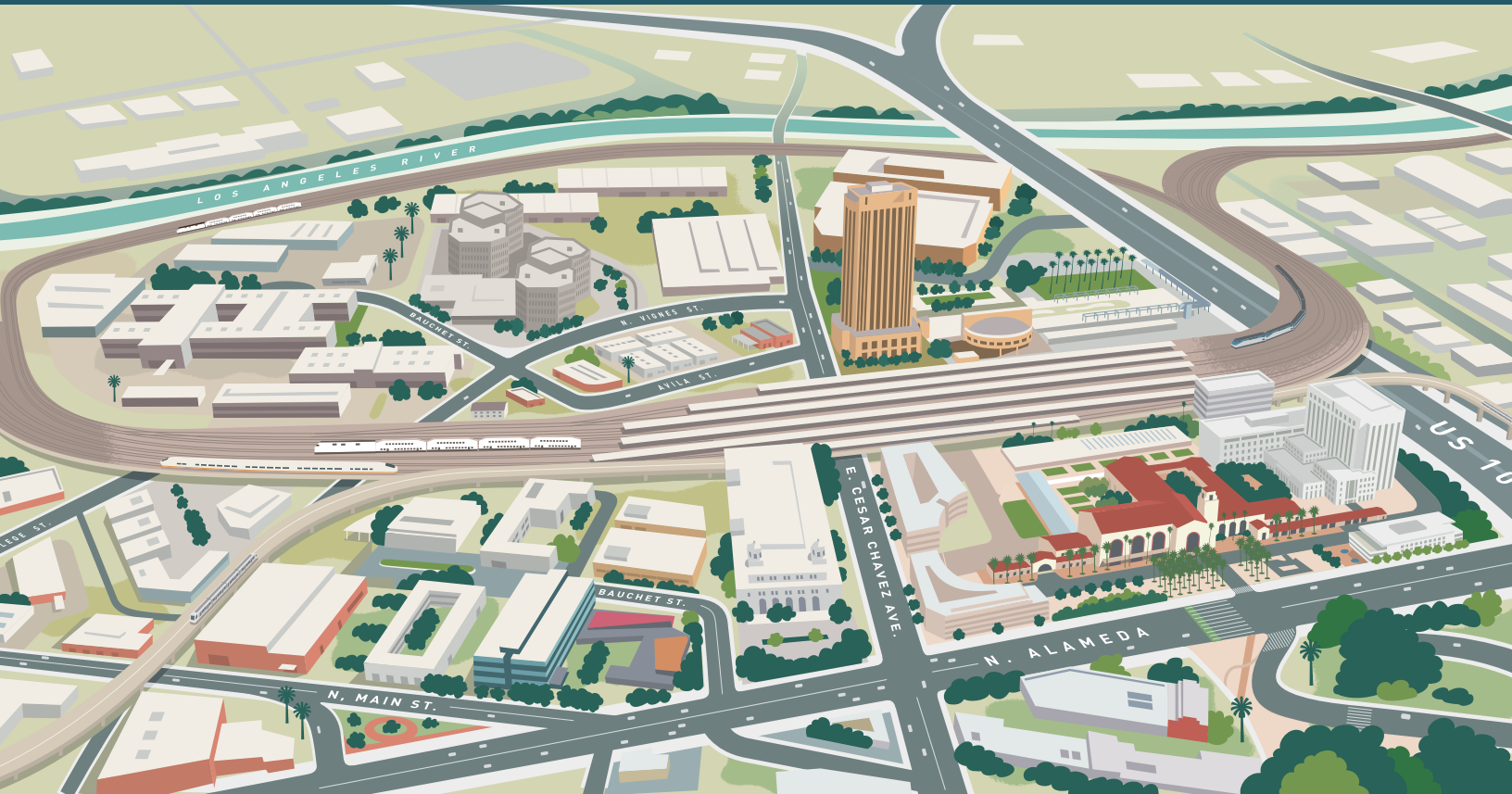


Link Union Station

DRAFT – Visual Impact Assessment

January 2019



(THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK)

CONTENTS

ES.0 Executive Summary..... vii

1.0 Introduction..... 1

1.1 Project Location and Study Area..... 1

1.2 Proposed Project Overview..... 2

1.3 Build Alternative Overview..... 3

2.0 Regulatory Setting..... 9

2.1 State Regulations 9

2.2 Local Regulations 9

2.2.1 City of Los Angeles General Plan..... 9

2.2.2 Central City North Community Plan..... 10

2.2.3 Alameda District Specific Plan..... 11

2.2.4 Cornfield Arroyo Seco Specific Plan 12

2.2.5 Los Angeles Municipal Code 12

2.2.6 Los Angeles CEQA Threshold Guide..... 13

3.0 Assessment Method..... 15

4.0 Visual Assessment Units and Key Views..... 17

4.1 Area of Visual Impact..... 17

4.1.1 Visual Assessment Unit #1: William Mead Homes 17

4.1.2 Visual Assessment Unit #2: Vignes Street Corridor..... 17

4.1.3 Visual Assessment Unit #3: Cesar Chavez Avenue Corridor/Mosaic
Apartments..... 17

4.1.4 Visual Assessment Unit #4: Alameda Street Corridor/Father Serra Park 24

4.1.5 Visual Assessment Unit #5: Commercial Street/US-101 Corridor 24

4.1.6 Visual Assessment Unit #6: Los Angeles Union Station..... 24

5.0 Visual Resources 29

5.1 Visual Character 29

5.1.1 Visual Assessment Unit #1: William Mead Homes 29

5.1.2 Visual Assessment Unit #2: Vignes Street Corridor..... 30

5.1.3 Visual Assessment Unit #3: Cesar Chavez Avenue Corridor/Mosaic
Apartments..... 30

5.1.4 Visual Assessment Unit #4: Alameda Street Corridor/Father Serra Park 30

5.1.5 Visual Assessment Unit #5: Commercial Street/US-101 Corridor 30

5.1.6 Visual Assessment Unit #6: Los Angeles Union Station..... 31

5.2 Visual Quality 32

5.2.1 Visual Assessment Unit #1: William Mead Homes 32

5.2.2 Visual Assessment Unit #2: Vignes Street Corridor..... 33

5.2.3 Visual Assessment Unit #3: Cesar Chavez Avenue Corridor/Mosaic
Apartments..... 34

5.2.4 Visual Assessment Unit #4: Alameda Street Corridor/Father Serra Park 35

5.2.5 Visual Assessment Unit #5: Commercial Street/US-101 Corridor 36

5.2.6 Visual Assessment Unit #6: Los Angeles Union Station..... 37

6.0 Viewer and Viewer Response..... 39

6.1 Types of Viewers..... 39

6.1.1	Neighbors (Viewers of the Project)	39
6.1.2	Users (Viewers from the Project)	40
6.2	Viewer Response	41
6.2.1	Viewer Exposure	41
6.2.2	Viewer Sensitivity	43
6.2.3	Overall Predicted Viewer Response.....	44
7.0	Environmental Impacts.....	45
7.1	Resource Change.....	45
8.0	Impact Analysis	47
8.1	Thresholds of Significance.....	47
8.2	Criteria Requiring No Further Evaluation.....	47
8.3	Visual Character and Quality	47
8.3.1	Visual Assessment Unit #1: William Mead Homes	47
8.3.2	Visual Assessment Unit #2: Vignes Street Corridor.....	53
8.3.3	Visual Assessment Unit #3: Cesar Chavez Avenue Corridor/Mosaic Apartments.....	56
8.3.4	Visual Assessment Unit #4: Alameda Street Corridor/Father Serra Park	59
8.3.5	Visual Assessment Unit #5: Commercial Street/US-101 Corridor	62
8.3.6	Visual Assessment Unit #6: Los Angeles Union Station.....	68
8.3.7	Views of New Passenger Concourse within Visual Assessment Unit #6	69
8.4	Lighting and Glare.....	82
8.4.1	Visual Assessment Unit #1: William Mead Homes	82
8.4.2	Visual Assessment Unit #2: Vignes Street Corridor.....	83
8.4.3	Visual Assessment Unit #3: Cesar Chavez Avenue Corridor/Mosaic Apartments.....	83
8.4.4	Visual Assessment Unit #4: Alameda Street Corridor/Father Serra Park	84
8.4.5	Visual Assessment Unit #5: Commercial Street/US-101 Corridor	85
8.4.6	Visual Assessment Unit #6: Los Angeles Union Station.....	86
8.4.7	Mitigation Measures	86
9.0	Significance Summary.....	89
9.1	Visual Character and Quality	89
9.2	Lighting and Glare.....	90
10.0	References	91

FIGURES

Figure 1-1. Project Location and Regional Vicinity 5

Figure 1-2. Project Study Area..... 7

Figure 4-1. Visual Assessment Units and Key Views 19

Figure 4-2. Key View #1a – William Mead Homes (view looking southwest from corner of Bolero Lane/Bloom Street toward railroad right-of-way) 21

Figure 4-3. Key View #1b – William Mead Homes (view looking south from Elmira Street toward railroad right-of-way) 21

Figure 4-4. Key View #2a – Vignes Street (view looking north from road toward bridge) 22

Figure 4-5. Key View #2b – Vignes Street (view looking south from road toward bridge)..... 22

Figure 4-6. Key View #3a – Cesar Chavez Avenue (view looking west from road toward bridge) 23

Figure 4-7. Key View #3b – Cesar Chavez Avenue (view looking east from road toward bridge)..... 23

Figure 4-8. Key View #4a - Los Angeles Union Station Entrance (view looking southeast from Alameda Street toward Los Angeles Union Station) 25

Figure 4-9. Key View #4b - Los Angeles Union Station Entrance (view looking east from Father Serra Park toward Los Angeles Union Station)..... 25

Figure 4-10. Key View #5a - US-101/Commercial Street (view looking southeast from Los Angeles Union Station southern platform limit toward US-101/Commercial Street)..... 26

Figure 4-11. Key View #5b - Commercial Street (view looking north from Commercial Street toward US-101 and Los Angeles Union Station) 26

Figure 4-12. Key View #5c - Commercial Street (view looking east from US-101 on/off ramps) 27

Figure 4-13. Key View #6a - Los Angeles Union Station Rail Yard (view looking northeast toward platform area)..... 27

Figure 4-14. Key View #6b - Los Angeles Union Station Platform Access (view looking north from passageway toward pedestrian ramp)..... 28

Figure 4-15. Key View #6c – Los Angeles Union Station Pedestrian Passageway (view looking west from passageway toward passageway entrance)..... 28

Figure 7-1. Federal Highway Administration Visual Impact Assessment Process Concept Diagram 45

Figure 8-1. Key View #1a – Existing Conditions..... 49

Figure 8-2. Key View #1a – Post-Project Conditions (Proposed Project) (Retaining Wall and Sound Wall) 50

Figure 8-3. Key View #1a – Post-Project Conditions (Build Alternative) (Retaining Wall and Sound Wall) 50

