 5-7. Scenic Resources Potentially Affected by Construction of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2				
Resources	**Cut-and-Cover for Guideway**	**Construction Staging**	**Stations and Portals**	**Tunnel Boring**
Brunswick Square	LTS	LTS	NO	LTS
Señor Fish	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
Arts District				
Nishi Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple	LTS	LTS	LTS	NO
900 East 1st Street	NO	NO	NO	NO
1ST Street Viaduct	NO	NO	NO	NO

NO = No impact.
LTS = Less than significant impact.

5.6.1.1 Scenic Resource Impacts

Construction staging areas and associated temporary construction walls would be located on the block bounded by 1st, 2nd, and Alameda Streets, and Central Avenue, and would, therefore, not be visible to anyone but those in the vicinity of this block. There would be no impact to scenic resources in this vicinity because there are no nearby resources.

There would be no potential impacts to views of historic buildings during construction of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 because existing historic resources along 1st Street are too far to the east. Two local historic resources include a brick building located at 900 East 1st Street and the 1st Street Viaduct. These structures are each located more than one-half block east of the easternmost portal of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2. Therefore, there would be no visual impacts to or from these two resources. The Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple another important community/cultural resource, is located at approximately 800 East 1st Street. Construction of the portal within 1st Street would involve cut-and-cover methods and occur in the vicinity of the temple, creating moderate potential visual impacts to this resource during construction. In consultation with the Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Temple, the Reverend indicated to Metro that the portal's proximity to the temple would be visually intrusive.

Table 5-7 shows buildings and/or recognized visual resources that could potentially be affected by construction activities associated with installation of tracks and poles, cut-and-cover methods, station construction, and pedestrian and LRT portals. Impacts to these resources would be the same regardless of whether the entire block or only a portion of the block at 1st, 2nd, and Alameda Streets, and Central Avenue is acquired.

Installation of Tracks and Poles

Installation of tracks and poles along the underground portions of this alternative would not be visible to nearby land uses or passersby. Above-ground trackwork already exists at the eastern end of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 as part of the Metro Gold Line.

The proposed alternative would include construction of tracks and poles to link the Regional Connector to the existing structures. The only locations where construction of tracks and poles would be visible would be associated with the train portals in 1st Street and between Temple and Commercial Streets just east of Alameda Street. At these locations, the tracks and poles transition from fully underground, sloping uphill out of the tunnel portals, to at grade with the existing tracks. Therefore, no or very low visual impacts would potentially result to scenic resources along 1st Street or Alameda Street during construction.

Underground Station Sites and Pedestrian Portals

Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would require that another underground station be constructed under the block bounded by 1st, 2nd, and Alameda Streets, and Central Avenue. This additional proposed station would be constructed using cut-and-cover methods.

Construction of this underground station would result in removal of the Señor Fish building. Removal of this structure would result in a less than significant visual impact to the Little Tokyo area because of its modest size and reduced level of historical significance. Appropriate urban design of pedestrian portals and surrounding streetscape and landscaping would incorporate historical and visual references of the surrounding Little Tokyo and Arts District neighborhoods that complement these important communities.

No other scenic resources or buildings are located immediately adjacent to the proposed 2nd Street/Central Avenue station. Construction of this station would occur below ground and therefore would not be visible to nearby buildings, land uses, or passersby. After underground construction is complete, the pedestrian portals would be finished and the ground surface restored. Therefore, construction activities for this underground station, ancillary facilities, and pedestrian portals—as with the other proposed underground stations—would be primarily invisible to nearby land users. Potential impacts to visual resources would be less than significant.

5.6.1.2 Visual Character Impacts

Cut-and-cover construction, installation of tracks and poles in the at-grade locations within this alternative, and station and pedestrian portal construction would temporarily alter the existing visual character of downtown Los Angeles. Areas of downtown Los Angeles through which the underground portions of this alignment would pass currently consist of high- and mid-rise buildings and high-density construction. The at-grade portion of this alternative would be limited to the transition areas at the 1st Street and Alameda Street portals, interfacing with the existing at-grade LRT trackway of the Metro Gold Line.

The Little Tokyo Historic District would be more than a block away from the proposed train portals and almost a block from the pedestrian portals to the proposed underground station. Construction staging areas and surrounding construction walls would be visible for a period ranging from 12 to 48 months.

During construction, activities occurring above ground in the roadways and along sidewalks could potentially temporarily disrupt views along corridors and impede views of historic resources, visual resources, and viewshed corridors. However, no recognized or valued views are located in the project area.