Figure 8-4. Key View #1b – Existing Conditions..... 51

Figure 8-5. Key View #1b – Post-Project Conditions (Retaining Wall)..... 51

Figure 8-6. Key View #1b – Existing Conditions.....	52
Figure 8-7. Key View #1b – Post-Project Conditions (Retaining Wall and Sound Wall).....	52
Figure 8-8. Key View #2a – Vignes Street Bridge (view looking west toward bridge) Existing Conditions	54
Figure 8-9. Key View #2a – Vignes Street Bridge (view looking west toward bridge) Post-Project Conditions	54
Figure 8-10. Key View #2b – Vignes Street Bridge (view looking east toward bridge) Existing Project Conditions.....	55
Figure 8-11. Key View #2b – Vignes Street Bridge (view looking east toward bridge) Post-Project Conditions	55
Figure 8-12. Key View #3a – Cesar Chavez Avenue (view looking west toward bridge) Existing Conditions	57
Figure 8-13. Key View #3a – Cesar Chavez Avenue (view looking west toward bridge) Post-Project Conditions	57
Figure 8-14. Key View #3b – Cesar Chavez Avenue Bridge (view looking east toward bridge) Existing Conditions	58
Figure 8-15. Key View #3b – Cesar Chavez Avenue Bridge (view looking east toward bridge) Post-Project Conditions	58
Figure 8-16. Key View #4a – Los Angeles Union Station Entrance (view looking southeast from Alameda Street toward Los Angeles Union Station) Existing Conditions	60
Figure 8-17. Key View #4a – Los Angeles Union Station Entrance (view looking southeast from Alameda Street toward Los Angeles Union Station) Post-Project Conditions	61
Figure 8-18. Key View #4b – Los Angeles Union Station Entrance (view looking east from Father Serra Park toward Los Angeles Union Station) Existing Conditions.....	61
Figure 8-19. Key View #4b – Los Angeles Union Station Entrance (view looking east from Father Serra Park toward Los Angeles Union Station) Post-Project Conditions.....	62
Figure 8-20. Key View #5a – US-101/Commercial Street (view looking southeast from Los Angeles Union Station toward US-101/Commercial Street) Existing Conditions	65
Figure 8-21. Key View #5a – US-101/Commercial Street (view looking southeast from Los Angeles Union Station toward US-101/Commercial Street) Post-Project Conditions	65
Figure 8-22. Key View #5b – Commercial Street (view looking north from Commercial Street toward US-101 and Los Angeles Union Station) Existing Conditions	66
Figure 8-23. Key View #5b – Commercial Street (view looking north from Commercial Street toward US-101 and Los Angeles Union Station) Post-Project Conditions	66
Figures 8-24. Key View #5c – Commercial Street (view looking east from US-101 on/off ramps toward embankment) Existing Conditions.....	67
Figure 8-25. Key View #5c – Commercial Street (view looking east from US-101 on/off ramps toward embankment) Post-Project Conditions.....	67

Figure 8-26. Viewpoint Locations of the New Above-Grade Passenger Concourse with New Expanded Passageway..... 71

Figure 8-27. View A - Exterior View of West Plaza Looking North..... 73

Figure 8-28. View B - Exterior View of West Plaza Looking South..... 73

Figure 8-29. View C - Interior View of Vertical Circulation Elements Looking Northwest..... 74

Figure 8-30. View D - Interior View of Retail Space and Waiting Areas Looking East 74

Figure 8-31. View E - Exterior View of Platforms Looking North 75

Figure 8-32. View F - Exterior View of East Plaza Looking Southwest..... 75

Figure 8-33. View G – New Expanded Passageway (Interior View Looking North)..... 76

Figure 8-34. View H – New Expanded Passageway (Interior View Looking South)..... 76

Figure 8-35. Viewpoint Locations of the New At-Grade Passenger Concourse (Build Alternative) 77

Figure 8-36. View A - Exterior View of West Plaza Looking North..... 79

Figure 8-37. View B - Interior View of Vertical Circulation Elements Looking North 79

Figure 8-38. View C - Interior View of Core Retail Space and Waiting Areas Looking East..... 80

Figure 8-39. View D - Exterior View of Platforms and Historic LAUS Looking West 80

Figure 8-40. View E - Interior View of East Plaza Looking East 81

Figure 8-41. View F - Exterior View of East Plaza Looking West..... 81

TABLES

Table 4-1. Link Union Station – Visual Assessment Units and Key Views..... 18

Table 5-1. Visual Quality of Visual Assessment Unit #1 – William Mead Homes 33

Table 5-2. Visual Quality of Visual Assessment Unit #2 – Vignes Street Corridor..... 34

Table 5-3. Visual Quality of Visual Assessment Unit #3 – Cesar Chavez Avenue Corridor/Mozaic Apartments 35

Table 5-4. Visual Quality of Visual Assessment Unit #4 – Alameda Street Corridor/Father Serra Park..... 36

Table 5-5. Visual Quality of Visual Assessment Unit #5 – Commercial Street/ US-101 Corridor 37

Table 5-6. Visual Quality of Visual Assessment Unit #6 38

Table 6-1. Predicted Viewer Response..... 44

Table 7-1. Visual Impact Using Resource Change and Viewer Response..... 46

Table 9-1. Summary of Visual Character and Quality Impacts..... 89

ACRONYMS

CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
EIR	environmental impact report
General Plan	City of Los Angeles General Plan
LAUS	Los Angeles Union Station
Link US	Link Union Station
Metro	Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Project	Link Union Station project
ROW	right-of-way
U.S.	United States
VIA	visual impact assessment

ES.0 Executive Summary

The purpose of this visual impact assessment (VIA) is to document changes to the visual environment, identify potential visual impacts caused by the proposed project and build alternative, and propose measures to minimize potential impacts relative to visual resources and aesthetics. This VIA was prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and addresses multiple state and local regulations regarding visual resources.

The project study area was divided into six “visual assessment units.” Each visual assessment unit has its own visual character and visual quality, defined by boundaries in visual characteristics. Because it is not feasible to analyze all the views in which the project would be seen, 14 key views associated with visual assessment units that most clearly illustrate the visual change associated with proposed infrastructure were selected. Key views also represent the viewer groups that have the highest potential to be impacted by the project, considering exposure and sensitivity. Visual impacts are determined by assessing changes to the visual resources and predicting viewer response to those changes.

A significant impact would occur in Visual Assessment Unit #1, with regard to resource change and viewer response of the proposed retaining wall and sound wall required. Upon implementation of mitigation measures, impacts would be reduced to a level less than significant.

The proposed project and build alternative would result in no significant impacts with regard to resource change and viewer response for Visual Assessment Unit #2 through Visual Assessment Unit #6. Additionally, the proposed project and build alternative would have a beneficial impact on resource change and viewer response for Visual Assessment Unit #6.

(THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

1.0 Introduction

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) is proposing the Link Union Station Project to transform Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS) from a “stub-end tracks station” into a “run-through tracks station” with a new passenger concourse that would improve the efficiency of the station and accommodate future growth and transportation demands in the region.

1.1 Project Location and Study Area

LAUS is located at 800 Alameda Street in the City of Los Angeles, California. LAUS is bounded by US-101 to the south, Alameda Street to the west, Cesar Chavez Avenue to the north, and Vignes Street to the east. Figure 1-1 depicts the regional location and general vicinity of LAUS.

Figure 1-2 depicts the project study area, which encompasses the extent of environmental study associated with potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts from implementation of the project. The project study area includes three main segments (Segment 1: Throat Segment, Segment 2: Concourse Segment, and Segment 3: Run-Through Segment). The existing conditions within each segment are summarized north to south below.

- **Segment 1: Throat Segment** – This segment, known as the LAUS throat, includes the area north of the platforms, from Main Street at the north to Cesar Chavez Avenue at the south. In the throat segment, all arriving and departing trains traverse five lead tracks into and out of the rail yard, except for one location near the Vignes Street Bridge where the tracks reduce to four lead tracks. Currently, special track work consisting of multiple turnouts and double-slip switches are used in the throat to direct trains into and out of the appropriate assigned terminal platform tracks.
- **Segment 2: Concourse Segment** – This segment is between Cesar Chavez Avenue and US-101 and includes LAUS, the rail yard, the Garden Tracks (stub-end tracks where private train cars are currently stored, just north of the platforms and adjacent to the existing Gold Line aerial guideway), the East Portal building, the baggage handling building with aboveground parking areas and access roads, the ticketing/waiting halls, and the pedestrian passageway with connecting ramps and stairways below the rail yard.
- **Segment 3: Run-Through Segment** – This segment is south of LAUS and extends east/west from Alameda Street to the west bank of the Los Angeles River and north/south from Keller Yard to Control Point (CP) Olympic. This segment includes US-101, the Commercial Street/Ducommun Street corridor, Metro Red and Purple Lines Maintenance Yard (Division 20 Rail Yard), BNSF West Bank Yard, Keller Yard, the main line tracks on the west bank of the Los Angeles River, from Keller Yard to CP Olympic, and the “Amtrak Lead Track” connecting the main line tracks with Amtrak’s Los Angeles Maintenance Facility. Businesses within the run-through segment are primarily industrial and manufacturing related.

The project study area has a dense street network ranging from major highways to local city streets. The roadways within the project study area include the El Monte Busway, US-101, Bolero Lane, Leroy Street, Bloom Street, Cesar Chavez Avenue, Commercial Street, Ducommun Street, Jackson Street, East Temple Street, Banning Street, First Street, Alameda Street, Garey Street, Vignes Street, Main Street, Aliso Street, Avila Street, Bauchet Street, and Center Street.

1.2 Proposed Project Overview

The proposed project components are summarized north to south below.

- **Throat and Elevated Rail Yard** – The proposed project includes subgrade and structural improvements in Segment 1 of the project study area (throat segment) to increase the elevation of the tracks leading to the rail yard. The proposed project includes the addition of one new lead track in the throat segment for a total of six lead tracks to facilitate enhanced operations for regional/intercity rail service providers (Metrolink/Amtrak) and accommodate the planned High-Speed Rail (HSR) system within a shared track alignment. Regional/intercity and HSR trains would share the two western lead tracks in the throat segment. The rail yard would be elevated approximately 15 feet. New passenger platforms with individualized canopies would be constructed on the elevated rail yard, with an underlying assumption that the platform infrastructure and associated vertical circulation elements (stairs, escalators, and elevators) would be modified at a later date to accommodate the planned HSR system. The existing railroad bridges in the throat segment at Vignes Street and Cesar Chavez Avenue would also be reconstructed. North of CP Chavez, the proposed project also includes safety improvements at the Main Street public at-grade crossing on the west bank of the Los Angeles River (medians, restriping, signals, and pedestrian and vehicular gate systems) to facilitate future implementation of a quiet zone by the City of Los Angeles.
- **Above-Grade Passenger Concourse with New Expanded Passageway** – The proposed project includes an above-grade passenger concourse with new expanded passageway in Segment 2 of the project study area (concourse segment). The above-grade passenger concourse with new expanded passageway would include space dedicated for passenger circulation, waiting areas, ancillary support functions (back-of-house uses, baggage handling, etc.), transit-serving retail, office/commercial uses, and open spaces and terraces. The new passenger concourse would create an opportunity for an outdoor, community-oriented space and enhance Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility at LAUS. The elevated portion of the above-grade passenger concourse would be located above the rail yard, approximately 90 feet above the existing grade with new plazas east and west of the elevated rail yard (East and West Plazas). The new expanded passageway would be located below the rail yard to provide additional passenger travel-path convenience and options. Amtrak ticketing and baggage check-in services would occur at two locations at the east and west ends of LAUS, and new carousels would be constructed within the new expanded passageway. The above-grade passenger concourse includes a canopy over the West Plaza up to 70 feet in height, with individual canopies that would extend up to 25 feet over each platform. New vertical circulation elements (VCEs) would also be constructed throughout the concourse to

enhance passenger movements throughout LAUS while meeting ADA and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) platform egress code requirements.

- **Run-Through Tracks** – The proposed project includes up to 10 new run-through tracks (including a new loop track) south of LAUS in Segment 3 of the project study area (run-through segment). The run-through tracks would facilitate connections for regional/intercity rail trains and HSR trains from LAUS to the main line tracks on the west bank of the Los Angeles River. A “common” viaduct/deck over US-101 and embankment south of US-101, from Vignes Street to Center Street, would be constructed wide enough to support regional/intercity rail run-through service, and future run-through service for the planned HSR system.

The proposed project would also require modifications to US-101 and local streets (including potential street closures and geometric modifications); railroad signal, positive train control (PTC), and communications-related improvements; modifications to the Gold Line light rail platform and tracks; modifications to the main line tracks on the west bank of the Los Angeles River; modifications to Keller Yard and BNSF West Bank Yard (First Street Yard); modifications to the Amtrak lead track; new access roadways to the railroad right-of-way (ROW); additional ROW; new utilities; utility relocations, replacements, and abandonments; and new drainage facilities/water quality improvements.

1.3 Build Alternative Overview

The primary differences between the proposed project and the build alternative are related to the lead tracks north of LAUS and the new passenger concourse. Compared to the proposed project, the build alternative includes the following:

- **Dedicated Lead Tracks North of LAUS** – The build alternative includes reconstruction of the throat, with two new lead tracks that would be located outside of the existing railroad ROW, facilitating a dedicated track alignment, with a total of seven lead tracks. Reconfiguration of Bolero Lane and Leroy Street would also be required.
- **At-Grade Passenger Concourse** – The build alternative includes an at-grade passenger concourse below the rail yard.

All other infrastructure elements are similar to the proposed project. The components of the build alternative are described north to south below.

- **Throat and Elevated Rail Yard** – The build alternative accommodates future HSR trains on dedicated lead tracks in the throat segment. The build alternative includes the addition of two new lead tracks for a total of seven lead tracks in the throat segment (with future HSR trains and some express/intercity services using the two western dedicated lead tracks and most regional/intercity trains using the five eastern lead tracks). The rail yard would be elevated approximately 15 feet. New passenger platforms with a grand canopy covering the elevated rail yard would be constructed, with an underlying assumption that the platform infrastructure and associated vertical circulation elements (stairs, escalators, and elevators) would be modified at a later date to accommodate the

planned HSR system. The existing railroad bridges in the throat segment at Vignes Street and Cesar Chavez Avenue would also be reconstructed under the build alternative. North of CP Chavez, the build alternative also includes safety improvements at the Main Street public at-grade crossing on the west bank of the Los Angeles River (medians, restriping, signals, and pedestrian and vehicular gate systems) to facilitate future implementation of a quiet zone by the City of Los Angeles.

- **At-Grade Passenger Concourse** – The build alternative includes a new at-grade passenger concourse that would include space dedicated for passenger circulation, waiting areas, ancillary support functions (back-of-house uses, baggage handling, etc.), transit-serving retail, office/commercial uses, and open spaces and terraces. The at-grade passenger concourse would also create an opportunity for an outdoor, community-oriented space and enhanced ADA accessibility. The at-grade passenger concourse would be constructed below the elevated rail yard. Amtrak ticketing and baggage check-in services would occur at a centralized location where new carousels would be constructed at the concourse level. The at-grade passenger concourse also includes new plazas east and west of the elevated rail yard (East and West Plazas), and a grand canopy that would extend up to 70 feet above the elevated rail yard and West Plaza. New vertical circulation elements would also be constructed throughout the concourse to enhance passenger movements throughout LAUS while meeting ADA and NFPA platform egress code requirements.
- **Run-Through Tracks** – The build alternative includes up to 10 new run-through tracks (including a new loop track) in the run-through segment. All infrastructure south of LAUS is the same as described above for the proposed project.

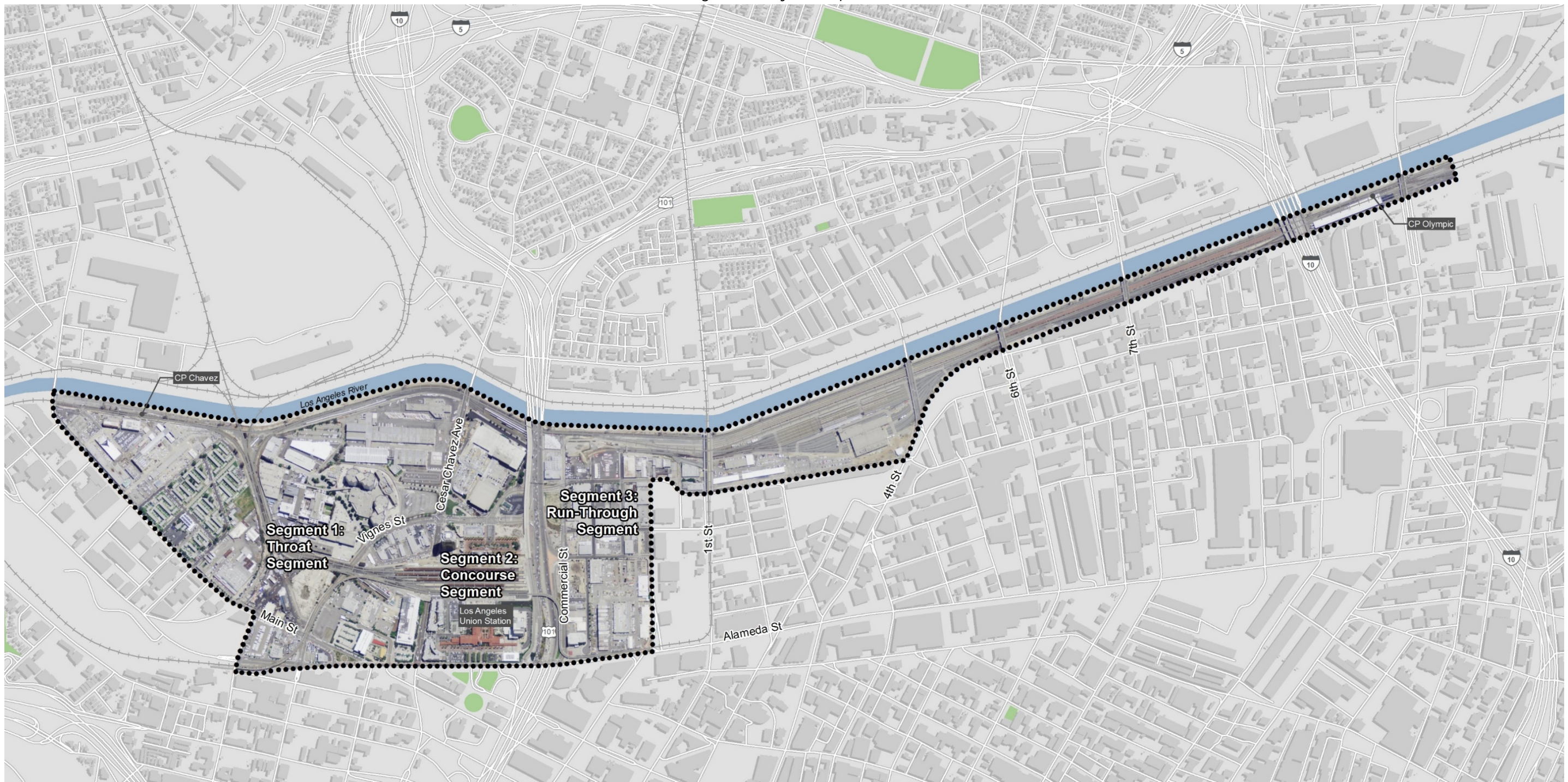
The build alternative would also require modifications to US-101 and local streets (including potential street closures and geometric modifications); railroad signal, positive train control, and communications-related improvements; modifications to the Gold Line light rail platform and tracks; modifications to the main line tracks on the west bank of the Los Angeles River; modifications to Keller Yard and BNSF West Bank Yard (First Street Yard); modifications to the Amtrak lead track; new access roadways to the railroad ROW; additional ROW; new utilities; utility relocations, replacements, and abandonments; and new drainage facilities/water quality improvements.

Figure 1-1. Project Location and Regional Vicinity



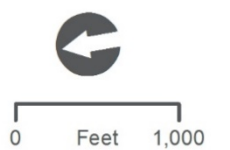
(THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK)

Figure 1-2. Project Study Area



LEGEND

 Project Study Area



(THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK)

2.0 Regulatory Setting

2.1 State Regulations

CEQA was adopted to inform about the potential significant environmental impacts of proposed activities, including visual impacts; identify ways that environmental damage can be avoided or significantly reduced; require changes in a project through the use of alternatives or mitigation measures when feasible; and publicly disclose the reasons why a project was approved if significant environmental impacts are involved.

For reference, Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines contains thresholds of significance for aesthetics, which ask if the activity would:

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

2.2 Local Regulations

2.2.1 City of Los Angeles General Plan

The *City of Los Angeles General Plan* (General Plan) (City of Los Angeles 1995) includes the following policies applicable to visual impacts.

Framework Element

Chapter 9 of the Framework Element (City of Los Angeles 1995), Infrastructure and Public Services, includes the following policies relating to lighting:

- Policy 9.40.1: Require lighting on private streets, pedestrian oriented areas, and pedestrian walks to meet minimum City standards for street and sidewalk lighting.
- Policy 9.40.2: Require parking lot lighting and related pedestrian lighting to meet recognized national standards.
- Policy 9.40.3: Develop regulations to ensure quality lighting to minimize or eliminate the adverse impact of lighting due to light pollution, light trespass, and glare for facade lighting, security lighting, and advertising lighting, including billboards.

- Policy 9.40.4: Establish regulations and standards which eliminate the adverse impacts due to light pollution, light trespass, and glare for the area lighting of rail yards, transit yards, trucking facilities, and similar facilities.
- Policy 9.40.6: Placement and location of street trees shall be coordinated with the placement of street lights.