Viewers would see construction-related equipment and activities, and the urban streetscape would be temporarily altered. However, construction of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would occur in a heavily urbanized environment where construction activities are not uncommon, and would not noticeably reduce visual quality or alter viewing context. Therefore, temporary construction impacts would be less than significant.

5.6.1.3 Nighttime Lighting Impacts

During construction, nighttime lighting would be introduced into the project area at construction staging locations. Lighting would predominantly consist of security lighting, and light would be directed on-site. Therefore, potential nighttime lighting impacts would be less than significant during construction of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2.

5.6.1.4 Shade and Shadow Impacts

Construction of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would mostly occur underground. Heights of structures and construction-related facilities located above ground would be limited to no more than two stories. Therefore, the potential for construction to result in shading and shadows beyond those currently created by the high- and mid-rise buildings along the alignment corridors is limited. Even along 1st Street, east of Alameda Street, several of the existing buildings on the south side of the street cast shade

that is two stories high. No shade or shadow impacts would result from construction of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2.

5.6.2 Indirect Construction Impacts

5.6.2.1 Scenic Resource Impacts

Construction of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would result in limited localized visual impacts on the Little Tokyo and Arts District areas of downtown. Construction of this alternative would be localized and not result in any indirect impacts to scenic resources beyond those discussed in the Cultural Resources – Built Environment Technical Memorandum. No indirect visual impacts to scenic resources would occur as a result of construction of this alternative.

5.6.2.2 Visual Character Impacts

Construction activities for the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would be localized and not result in any indirect impacts to visual character beyond those discussed in the Cultural Resources – Built Environment Technical Memorandum. No indirect impacts to visual character would occur as a result of construction of this alternative.

5.6.2.3 Nighttime Illumination Impacts

During construction, nighttime security lighting would be introduced into the immediate project area at construction staging locations. All potential lighting impacts would be localized and therefore would not result in indirect nighttime lighting impacts.

5.6.2.4 Shade and Shadow Impacts

Construction of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would mostly occur underground. Above ground construction-related facilities and equipment would be limited, and shadows cast by these facilities and equipment would be localized to the immediate area and at the portal locations. Therefore, no indirect shade and shadow impacts would result from construction of this alternative.

5.6.3 Direct Operational Impacts

The Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would occur primarily underground with short at-grade segments in the Little Tokyo and Arts District vicinity where the alignment transitions connect to the existing Metro Gold Line tracks. These transition areas would be adjacent to the portals in 1st Street and parallel to Alameda Street.

As with the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative, the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 includes above-ground entrances to access to pedestrian portals to underground stations, including the proposed 2nd Street/Central Avenue station. With the exception of these above-ground entrances and the at-grade portion of the alignment at the 1st

Street and Alameda Street train portals, all operations of this alternative would be located underground. Table 5-8 summarizes potential impacts to scenic resources associated with operation of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2.

Table 5-8. Scenic Resources Potentially Affected by Operation of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2

Resources	Poles and Track	Stations	Pedestrian Portals	Train Portals
Financial District				
Fine Arts Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
818 Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
Roosevelt Lofts	NO	NO	NO	NO
Pegasus	NO	NO	NO	NO
811 Wilshire Blvd	NO	NO	NO	NO
Engine Co. No. 28	NO	NO	NO	NO
Standard Hotel	NO	NO	NO	NO
California Club	NO	NO	NO	NO
LA Central Library & Maguire Gardens	NO	NO	LTS	NO
City National Plaza	NO	NO	LTS	NO
Citigroup Center Plaza	NO	NO	LTS	NO
Bunker Hill				
Walt Disney Concert Hall	NO	NO	NO	NO
2nd Street Tunnel	NO	NO	NO	NO
Grassy Open Space at General Thaddeus Kosciuszko Way	NO	NO	NO	NO

Table 5-8. Scenic Resources Potentially Affected by Operation of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2				
Resources	**Poles and Track**	**Stations**	**Pedestrian Portals**	**Train Portals**
Historic Core				
LA Law Center	NO	NO	NO	NO
Times Annex	NO	NO	LTS	NO
Times Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
Higgins Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
St. Vibiana's Cathedral	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
Redwing Shoes	NO	NO	NO	NO
Civic Center				
Tinker Toy Parking Structure	NO	NO	NO	NO
Little Tokyo				
Little Tokyo Historic District	LTS	NO	NO	LTS
Union Center Arts	LTS	NO	NO	LTS
Koyasan Buddhist Temple	LTS	NO	NO	LTS
Brunswick Square	LTS	NO	NO	LTS
Arts District				
Nishi Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple	LTS	NO	NO	LTS
900 East 1st Street	NO	NO	NO	NO
1ST Street Viaduct	NO	NO	NO	NO

NO = No impact.
LTS = Less than significant impact.