Conservation Element

The Conservation Element of the General Plan (City of Los Angeles 2016) includes the following section pertaining to visual and aesthetic resources:

- Section 15: Land Form and Scenic Vistas aims to protect and reinforce natural and scenic vistas as irreplaceable resources and for the aesthetic enjoyment of present and future generations.

Mobility Plan 2035 (Transportation Element)

Mobility Plan 2035 is an element of the General Plan (City of Los Angeles 2016) and includes the following policies pertaining to visual and aesthetic resources:

- Policy 2.16: Ensure that future modifications to any scenic highway do not impact the unique identity or characteristic of that scenic highway.
- Policy 3.4: Provide all residents, workers, and visitors with affordable, efficient, convenient, and attractive transit services.

2.2.2 Central City North Community Plan

The project is within the *Central City North Community Plan* (City of Los Angeles 2000) area. The following policies are related to visual quality and aesthetics:

- Policy 2-1.4: Require that projects be designed and developed to achieve a high level of quality, distinctive character, and compatibility with existing uses and development.
- Policy 2-4.1: Require that any proposed development be designed to enhance and be compatible with adjacent development.
- Policy 2-4.2: Preserve community character, scale, and architectural diversity.
- Policy 2-4.3: Improve safety and aesthetics of parking areas in commercial areas.
- Policy 2-4.4: Landscaped corridors should be created and enhanced through the planting of street trees along segments with no building setbacks and through median plantings.
- Policy 3-1.2: Adequate compatibility should be achieved through design treatments, compliance with environmental protection standards and health and safety requirements for industrial uses where they adjoin residential neighborhoods and commercial uses.

- Policy 3-1.3: Require that any proposed development be designed to enhance and be compatible with adjacent development.
- Policy 3-2.1/18-1.1: Support the existing artists-in-residence in Central City North as a cultural resource for the community.
- Policy 5-1.1: Encourage the retention of passive and visual open space which provides a balance to the urban development of the Plan Area.
- Policy 8-2.2: Insure that landscaping around buildings be placed so as not to impede visibility.
- Policy 8-2.3: Insure adequate lighting around residential, commercial, and industrial buildings in order to improve security.
- Policy 10-1.2: Encourage the provision of safe, attractive, and clearly identifiable transit stops with user friendly design amenities.

The community plan also includes urban design policies and standards to ensure that residential, commercial, and industrial projects and public spaces and ROWs incorporate specific elements of good design. For commercial areas, the plan includes requirements for building height and design and parking. Community design and landscaping policies and standards are also provided for entryways, streetscape, street trees, street furniture, street lighting, sidewalks and paving, and signage.

2.2.3 Alameda District Specific Plan

The *Alameda District Specific Plan* (City of Los Angeles 1996) was established to manage continued and expanded development around LAUS as a major transit hub for the region and facilitate mixed-use development in the area providing office, hotel, retail, entertainment, tourism, residential, and related uses, in conformance with the goals and objectives of local and regional plans and policies. The specific plan area is generally bounded by Alameda Street, Main Street, Vignes Street, US-101, the El Monte Busway, and the passenger platforms/tracks adjacent to and north of the station.

The plan includes policies regarding allowable and prohibited land use; building height requirements; historic preservation requirements; open space, pedestrian, and landscaping requirements; transportation; and other policies pertaining to the planning area. The plan also includes significance thresholds, for which there are no aesthetic/visual thresholds, and mitigation measures for resource topics, including lighting. A summary of these measures is as follows:

1. Exterior lighting, including pedestrian lighting, shall be shielded to reduce the amount of direct lighting escaping the site.
2. Parking structures shall be designed so as to shield exterior areas from vehicle headlights and interior parking structure lighting, to the extent feasible.
3. Pole-mounted lighting fixtures on pedestrian paths will utilize cut-off technology to reduce glare.
4. Necessary building floodlighting will be shielded and designed to eliminate spillover glare.

5. Exterior building surfaces, particularly those facing heavily traveled roadways, shall utilize low-reflectivity materials.

2.2.4 Cornfield Arroyo Seco Specific Plan

The Cornfield Arroyo Seco Specific Plan includes requirements that may be applicable to visual impacts:

- Lighting shall be provided along all vehicular access ways and pedestrian walkways.
- Lighting (exterior building and landscape) shall be directed away from properties and roadways, and shielded as necessary. In particular, no lighting shall be directed at the window of a residential unit located either within or adjacent to a project.

2.2.5 Los Angeles Municipal Code

Ordinance Number 185472

- Clarifies Historic-Cultural Monument designation criteria, enhances due process and notification procedures affecting property owners, and provides for extensions of time limits.

Ordinance Number 177404

- All existing protected trees and relocation and replacement trees specified by the Advisory Agency in accordance with Sections 17.02, 17.05, 17.06, 17.51, and 17.52 of this Code shall be indicated on a plot plan attached to the building permit issued pursuant to this Code.

Chapter 9, Article 3, Sec. 93.0117

- No exterior light source may cause more than two footcandles (21.5 lx) of lighting intensity or generate direct glare onto exterior glazed windows or glass doors; elevated habitable porch, deck, or balcony; or any ground surface intended for uses such as recreation, barbecue or lawn areas, or any other property containing a residential unit or units.

Chapter 1, Article 2, Sec. 12.21 A5(k)

- All lights used to illuminate a parking area shall be designed, located, and arranged so as to reflect the light away from any streets and any adjacent premises.

Chapter 1, Article 7, Sec. 17.08C

- Plans for street lighting system shall be submitted to and approved by the Bureau of Street Lighting.

Division 62, Sec. 91.6205M

- No sign shall be arranged and illuminated in such a manner as to produce a light intensity of greater than three footcandles above ambient lighting, as measured at the property line of the nearest residentially zoned property.

2.2.6 Los Angeles CEQA Threshold Guide

The *Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide* (City of Los Angeles 2006) provides more specific guidance not only to determine the potential for significance, but to also establish thresholds by which a potential aesthetic impact can be measured. The *Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide* recognizes the subjectivity brought to such an analysis and states that a determination of significance is to be made on a case-by-case basis based on the following considerations:

- The amount of relative proportion of existing features or elements that substantially contribute to the valued visual character or image of a neighborhood, community, or localized area, which would be removed, altered, or demolished
- The degree of contrast between proposed features and existing features that represent the area's valued aesthetic image
- The degree to which the project would contribute to the area's aesthetic value

(THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

3.0 Assessment Method

This VIA has been prepared using guidance outlined in the publication *Guidelines for the Visual Impact Assessment of Highway Projects* (Federal Highway Administration January 2015). The VIA was prepared using the California Department of Transportation's template, modified as needed for this project type. The following steps were followed to assess the potential aesthetic impact of the project:

- The project location and setting were defined.
- Existing visual resources and key viewers were identified.
- Visual assessment units and key viewpoints were identified.
- Resource change and viewer response were assessed.
- The visual appearance of the project at key viewpoints was simulated.
- Visual impacts resulting from the project were analyzed.
- Measures to offset visual impacts were developed.

The study area for the VIA was identified by considering the existing landscape constraints (landform and land cover) and physiological limits of human sight, as well as by reviewing initial plans and simulation models to identify the visual elements of the project. Visual quality within the VIA study area was then described based on existing visual character, viewer groups, and expected community preferences.

Preliminary identification of key views was conducted using aerial mapping and project plans. Preliminary viewpoints were identified based on the anticipated viewers and visual changes at these locations. Appropriate viewpoint locations were verified and finalized in the field during a site visit on July 11, 2016, and multiple photographs were taken at each viewpoint location. Throughout the course of the project design, viewpoints and photographs were reevaluated against project plans, and final photograph locations and angles were chosen by the project team for their overall representation of key views, key viewers, and potential visual changes associated with project elements.

To create a visual representation of the project, photo-realistic simulations were created by combining photographs of existing conditions and computer-aided design files. A three-dimensional model was generated using known match points in both the photographs and the virtual model. Images were then duplicated within the simulation, and multimedia elements were added as an overlay, with attention paid to location and size of objects. Artist renderings were also prepared to depict the elements of the new above-grade passenger concourse with new expanded passageway associated with the proposed project and the at-grade passenger concourse associated with the build alternative.

Visual impacts were assessed by measuring the level of visual change in the VIA study area and estimating viewer response. Narrative ratings were used in the analysis. Mitigation measures were developed based on the results of the impacts assessment.

(THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

4.0 Visual Assessment Units and Key Views

4.1 Area of Visual Impact

The project study area was divided into a series of “visual assessment units.” Each visual assessment unit has its own visual character and visual quality, defined by boundaries in visual characteristics. Because it is not feasible to analyze all the views in which the project would be seen, it is necessary to select a number of key views associated with visual assessment units that would most clearly illustrate the change in the project’s visual resources. Key views also represent the viewer groups that have the highest potential to be affected by the project, considering exposure and sensitivity. For this project, 6 visual assessment units and 14 key views have been identified (Table 4-1). These visual assessment units are focused on the most visually dominant features of the project in Segments 1, 2, and 3 of the project study area. Figure 4-1 illustrates the visual assessment units and key views.

4.1.1 Visual Assessment Unit #1: William Mead Homes

This visual assessment unit is in the William Mead Homes public housing development, and represents residential viewers. Two key views were chosen within the development to illustrate visual changes resulting from the project (Figure 4-2 and Figure 4-3). Key View #1a is located at the corner of Bolero Lane and Bloom Street, in front of one of the apartment buildings, facing southwest. Key View #1b is located at Elmira Street, between two of the apartment buildings, facing south. These key views were chosen to illustrate views of the track and structural improvements within Segment 1 of the project study area from two vantage points that residents within William Mead Homes would experience.

4.1.2 Visual Assessment Unit #2: Vignes Street Corridor

This visual assessment unit is along Vignes Street, and represents commuters and visitors. Two key views were chosen to illustrate visual changes resulting from the project (Figure 4-4 and Figure 4-5). Both key views are of the historic Vignes Street Bridge looking north (Key View #2a) and looking south (Key View #2b). These key views were chosen to illustrate views of the new bridge that would support the elevated tracks through the throat segment.

4.1.3 Visual Assessment Unit #3: Cesar Chavez Avenue Corridor/Mosaic Apartments

This visual assessment unit is along Cesar Chavez Avenue, near the Mosaic Apartments and Metro Headquarters, and represents residential viewers, commuters, and visitors. Two key views were chosen to illustrate visual changes resulting from the project (Figure 4-6 and Figure 4-7). Both key views are of the historic Cesar Chavez Avenue Bridge looking west (Key View #3a) and looking east (Key View #3b). These key views were chosen to illustrate views of the new bridge that would support the elevated tracks leading to the LAUS rail yard and the proposed canopies, which would be visible from the Mosaic Apartments, as well as other viewpoints in this corridor, including roadway travelers.

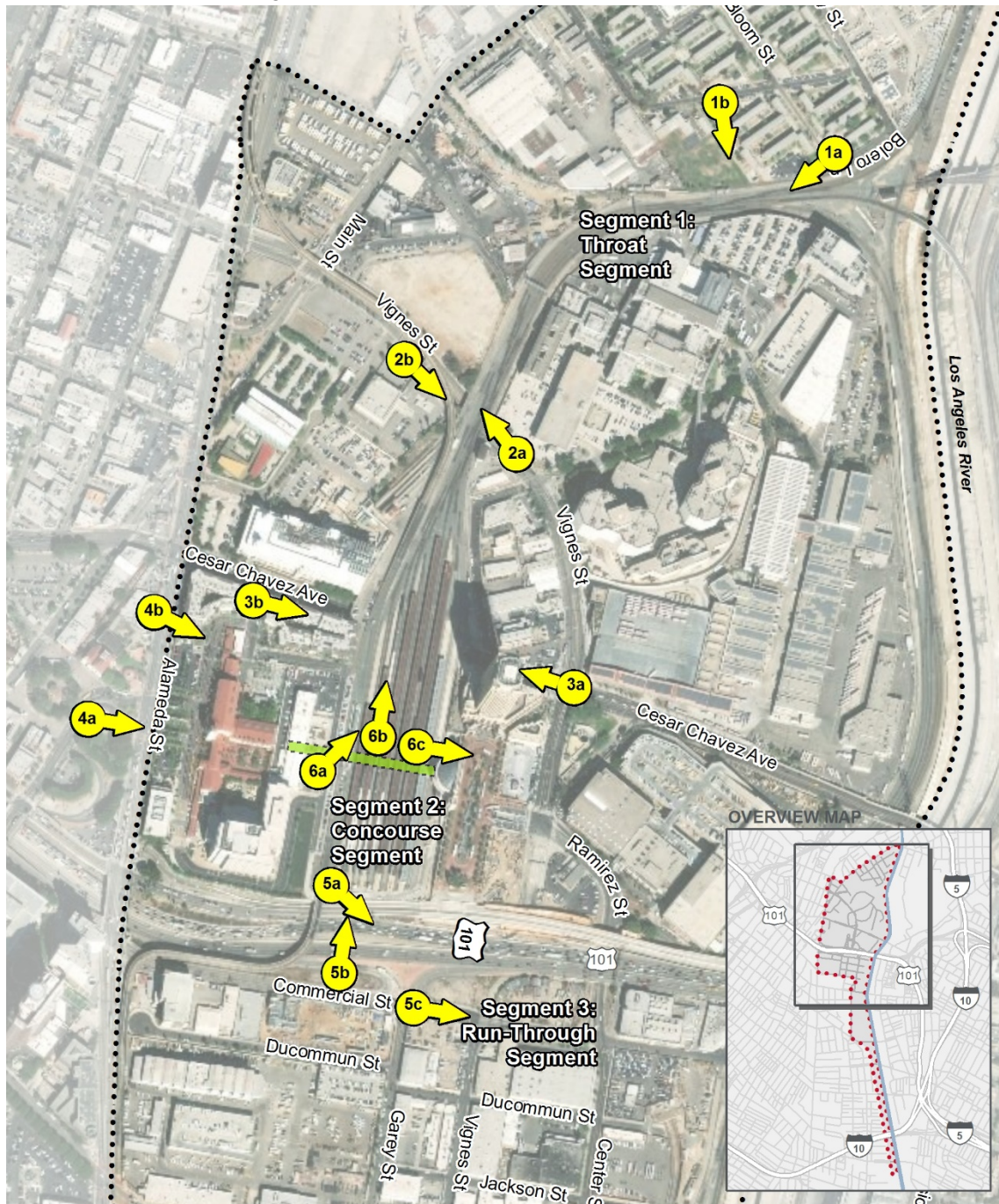
Table 4-1. Link Union Station – Visual Assessment Units and Key Views

Figure #	Visual Assessment Unit	Key View #	Key View Description
Figure 4-2	#1 – William Mead Homes	1a	William Mead Homes (view looking southwest from corner of Bolero Lane/Bloom Street toward railroad ROW)
Figure 4-3		1b	William Mead Homes (view looking south from Elmira Street toward railroad ROW)
Figure 4-4	#2 - Vignes Street Corridor	2a	Vignes Street (view looking north from road toward new bridge)
Figure 4-5		2b	Vignes Street (view looking south from road toward new bridge)
Figure 4-6	#3 - Cesar Chavez Avenue Corridor/Mosaic Apartments	3a	Cesar Chavez Avenue (view looking west from road toward new bridge)
Figure 4-7		3b	Cesar Chavez Avenue (view looking east from road toward new bridge)
Figure 4-8	#4 - Alameda Street Corridor/Father Serra Park	4a	LAUS Entrance (view looking southeast from Alameda Street toward LAUS)
Figure 4-9		4b	LAUS Entrance (view looking east from Father Serra Park toward LAUS)
Figure 4-10	#5 - Commercial Street/US-101 Corridor	5a	US-101/Commercial Street (view looking southeast from LAUS Southern Platform Limit toward US-101/Commercial Street)
Figure 4-11		5b	Commercial Street (view looking north from Commercial Street toward US-101 and LAUS)
Figure 4-12		5c	Commercial Street (view looking east from US-101 on/off ramps)
Figure 4-13	#6 - Los Angeles Union Station	6a	LAUS Rail Yard (view looking northeast toward platform area)
Figure 4-14		6b	LAUS Platform Access (view looking north from passageway toward pedestrian ramp)
Figure 4-15		6c	LAUS Pedestrian Passageway (view looking west from passageway toward passageway entrance)




Note:

ROW=right-of-way; LAUS=Los Angeles Union Station

Figure 4-1. Visual Assessment Units and Key Views



LEGEND

-  Project Study Area
-  Existing Pedestrian Passageway
-  Key View



0 Feet 400

(THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK)

Figure 4-2. Key View #1a – William Mead Homes
(view looking southwest from corner of Bolero Lane/Bloom Street toward railroad right-of-way)



Figure 4-3. Key View #1b – William Mead Homes
(view looking south from Elmira Street toward railroad right-of-way)



Figure 4-4. Key View #2a – Vignes Street
(view looking north from road toward bridge)



Figure 4-5. Key View #2b – Vignes Street
(view looking south from road toward bridge)



Figure 4-6. Key View #3a – Cesar Chavez Avenue
(view looking west from road toward bridge)



Figure 4-7. Key View #3b – Cesar Chavez Avenue
(view looking east from road toward bridge)



4.1.4 Visual Assessment Unit #4: Alameda Street Corridor/Father Serra Park

This visual assessment unit is on Alameda Street in front of the historic LAUS station entrance, and represents commuters, visitors, tourists, travelers, and workers across Alameda Street from LAUS. Two key views were chosen to illustrate visual changes of the project (Figure 4-8 and Figure 4-9). Key View #4a is from the sidewalk across from the historic LAUS entrance, and Key View #4b is from Father Serra Park. These key views were chosen to illustrate views of the above-grade passenger concourse.

4.1.5 Visual Assessment Unit #5: Commercial Street/US-101 Corridor

Visual Assessment Unit #5 is of the US-101 and the Commercial Street corridor and represents commuters and visitors. Three key views were chosen to illustrate visual changes of the project (Figure 4-10 through Figure 4-12). Key View #5a is from the LAUS rail yard looking southeast toward US-101 and Commercial Street. Key View #5b is from Commercial Street looking north toward US-101 and LAUS. Key View #5c is from the corner of Commercial Street and Garey Street looking east toward Center Street. These key views were chosen to illustrate views of the run-through track structures south of LAUS in Segment 3. Key View #5b was also chosen to illustrate views of the elevated portion of the above-grade passenger concourse visible from south of LAUS.

4.1.6 Visual Assessment Unit #6: Los Angeles Union Station

This visual assessment unit is within LAUS, and represents station users, employees, commuters, and visitors. For this particular visual assessment unit, three key views were chosen to illustrate the existing conditions of the LAUS rail yard and pedestrian passageway (Figure 4-13 through Figure 4-15), and multiple artist renderings were chosen to illustrate the visual changes of the project. Key View #6a is from the parking lot adjacent to the baggage handling building, facing northeast toward the platforms. Key Views #6b and #6c are located within the 28-foot-wide pedestrian passageway looking toward the ramps to the platforms (Key View #6b) and looking west toward the passageway entrance (Key View #6c).

Figure 4-8. Key View #4a - Los Angeles Union Station Entrance
(view looking southeast from Alameda Street toward Los Angeles Union Station)



Figure 4-9. Key View #4b - Los Angeles Union Station Entrance
(view looking east from Father Serra Park toward Los Angeles Union Station)



Figure 4-10. Key View #5a - US-101/Commercial Street (view looking southeast from Los Angeles Union Station southern platform limit toward US-101/Commercial Street)



Figure 4-11. Key View #5b - Commercial Street (view looking north from Commercial Street toward US-101 and Los Angeles Union Station)



Figure 4-12. Key View #5c - Commercial Street
(view looking east from US-101 on/off ramps)



Figure 4-13. Key View #6a - Los Angeles Union Station Rail Yard
(view looking northeast toward platform area)



Figure 4-14. Key View #6b - Los Angeles Union Station Platform Access
(view looking north from passageway toward pedestrian ramp)



Figure 4-15. Key View #6c – Los Angeles Union Station Pedestrian Passageway
(view looking west from passageway toward passageway entrance)



5.0 Visual Resources

Visual resources are defined and described below by assessing visual character and visual quality in the project study area.

5.1 Visual Character

Visual character includes attributes such as form, line, color, texture, and is used to describe, not evaluate. These attributes are considered neither good nor bad; however, a change in visual character can be evaluated when it is compared with the viewer response to that change. Changes in visual character can be quantified by identifying how visually compatible a project would be with the existing condition by using visual character attributes as an indicator. For this project, the following attributes were considered:

- **Form** – visual mass and shape
- **Line** – edges or linear definition
- **Color** – reflective brightness (light, dark) and hue (red, green)
- **Texture** – surface coarseness
- **Dominance** – position, size, or contrast
- **Scale** – apparent size as it relates to the surroundings
- **Diversity** – a variety of visual patterns
- **Continuity** – uninterrupted flow of form, line, color, or textural pattern

5.1.1 Visual Assessment Unit #1: William Mead Homes

Visual Assessment Unit #1 consists of William Mead Homes, an 8-acre residential development that provides housing to low-income families. The William Mead Homes development consists of 449 units in 24 buildings in the northern portion of the project study area. These homes are clustered together in a distinct neighborhood and are bordered by railroad tracks to the east, commercial/industrial properties to the south, Main Street to the west, and Leroy Street to the north. The residential community is surrounded by industrial, commercial, and transportation uses.

Buildings in Visual Assessment Unit #1 are brick buildings, two to three stories high, with ornamental landscaping (trees, bushes, and lawns) surrounding the units. Paved sidewalks and roadways connect the buildings. Some of the units have laundry lines set on cement slabs adjacent to the buildings. There are telephone poles and overhead power lines running through the Visual Assessment Unit. Recreational facilities include a baseball diamond, basketball court, and handball court, located at the southwestern corner of the property.