5.6.3.1 Scenic Resource Impacts

Operation of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would result in only minimal visual impacts to scenic resources. Other than pedestrian access and egress through pedestrian portals at the proposed underground stations, most operational activities would occur underground, with no degradation of views of historic buildings and little or no contrasting visual conditions. There would be no visual impacts as a result of the new trackway and system appurtenances, which would be located underground except where the trackway returns to grade in 1st Street, and at the Alameda Street train portal.

In the Bunker Hill area, there may be a pedestrian bridge constructed from the 2nd/Hope Street station to Upper Grand Avenue above the existing General Thaddeus Koscuiszko Way right-of-way. The bridge would not be visible from any historic buildings, and thus no adverse visual impacts to historic buildings would occur.

Within the Little Tokyo and Arts District areas, the only above-ground features associated with the project would be station pedestrian entrances and the train portals in 1st Street and next to Alameda Street. Two identified visual resources near the eastern end of the alignment are the 900 East 1st Street building and the 1st Street Viaduct. Both of these resources are located too far east along 1st Street to experience any visual impacts.

The Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple at 800 East 1st Street, an important community and cultural resource, would experience low to moderate visual impacts from the train portal in front of and west of this location. Pedestrians walking along the north or south sides of 1st Street would experience low to moderate visual impacts looking into the street corridor toward the train portal. People walking along the east side of Alameda on the block between Temple and Commercial Streets would experience low visual impacts when looking east into the block at the train portal. In consultation with the Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Temple, the Reverend indicated to Metro that the portal's proximity to the temple would be visually intrusive.

There would be station entrances at up to four potential locations within one block of the proposed 2nd Street/Central Avenue station, though not all of the potential locations would necessarily be used. None of these entrances would adversely affect views due to their relatively small size.

At-grade overhead contact systems, catenary poles, and trackway for the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 (standard features required for a light rail system to operate) would be located only at the easternmost train portals on 1st Street and the northernmost train portal adjacent to Alameda Street between Temple and Commercial Streets. The rest of the alignment and potential visual effects would be the same as the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1. Given that the majority of features

associated with Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would be below ground, potential impacts to scenic resources would be less than significant.

5.6.3.2 Visual Character Impacts

The Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 is located in a heavily urbanized environment, and adding primarily underground structures and a limited fixed guideway would not noticeably reduce visual quality or alter the viewing context in the Little Tokyo or Arts District areas of downtown Los Angeles.

Construction and operation of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would contribute to the existing urban character and high-density, pedestrian friendly environment that already exists in downtown Los Angeles. Additionally, this alternative would be primarily underground and thereby not visually accessible to the public. Therefore, potential visual character impacts associated with Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would be less than significant.

5.6.3.3 Nighttime Lighting Impacts

Operation of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would introduce limited new nighttime lighting into the project area. Lighting would predominantly consist of security lighting at pedestrian portal locations, and nighttime lighting would be directed on site. Therefore, no nighttime lighting impacts would occur during operation of this alternative.

5.6.3.4 Shade and Shadow Impacts

Operation of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would introduce limited new above-ground structures in the already heavily urbanized Little Tokyo and Arts District areas of downtown Los Angeles. The only new above-ground structures would be pedestrian portals to underground stations and two train portals in 1st Street and east of and adjacent to Alameda Street north of Temple Street. Heights of structures located above ground would be limited to approximately two stories. Therefore, the potential for shading and shadows beyond those currently created by the buildings along the alignment's corridors is limited. No shade or shadow impacts would result from operation of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2.

5.6.4 Indirect Operational Impacts

5.6.4.1 Scenic Resource Impacts

All potential impacts to scenic resources would be localized. Therefore, no indirect impacts to scenic resources would occur from operation of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2.

5.6.4.2 Visual Character Impacts

Potential changes in visual character from operation of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would be localized and not result in any indirect impacts to visual character beyond those discussed above and within the Cultural Resources - Built Environment Technical Memorandum. No indirect impacts to visual character would occur with this alternative.

5.6.4.3 Nighttime Illumination Impacts

Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would introduce new nighttime lighting into the immediate project area and at pedestrian portal locations. Nighttime lighting, however, would primarily consist of security lighting and improved pedestrian streetscape lighting where necessary, and effects would be localized. Therefore, no indirect nighttime lighting impacts would result from implementation or operation of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2.

5.6.4.4 Shade and Shadow Impacts

Operation of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would be primarily limited to underground LRT operations. Placement of structures above ground would be limited to facilities associated with pedestrian portals to stations and the three train portals discussed previously. Shade and shadows associated with these structures would be localized to the immediate vicinity of the facilities themselves. Therefore, no indirect shade or shadow impacts would result from operation of this alternative.

5.6.5 Cumulative Construction Impacts

5.6.5.1 Scenic Resource Impacts

Other construction projects besides the proposed Regional Connector Transit Corridor project are planned throughout the downtown Los Angeles. Construction of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would not result in either direct or indirect significant impacts to scenic resources. Therefore, construction of this alternative would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable visual resource impact, nor would it, in combination with other future construction projects in the downtown Los Angeles area, result in significant cumulative visual impacts to scenic resources.

5.6.5.2 Visual Character Impacts

The alignment of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 is located in greater downtown Los Angeles, which is a dynamic environment where new projects are constructed on an ongoing basis. Additional development projects are planned throughout the downtown Los Angeles area.

Construction of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would not result in either direct or indirect significant impacts to visual character. Therefore, construction of this alternative would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable visual resource impact, nor would it, in combination with other future projects in the downtown Los Angeles area, result in significant cumulative impacts to the visual character of downtown.

5.6.5.3 Nighttime Illumination Impacts

During construction, Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would not result in nighttime illumination impacts; therefore, this alternative would not result in or contribute to significant cumulative nighttime illumination impacts.

5.6.5.4 Shade and Shadow Impacts

During construction Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would not result in shade and shadow impacts; therefore, this alternative would not result in or contribute to significant cumulative shade and shadow impacts.

5.6.6 Cumulative Operational Impacts

5.6.6.1 Scenic Resource Impacts

Other development projects are planned throughout the downtown Los Angeles area. Operation of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would not result in either direct or indirect significant impacts to scenic resources. Therefore, operation of this alternative would not contribute to cumulatively considerable scenic resource impacts, nor would it in combination with other future development projects in the downtown Los Angeles area, result in significant cumulative visual impacts to scenic resources.

5.6.6.2 Visual Character Impacts

The alignment of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 is located in greater downtown Los Angeles, which is a dynamic environment where new projects are being implemented on an ongoing basis. Additional development projects are planned throughout downtown.

Operation of the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would not result in either direct or indirect significant impacts to visual character. Therefore, operation of this alternative would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable visual resource impact. Nor would the alternative, in combination with other future projects in the downtown Los Angeles area, result in significant cumulative impacts to the visual character of downtown.

5.6.6.3 Nighttime Illumination Impacts

The Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would not result in direct or indirect nighttime illumination impacts from operations. Therefore, this alternative would not result in or contribute to significant cumulative nighttime illumination impacts.

5.6.6.4 Shade and Shadow Impacts

The Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would not result in direct or indirect shade and shadow impacts. Therefore, this alternative would not result in or contribute to significant cumulative shade and shadow impacts.

6.0 POTENTIAL MITIGATION MEASURES

6.1 Potential Construction-Related Mitigation Measures

6.1.1 No Build Alternative

No significant construction-related visual impacts were identified for the No Build Alternative. Therefore, no mitigation measures would be required.

6.1.2 Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative

No significant construction-related visual impacts were identified for the TSM Alternative. Therefore, no mitigation measures would be required.

6.1.3 At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative

While no significant construction-related visual impacts were identified. The following mitigation measure would further reduce potential impacts.

- Construction staging areas would be screened to the extent necessary to minimize potential effects on scenic resources.

6.1.4 Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative

While no significant construction-related visual impacts were identified for the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative, the mitigation measure described previously for the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would further reduce less than significant potential impacts.

6.1.5 Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1

While no significant construction-related visual impacts were identified for the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1, the mitigation measure identified previously under the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would further reduce less than significant potential impacts.

6.1.6 Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2

While no significant construction-related visual impacts were identified for the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2, the mitigation measure described previously for the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would further reduce less than significant potential impacts.

6.2 Potential Operation-related Mitigation Measures

6.2.1 No Build Alternative

No significant operation-related visual impacts were identified for the No Build Alternative. Therefore, no mitigation measures would be required.

6.2.2 Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative

No significant operation-related visual impacts were identified for the TSM Alternative. Therefore, no mitigation measures would be required.

6.2.3 At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative

While no significant impacts to the Historic Core, Civic Center, or Little Tokyo communities would result from operation of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative, the following mitigation measures would further reduce less than significant impacts.