The visual character of Visual Assessment Unit #1 is that of an established high-density residential development within an urban industrial setting. The residential buildings, rectangular in shape and brick

red with green trim, are the dominant physical components. These buildings provide continuity in form, line, and color. The surrounding streets, power lines, and commercial/industrial buildings are also linear in form. Landscaping surrounding the buildings, including trees, shrubs, lawns, and individual ornamental plantings, adds diversity in form, line, color, and texture to the landscape. Within the development, the buildings are relatively close together, and the streets are narrow, creating a pedestrian-scale environment.

5.1.2 Visual Assessment Unit #2: Vignes Street Corridor

Visual Assessment Unit #2 consists of Vignes Street from Bauchet Street to Alameda Street. This segment is typically two vehicle lanes in each direction. The street has sidewalks but no bus stops, bicycle lanes, or street parking. The existing Vignes Street Bridge supports the lead tracks that approach the rail yard.

Land uses in Visual Assessment Unit #2 along the Vignes Street corridor consist of institutional, governmental uses dominated by correctional facilities and some low-scale commercial uses. The visual character of Visual Assessment Unit #2 is that of an urban setting with buildings up to sidewalks, limited vegetation, and the use of retaining walls and fences to define properties.

5.1.3 Visual Assessment Unit #3: Cesar Chavez Avenue Corridor/Mosaic Apartments

Visual Assessment Unit #3 consists of Cesar Chavez Avenue from Alameda Street to Vignes Street. This corridor is characterized by an urban setting consisting of a mix of land uses such as the Mosaic Apartments, the historic United States (U.S.) Post Office Terminal Annex, and institutional uses at Vignes Street and Cesar Chavez Avenue. Adjacent to the Mosaic Apartments and the U.S. Post Office Terminal Annex are two travel lanes with a bicycle lane in each direction, but the roadway is reduced approaching the roadway bridge, eliminating the bicycle lanes on each side to Vignes Street. Under the existing railroad bridge, the sidewalk is further reduced to a minimal width.

5.1.4 Visual Assessment Unit #4: Alameda Street Corridor/Father Serra Park

Visual Assessment Unit #4 consists of Alameda Street between Cesar Chavez Avenue and US-101. In this segment of the corridor, Alameda Street is three vehicle lanes in each direction. Land uses in Visual Assessment Unit #4 consist of commercial businesses, retail shops, offices, and warehouses; and the Father Serra Park; as well as Olvera Street and the adjacent El Pueblo Historic Park, which includes a plaza with gazebo, the Los Angeles Chinese American Museum, and Los Angeles' first fire station. This is a highly active pedestrian area, with which LAUS interfaces directly, and represents the most critical viewshed of analysis.

5.1.5 Visual Assessment Unit #5: Commercial Street/US-101 Corridor

Visual Assessment Unit #5 consists of the US-101 corridor south of LAUS and also includes the El Monte Busway and Commercial Street. Alameda Street, on the west side of this assessment unit between Arcadia Street/El Monte Busway and Commercial Street over US-101, is three vehicle lanes in each direction, and is characterized by standard concrete sidewalks and chain-link fencing. In this segment of the corridor,

US-101 is at at-grade and consists of four lanes, with an exit lane in the southern direction, and four lanes in the northern direction. There is a 3-foot-tall concrete median dividing southbound and northbound lanes.

Along Commercial Street between Alameda Street and Center Street, this corridor consists of two vehicle lanes in each direction. There is a sidewalk on the south side of the roadway, and the north side of the roadway is partially landscaped with crape myrtle trees (*Lagerstroemia* spp.), Indian hawthorn (*Rhaphiolepis indica*), and silver carpet (*Dymondia margaretae*). There is no street parking or bicycle lanes along this segment of the roadway. This assessment unit has little pedestrian activity.

Land uses in Visual Assessment Unit #5 consist primarily of transportation uses (public facilities), commercial manufacturing, and heavy industrial uses, with many vacant lots/parking lots. Light poles and roadway signs are present, with weedy vegetation, including Mexican fan palms (*Washingtonia robusta*) and date palms (*Phoenix dactylifera*). The Metro Gold Line crosses over the US-101 corridor with a modern concrete viaduct bridge structure. There are telephone poles, overhead power lines, and street lights within this segment of the corridor. High-voltage transmission lines are visible in the background over the Los Angeles River.

The visual character of Visual Assessment Unit #5 is that of an urban transportation corridor. Several existing roadway corridors, including Alameda Street, US-101, Arcadia Street, Aliso Street, Commercial Street, and the El Monte Busway, are all within this assessment unit, and they are the dominant visual elements of the area. These roadway corridors are linear features crossing the landscape, and are constructed of asphalt and concrete, creating a moderate level of continuity in form, line, color, and texture. Beyond the roadways, there are intermittent buildings associated with downtown and LAUS that are varied in shape and height, but are mainly similar in color to the roadway corridors. Landscaping, including street trees and shrubs, adds some diversity in form, line, color, and texture to the landscape. The streets are relatively wide, and some of the buildings are tall, which creates a more open and grand scale environment.

5.1.6 Visual Assessment Unit #6: Los Angeles Union Station

Visual Assessment Unit #6 consists of LAUS bounded by Cesar Chavez Avenue on the north, Alameda Street on the west, Vignes Street on the east, and US-101 on the south. The main components of LAUS are the historic building waiting walls, pedestrian passageway, passenger platforms, butterfly canopies over the platforms, rail yard retaining wall facing US-101, car supply repair workshop and associated retaining wall (current maintenance building), terminal tower, railroad tracks, transit plaza, and ramps. There are parking lots at the entrance to LAUS off Alameda Street and east of the station. There are rows of fan palm trees at the entrance to LAUS adjacent to Alameda Street and along the sidewalks adjacent to the parking lots. Land uses in the assessment unit consist of public transportation uses supporting retail, and office buildings.

The visual character of Visual Assessment Unit #6 is that of a multimodal transportation center and tourist destination. The architectural design of LAUS is a combination of Art Deco, Mission Revival, and Streamline-Moderne styles. LAUS is known as the "Last of the Great Railway Stations" built in the United States, and listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. The assessment unit's architectural character is a unique blend of both historic and modern styles, reflecting the historic character of Los

Angeles and the evolution of railroad technology from steam to diesel power. The station's structural elements are varied because of function in shape, height, and color.

The station platforms, canopies, railroad tracks, overhead lines, and trains are the dominant physical components in the assessment unit. Although these are all linear features, there is a high diversity in color and pattern. There is no landscaping on the platforms, and landscaping along the west side of the platforms is minimal and low to the ground. The scale on the platforms is pedestrian oriented, with the platforms defined by the small-scale platform canopies, lighting, and benches. At the Patsaouras Transit Plaza, there are formal rows of palms that provide continuity in form, line, and color. This area also has architectural features, decorative paving, streetscape elements, and sculpture. There is a consistent and formal visual character and scale in the Patsaouras Transit Plaza; however, there is pedestrian-scale, highlighted by the larger scale of the surrounding buildings.

5.2 Visual Quality

Visual quality is evaluated by identifying the vividness, intactness, and unity present in the project study area. Public attitudes validate the assessed level of quality and predict how changes to the project study area can affect these attitudes. This process helps identify specific methods for addressing each visual impact that may occur as a result of the project. The three criteria for evaluating visual quality are:

- **Vividness** – the extent to which the landscape is memorable and is associated with distinctive, contrasting, and diverse visual elements.
- **Intactness** – the integrity of visual features in the landscape and the extent to which the existing landscape is free from non-typical visual intrusions.
- **Unity** – the extent to which all visual elements combine to form a coherent, harmonious visual pattern.

Narrative ratings have been used to assess the visual quality within each visual assessment unit. Narrative ratings ranging from very low (bad), low (poor), moderately low (fair), moderate (good), moderately high (very good), and high (excellent) have been given for each of the individual criteria—vividness, intactness, and unity—and the rating for the overall visual quality has been assigned based on an average of the individual ratings. If the average rating was between ratings, the higher of the two ratings has been assigned.

5.2.1 Visual Assessment Unit #1: William Mead Homes

Within the internal units of the complex, the primary views from the two-story buildings are of other buildings. On the south edge of the development, near Bolero Lane, there are views of the railroad tracks, power lines, correctional facilities along Vignes Street, and surrounding industrial development. The Los Angeles River, a concrete-lined channel, is beyond the tracks, but is not visible from the street elevation. On the west side of the development, along Elmyra Street, views are of commercial/industrial buildings immediately adjacent to the roadway. These buildings are all taller than the apartment buildings; therefore,

there are very few spaces through which there are views beyond these buildings. On the north side of the development, along Main Street, views are of single-story commercial/industrial buildings. On the east side of the development, along Leroy Street, views are of commercial/industrial buildings, most of which have been painted with murals. There are also large plane trees (*Platanus* spp.) along the residential side of Leroy Street.

The visual quality of Visual Assessment Unit #1 has been assessed in Table 5-1 using the rating system described above. Overall, the visual quality of Visual Assessment Unit #1 is rated as moderately low.

Table 5-1. Visual Quality of Visual Assessment Unit #1 – William Mead Homes		
Category	Description	Rating
Vividness	Visual Assessment Unit #1 is visually distinctive in that all of the buildings have a consistent architecture and distinctive colors that contrast with the surrounding development. The physical setting of the residential scale development within the larger Downtown Los Angeles Landscape also presents an interesting contrast in scale. However, there are a large number of visual intrusions, including power transmission and local distribution lines, satellite dishes, cluttered balconies, garbage cans, and vehicles, which distract from the overall memorability of the landscape.	Moderately Low
Intactness	Visual Assessment Unit #1 is comprised entirely of manmade elements. The continuity of the apartment buildings and landscaping increase visual integrity. However, there are a large number of visual intrusions, including power lines, satellite dishes, garbage cans, and vehicles, which distract from the views.	Moderately Low
Unity	Visual Assessment Unit #1 is comprised mainly of geometric apartment buildings of similar size and color, which create uniform patterns in the landscape. Ornamental plantings within the development, in particular the geometry of the lawns, add to the uniformity of the property. However, power lines, satellite dishes, garbage cans, and vehicles, detract from the overall visual coherency.	Moderate
Overall	The consistent architecture and distinctive colors of the buildings are visually memorable, and create integrity and uniformity in the landscape. Ornamental landscaping also adds to the uniformity. However, power lines, satellite dishes, garbage cans, and vehicles, detract from the overall vividness, intactness, and unity.	Moderately Low

5.2.2 Visual Assessment Unit #2: Vignes Street Corridor

The primary views within Visual Assessment Unit #2 are of other buildings and the streetscape. To the east, along Vignes Street, the views are of governmental, transit maintenance, and correctional facilities. There are views of the roadway corridor, the Los Angeles Police Department Erwin Piper Technical Center, the LAUS subterranean parking entrance, the Metro Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility, low-scale commercial, the Twin Towers and Los Angeles County Men’s Central Jail Correctional Facilities, and the roadway undercrossing. To the north of the bridge is the overhead concrete Gold Line structure, vacant lots, and parking lots.