- Metro would work cooperatively with the City of Los Angeles to develop detailed urban design guidelines that could guide future development in and around the Little Tokyo community and in the vicinity of the Regional Connector Transit Corridor project.
- Metro would coordinate with the Little Tokyo community to obtain input on the urban design of the project within the community. Urban design measures would be developed to integrate the LRT facilities into each community as appropriate. Designs might address elements such as catenary poles, materials, station colors, etc.

6.2.4 Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative

While no significant visual impacts to the Little Tokyo community would result from operation of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative, the mitigation measures described previously for the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would further reduce less than significant impacts.

6.2.5 Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1

While no significant visual impacts to the Little Tokyo or Arts District community would result from operation of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1, the mitigation measures described previously for the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative and the additional measure provided below would further reduce less than significant impacts.

- The train portal in 1st Street would be screened with appropriate, context sensitive urban design features.

6.2.6 Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2

While no significant visual impacts to the Little Tokyo or Arts District community would result from operation of Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2, the mitigation measures described for Variation 1 would further reduce less than significant impacts.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

Table 7-1 summarizes the overall visual and aesthetic impacts associated with each Regional Corridor Transit Connection Project alternative. As the table shows, there would either be no visual or aesthetic impacts or the impacts would be less than significant.

7.1 No Build Alternative

7.1.1 NEPA Findings

No visual impacts would result under this alternative.

7.1.2 CEQA Determination

No visual impacts would result under this alternative.

7.2 TSM Alternative

7.2.1 NEPA Findings

No adverse visual impacts would result under this alternative.

7.2.2 CEQA Determination

The visual character of the corridor would not change with construction and operation of the TSM Alternative. No visual impacts would result under this alternative.

7.3 At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative

7.3.1 NEPA Findings

The At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would result in minor changes in visual character. However, all potential impacts would be less than significant.

7.3.2 CEQA Determination

The visual character of the corridor would change slightly with the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative. The LRT trackway embedded in the street pavement, catenary poles, and overhead wires would result in less than significant visual impacts to the corridor environment. Views would not be degraded under this alternative, and no impacts to existing views from scenic highways would occur. Any potential impacts would be less than significant.

Table 7-1. Summary of Visual and Aesthetic Impacts

Impacts	No Build	TSM		At-Grade Emphasis LRT		Underground Emphasis LRT		Fully Underground LRT			
								Little Tokyo Variation 1		Little Tokyo Variation 2	
		Construction	Operation	Construction	Operation	Construction	Operation	Construction	Operation	Construction	Operation
Scenic Vistas	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Scenic Resources	NO	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
Visual Character	NO	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
Nighttime Illumination	NO	NO	NO	LTS	NO	LTS	NO	LTS	NO	LTS	NO
Shade and Shadows	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Indirect Impacts	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Direct Impacts	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Cumulative Impacts	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO

[1] *No scenic vistas are located in the project area; therefore, no analysis of impacts is included.*
NO = No impact.
LTS = Less than significant impact.

7.4 Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative

7.4.1 NEPA Findings

The Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would result in minor changes to visual character in localized places along the proposed alignment. However, all potential impacts would be less than significant.

7.4.2 CEQA Determination

The visual character of the corridor would slightly change with the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative. The principal features visible above ground would be station entrances and visual alterations in the vicinity of 1st, 2nd, and Alameda Streets. These visual alternations would not result in significant visual impacts. Views would not be degraded under this alternative, and no impacts to existing views from scenic highways would occur. Any impacts would be less than significant.

7.5 Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1

7.5.1 NEPA Findings

The Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1 would result in minor changes to visual character in localized places along the proposed alignment. However, all impacts would be less than significant.

7.5.2 CEQA Determination

The visual character of the corridor would slightly change with the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 1. The principal features visible above ground would be station entrances, visual alterations in the vicinity of the proposed 2nd/ Central Avenue station, and the train portals in 1st Street and just east of Alameda Street between Temple and Commercial Streets. These visual alterations would not result in significant visual impacts. Views would not be degraded under this alternative, and no impacts to existing views from scenic highways would occur. All impacts would be less than significant.

7.6 Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2

7.6.1 NEPA Findings

The Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2 would result in minor changes to visual character in localized places along the proposed alignment. However, potential impacts would be less than significant.

7.6.2 CEQA Determination

The visual character of the corridor would slightly change with the Fully Underground LRT Alternative – Little Tokyo Variation 2. The principal features visible above ground would be

station entrances, visual alterations in the vicinity of the 2nd/ Central Avenue station, and the train portals in 1st Street and just east of Alameda Street between Temple and Commercial Streets. These visual alterations would not result in significant visual impacts. Views would not be degraded under this alternative, and no impacts to existing views from scenic highways would occur. All impacts would be less than significant.

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