The visual quality of Visual Assessment Unit #2 has been assessed in Table 5-2 using the rating system described above. Overall, the visual quality of Visual Assessment Unit #2 is rated as low.

Table 5-2. Visual Quality of Visual Assessment Unit #2 – Vignes Street Corridor		
Category	Description	Rating
Vividness	Within Visual Assessment Unit #2, building architecture, streetscape elements, and the Vignes Street Undercrossing draw the eye and provide visual diversity and interest. The street has a fairly eclectic character. However, high traffic levels on the roadways and pedestrian traffic distract from the overall memorability of the landscape.	Low
Intactness	Visual Assessment Unit #2 is comprised entirely of manmade elements. The streetscape elements along Vignes Street do not create a sense of an intact consistent visual corridor. There are a number of visual intrusions, including high traffic levels on the roadways, pedestrian traffic, utilities, and signs, which distract from the views.	Low
Unity	Within Visual Assessment Unit #2, the streetscape along Vignes Street does not create uniform patterns within the landscape. The streetscape design varies throughout the entire corridor because of uses, scale, materials, streetscapes, and the diversity. The architecture styles and streetscape reduces the overall coherence of the visual patterns.	Low
Overall	Streetscape elements, architecture, and views within Visual Assessment Unit #2 are urban with generally obscured vistas. Streetscape elements loosely provide visual integrity. The visual diversity and intrusions reduce overall vividness, intactness, and unity.	Low

5.2.3 Visual Assessment Unit #3: Cesar Chavez Avenue Corridor/Mosaic Apartments

The primary views within Visual Assessment Unit #3 are of other buildings and the streetscape. Along Cesar Chavez Avenue, there are views of the roadway corridor, the U.S. Post Office Terminal Annex, the Mosaic Apartments, the Metro Headquarters Building, and the Cesar Chavez Avenue Undercrossing. To the south, there are views of Alameda Street and Olvera Street, the Mosaic Apartments, LAUS, El Pueblo Park, and Downtown Los Angeles in the background. To the west, along Cesar Chavez Avenue, views are of the Olvera Street district, a Chevron gas station, the Metro Plaza Hotel, and other single-story commercial buildings. North of Cesar Chavez Avenue, there are views of various commercial buildings, and hills in the background.

The visual quality of Visual Assessment Unit #3 has been assessed in Table 5-3 using the rating system described above. Overall, the visual quality of Visual Assessment Unit #3 is rated as moderate.

Table 5-3. Visual Quality of Visual Assessment Unit #3 – Cesar Chavez Avenue Corridor/Mosaic Apartments

Category	Description	Rating
Vividness	Within Visual Assessment Unit #3, building architecture, streetscape elements, the Cesar Chavez Avenue Bridge, and Alameda Street draw the eye and provide visual diversity and interest. East of the Cesar Chavez Avenue Bridge, the character changes with the switch to governmental uses and extensive use of retaining walls and concrete. Views of downtown (facing south at Alameda Street) and hills (facing west) add visual interest. However, high traffic levels on the roadways and pedestrian traffic distract from the overall memorability of the landscape.	Moderate
Intactness	Visual Assessment Unit #3 is comprised entirely of manmade elements. The streetscape elements along portions of Cesar Chavez Avenue have a visual intactness on each side of the Cesar Chavez Avenue Bridge but of different character on each side. There are a number of visual intrusions, including high traffic levels on the roadways, pedestrian traffic, utilities, and signs, which distract from the views.	Moderate
Unity	Within Visual Assessment Unit #3, the streetscape along portions of Cesar Chavez Avenue create a uniform pattern within the landscape on each side of the Cesar Chavez Avenue Bridge. The streetscape design has continuity on each side of the bridge, however, the diversity of architecture styles is complemented by an urban form and building placements which provides consistency of the visual pattern.	Moderate
Overall	Streetscape elements, architecture, and views within Visual Assessment Unit #3 have a vibrant urban appeal. Streetscape elements also provide visual integrity and uniform patterns in the landscape. However, visual diversity and intrusions reduce overall vividness, intactness, and unity.	Moderate

5.2.4 Visual Assessment Unit #4: Alameda Street Corridor/Father Serra Park

The primary views within Visual Assessment Unit #4 are of the Alameda Street corridor in front of LAUS, a highly pedestrian-active area with commuters, travelers, tourists, residents, and workers. North of Cesar Chavez Avenue, Alameda Street is characterized by an urban commercial corridor with mixed aesthetics and uses. To the north, along Alameda Street, views are of the U.S. Post Office Terminal Annex, various commercial buildings, and hills in the background. South of Cesar Chavez Avenue are views of El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic Park, Olvera Street buildings, the Mosaic Apartments, and the historic LAUS entrance. There are views are of the Olvera Street district, a Chevron gas station, the Metro Plaza Hotel, and other single-story commercial buildings. The visual quality of Visual Assessment Unit #4 has been assessed in Table 5-4 using the rating system described above. Overall, the visual quality of this assessment unit is rated as moderately high.

Table 5-4. Visual Quality of Visual Assessment Unit #4 – Alameda Street Corridor/Father Serra Park

Category	Description	Rating
Vividness	Visual Assessment Unit #4 is framed by the large scale of the buildings in the downtown area and US-101 on the south and hills to the north. The eye is drawn by the historic LAUS entrance and associated buildings, the Father Serra Park and all of its components and activities on the west. Beyond the El Pueblo is Chinatown and old Little Italy. These features are visually memorable. However, a high level of traffic on the roadways and high pedestrian traffic are distractions. Variability in visual pattern with many distinctive architectural features and destination spots adds to the overall memorability of the landscape.	Moderately High
Intactness	Visual Assessment Unit #4 is comprised entirely of manmade elements. The views of LAUS are dominant while the park area garners attention due to the high activity level. The integrating features in the landscape include tall palm trees on both sides of the corridor. The visual intrusions of this assessment unit include high traffic levels, pedestrian disruptions, and utilities, which distract from the views.	Moderately High
Unity	Within Visual Assessment Unit #4, LAUS, the Father Serra Park, and Olvera Street are visually dominant. Though eclectic, the area is unified as a tourist, commuter, and worker hub. There is a clear sense of arrival and place along Alameda Street.	Moderately High
Overall	Visual Assessment Unit #4 is visually impressive with a clear sense of place and arrival. It has unifying features with varying architectural style and ages. The variability in visual elements and patterns, does not seem to reduce the overall vividness, intactness, and unity of the views because the corridor has a distinct identity.	Moderately High

5.2.5 Visual Assessment Unit #5: Commercial Street/US-101 Corridor

The primary views within Visual Assessment Unit #5 are of the US-101, Commercial Street, and other roadway corridors and buildings. To the east, views are of railroad infrastructure near the west bank of the Los Angeles River, overhead power lines, and buildings adjacent to Commercial Street and US-101. To the south, views are of commercial/industrial buildings, parking areas, and vacant lots. To the west, views are of the Gold Line viaduct overcrossing, overhead power lines, and Downtown Los Angeles buildings. To the north, views are of LAUS. There are no scenic highways within Visual Assessment Unit #5. The visual quality of Visual Assessment Unit #5 has been assessed in Table 5-5 using the rating system described above. Overall, the visual quality of Visual Assessment Unit #5 is rated as low.

Table 5-5. Visual Quality of Visual Assessment Unit #5 – Commercial Street/US-101 Corridor

Category	Description	Rating
Vividness	Within Visual Assessment Unit #5, visual elements are scattered and spread away from the roadway corridor. The absence of distinctive features and variability in visual patterns detracts from the memorability of the landscape. Vividness is considered low.	Low
Intactness	Visual Assessment Unit #5 is comprised entirely of manmade elements. There are no integrating features, and there are many visual intrusions, including power lines, light poles, and traffic signs, which distract from views.	Low
Unity	Within Visual Assessment Unit #5, there is a high variability in visual elements and no unifying patterns in the landscape.	Low
Overall	Visual elements in Visual Assessment Unit #5 are scattered, and the variability in visual elements and patterns and visual intrusions reduce the overall vividness, intactness, and unity of the views.	Low

5.2.6 Visual Assessment Unit #6: Los Angeles Union Station

The primary views within Visual Assessment Unit #6 are of the platforms and surrounding buildings. To the east, views are of buildings adjacent to the rail yard including the Metro headquarters and the Metropolitan Water District building. To the south, views are of US-101 and buildings beyond. To the west, views are of the LAUS historic buildings. To the north, views are of the railroad tracks, Mozaic Apartments, and hills in the background. The visual quality of Visual Assessment Unit #6 has been assessed in Table 5-6 using the rating system described above. Overall, the visual quality of Visual Assessment Unit #6 is rated as moderate to moderately-high.

Table 5-6. Visual Quality of Visual Assessment Unit #6		
Category	Description	Rating
Vividness	Within Visual Assessment Unit #6, the historic station architecture, landscaping, and the scale of the platforms are visually notable and memorable. The design of the Patsaouras Transit Plaza is also visually distinctive. However, the variability in visual pattern surrounding the platforms and station detracts slightly from the memorability of the landscape. Vividness is considered moderately high.	Moderately High
Intactness	Visual Assessment Unit #6 is comprised entirely of manmade elements. The architectural and streetscape elements increase visual integrity. However, there are some visual intrusions, including traffic, which distract slightly from the views. Intactness is considered moderate.	Moderate
Unity	Within Visual Assessment Unit #6, the architectural and streetscape elements at the historic station area and Patsaouras Transit Plaza are unifying features. However, the streetscape is not uniform throughout the entire station, and there is a high level of visual diversity in both structures and landscaping that reduces the overall visual coherence. Unity is considered moderate.	Moderate
Overall	Streetscape elements in Visual Assessment #6 are visually appealing, provide increased visual integrity, and are unifying features. However, visual diversity within the station and visual intrusions reduce overall vividness, intactness, and unity.	Moderate

6.0 Viewer and Viewer Response

The population affected by the project is composed of “viewers.” Viewers are people whose views of the landscape may be altered by the project, either because the landscape itself has changed or their perception of the landscape has changed. Viewers or, more specifically, the responses viewers have to changes in their visual environment, are one of two variables that determine the extent of visual impacts that would result from the project.

6.1 Types of Viewers

There are two major types of viewer groups for the project, neighbors and users. Each viewer group has its own particular level of “exposure” and “sensitivity,” resulting in distinct and predictable visual concerns for each group that help to predict their responses to visual changes.

6.1.1 Neighbors (Viewers of the Project)

Project neighbors are people who have views of the project. They can be subdivided into different viewer groups by land use, and include residents, employees, commuters, and visitors. For example, residential, commercial, industrial, retail, institutional, civic, educational, and recreational land uses may generate highway neighbors or viewer groups with distinct reasons for being in the corridor and therefore having distinct responses to changes in visual resources. For this project the following neighbors were considered.

Residents

This viewer group includes residents in the William Mead Homes residential development and the Mozaic Apartments. Residents in the William Mead Homes development would have views of the retaining wall and sound wall, along the reconstructed lead tracks in Segment 1. Residents in the Mozaic Apartments would have variable views of the elevated rail yard and new above-grade passenger concourse in Segment 2 (proposed project). Residents of the Santa Fe Apartments on Santa Fe Street, south of First Street in Segment 3, would have secondary views of the proposed run-through track structures south of LAUS, but from a substantial distance. Given this distance from the project, focus is placed on residents in the William Mead Homes and the Mozaic Apartments.

Business Persons

This viewer group includes business owners, employees, and patrons at commercial, industrial, and institutional land uses in the project study area, including those along Alameda Street, Cesar Chavez Avenue, and Commercial Street. This viewer group would have views that would be relatively close to different elements of the project in all visual assessment units, with the exception of Visual Assessment Unit #1. There would be a high number of viewers in this viewer group because the project would be visible from several commercial/industrial corridors, including Vignes Street (Visual Assessment Unit #2), Cesar Chavez Avenue (Visual Assessment Unit #3), Alameda Street (Visual Assessment Unit #4), Commercial Street and US-101 (Visual Assessment Unit #5), and buildings surrounding LAUS (Visual Assessment Unit #6). Some project elements would also be visible from high-rise buildings and other elevated areas in a

larger surrounding area. Most viewers would have short-term exposure to views in the project study area when arriving and leaving businesses; however, exposure would be often, and potentially daily. Some business owners and/or employees may have a longer period of exposure if they have views of the project from their places of business. Overall exposure of this viewer group is considered moderately high.

Commuters

This viewer group includes commuters or residents traveling along roadways or transit-ways within the project study area, including the railroad tracks, US-101, Alameda Street, Cesar Chavez Avenue, and Commercial Street. This viewer group would have views that would be relatively close to certain project elements in all visual assessment units, with the exception of Visual Assessment Unit #1. Commuters along Vignes Street (Visual Assessment Unit #2) would have views of the new bridge; commuters along Cesar Chavez Avenue (Visual Assessment Unit #3) would have views of the new bridge, elevated rail yard, and canopies; viewers along Alameda Street (Visual Assessment Unit #4), and Commercial Street and US-101 (Visual Assessment Unit #5) would have views of the run-through track structures south of LAUS. Viewers using LAUS would have views of the railroad tracks and LAUS (Visual Assessment Unit #6). There would be many viewers in this viewer group, since the project is located along several main roadways, highways, and transit corridors. This viewer group would have a range of short-term to long-term exposure to views in the project study area due to the varying traffic levels during travel time in the area; however, exposure would be often, and potentially daily. Overall exposure of this viewer group is considered moderately high.

Visitors and Tourists

This viewer group would have views that would be relatively close to different elements of the project in all visual assessment units, with the exception of Visual Assessment Unit #1. Visitors at LAUS (Visual Assessment Unit #6) would have views of the new above-grade passenger concourse, and train riders would have views of the tracks and concourse. Visitors traveling along local roadways and US-101 (Visual Assessment Unit #2 through Visual Assessment Unit #5) would have views of certain project elements, depending on location. There would be many viewers in this viewer group because the project is located in Downtown Los Angeles, near Chinatown, Olvera Street, and other cultural points of interest, and at LAUS. Some viewers would have short-term exposure to views in the project study area when passing through or visiting the area, and exposure would be intermittent. Overall exposure of this viewer group is considered moderate.

6.1.2 Users (Viewers from the Project)

For this project, two types of users were considered.

Commuters

This viewer group includes commuters or residents traveling by transit within the project study area, and those using LAUS. This viewer group would have views of various elements of the project, depending on their route of travel.

Visitors/Tourists

This viewer group includes visitors, tourists, or recreational users within the project study area, primarily those visiting points of cultural interest such as Olvera Street, LAUS, museums, and other locations. This viewer group would have views of various elements of the project, depending on their route of travel.

6.2 Viewer Response

Viewer response is a measure or prediction of the viewer's reaction to changes in the visual environment and has two dimensions, as previously mentioned: viewer exposure and viewer sensitivity.

6.2.1 Viewer Exposure

Viewer exposure is a measure of the viewer's ability to see a particular object. Viewer exposure has three attributes: location, quantity, and duration. Location relates to the position of the viewer in relationship to the object being viewed. The closer the viewer is to the object, the more exposure. Quantity refers to how many people see the object. The more people who can see an object or the greater frequency an object is seen, the more exposure the object has to viewers. Duration refers to how long a viewer is able to keep an object in view. The longer an object can be kept in view, the more exposure. High viewer exposure helps predict if viewers would have a response to a visual change.

Narrative ratings have been used to assess viewer exposure. Narrative ratings range from low (larger distance, fewer viewers, and/or short duration) to moderate (moderate distance, moderate number of viewers, and/or moderate duration) and high (proximal location, high number of viewers, and/or long duration of exposure).

Residents

This viewer group would have views that would be relatively close to certain project elements in Visual Assessment Unit #1 and Visual Assessment Unit #2. Buildings in Visual Assessment Unit #1 are two to three stories high, and the Mozaic Apartments building is five stories high. Residents at the William Mead Homes (Visual Assessment Unit #1) would have proximal views of the throat segment of the project study area (Segment 1). Residents at the Mozaic Apartments (Visual Assessment Unit #2) would have proximal views of the elevated rail yard and passenger concourse (Segment 2). There would be a moderate number of viewers in this viewer group, including those living in the William Mead Homes and Mozaic Apartments, and not all of the residents would have immediate views of the project elements because of the existing orientation of residential structures (William Mead Homes or Mozaic Apartments). Exposure to visual changes resulting from the project would be long term in duration, because the project elements would be permanent features in the landscape. Some viewers, depending upon the residential unit in which they reside (William Mead Homes or Mozaic Apartments), would see the changes when arriving at and leaving their homes, and may have views of the area from inside their homes. Overall exposure for this viewer group is considered high.

Business Owners/Employees

This viewer group would have views that would be relatively close to different elements of the project in all visual assessment units, with the exception of Visual Assessment Unit #1. There would be a high number of viewers in this viewer group because the project would be visible from several commercial/industrial corridors, including Vignes Street (Visual Assessment Unit #2), Cesar Chavez Avenue (Visual Assessment Unit #3), Alameda Street (Visual Assessment Unit #4), Commercial Street and US-101 (Visual Assessment Unit #5), and buildings surrounding LAUS (Visual Assessment Unit #6). Some project elements would also be visible from high-rise buildings and other elevated areas in a larger surrounding area. Most viewers would have short-term exposure to views in the project study area when arriving and leaving businesses; however, exposure would be often, and potentially daily. Some business owners and/or employees may have a longer period of exposure if they have views of the project from their places of business. Overall exposure of this viewer group is considered moderately high.

Commuters

This viewer group would have views that would be relatively close to certain project elements in all visual assessment units, with the exception of Visual Assessment Unit #1. Commuters along Vignes Street (Visual Assessment Unit #2) would have views of the new bridge; commuters along Cesar Chavez Avenue (Visual Assessment Unit #3) would have views of the new bridge, elevated rail yard, and canopies; viewers along Alameda Street (Visual Assessment Unit #4), and Commercial Street and US-101 (Visual Assessment Unit #5) would have views of the run-through track structures south of LAUS. Viewers using LAUS would have views of the railroad tracks and LAUS (Visual Assessment Unit #6). There would be many viewers in this viewer group, since the project is located along several main roadways, highways, and transit corridors. This viewer group would have a range of short-term to long-term exposure to views in the project study area depending on traffic level during the travel time period; however, exposure would be often, and potentially daily. Overall exposure of this viewer group is considered moderately high.

Visitors/Tourists

This viewer group would have views that would be relatively close to different elements of the project in all visual assessment units, with the exception of Visual Assessment Unit #1. Visitors at LAUS (Visual Assessment Unit #6) would have views of the passenger concourse, and train riders would have views of the tracks and concourse. Visitors traveling along local roadways and US-101 (Visual Assessment Unit #2 through Visual Assessment Unit #5) would have views of certain project elements, depending on location. There would be many viewers in this viewer group because the project is located in Downtown Los Angeles, near Chinatown, Olvera Street, and other cultural points of interest, and at LAUS. Some viewers would have short-term exposure to views in the project study area when passing through or visiting the area, and exposure would be intermittent. Overall exposure of this viewer group is considered moderate.

6.2.2 Viewer Sensitivity

Viewer sensitivity is a measure of the viewer's recognition of a particular object. Viewer sensitivity has three attributes: activity, awareness, and local values:

- Activity relates to the pre-occupation of viewers, whether they are preoccupied, thinking of something else, or are truly engaged in observing their surroundings. The more they are actually observing their surroundings, the more sensitivity viewers will have of changes to visual resources.
- Awareness relates to the focus of view, whether the focus is wide and the view general, or the focus is narrow and the view specific. The more specific the awareness, the more sensitive a viewer is to change.
- Local values and attitudes also affect viewer sensitivity. If the viewer group values aesthetics in general, or if a specific visual resource has been protected by local, state, or national designation, it is likely that viewers would be more sensitive to visible changes. High viewer sensitivity helps predict if viewers would have a high concern for any visual change.

Residents

Most viewers in this group would be arriving at or leaving their homes, or spending time in their homes or patios (Visual Assessment Unit #1 and Visual Assessment Unit #3). Awareness of existing visual setting and sensitivity to visual changes would be high for these viewers because they would be more focused on their surroundings. Therefore, overall sensitivity of this viewer group to visual changes in the project study area is considered high.

Business Owners/Employees

Most viewers in this group would be at or near work (Visual Assessment Unit #2 through Visual Assessment Unit #6). Awareness of the visual setting would be moderate for business employees and patrons who would be more focused on their business, but may be higher for business owners who are concerned with the visual surroundings of their businesses. Therefore, overall sensitivity of this viewer group to visual changes in the project study area is considered moderately high.

Commuters

Most viewers in this group would be traveling to or from work or home (Visual Assessment Unit #2 through Visual Assessment Unit #6). Awareness of the visual setting would be moderately high for drivers, who would notice the creation of a large structure even during periods of light roadway congestion, but would be able to focus on the surrounding views during periods of heavy roadway congestion when vehicles are moving much more slowly. Awareness of the visual setting would range from moderate to moderately high for passengers, bicyclists, and pedestrians who would be able to focus on their surroundings, but may be accustomed to the views. Therefore, overall sensitivity of this viewer group to visual changes in the project study area is considered moderately high.

Visitors/Tourists

Most viewers in this group would be traveling to local businesses or points of cultural interest, or traveling through the area (Visual Assessment Unit #2 through Visual Assessment Unit #6). Awareness of the visual setting would be moderate for drivers since they would be more focused on driving, but would be high for passengers, bicyclists, and pedestrians who would be engaged in passive activities and, as visitors, would be more focused on their surroundings. Therefore, the sensitivity of this viewer group to visual changes in the project study area would be considered moderately high.

6.2.3 Overall Predicted Viewer Response

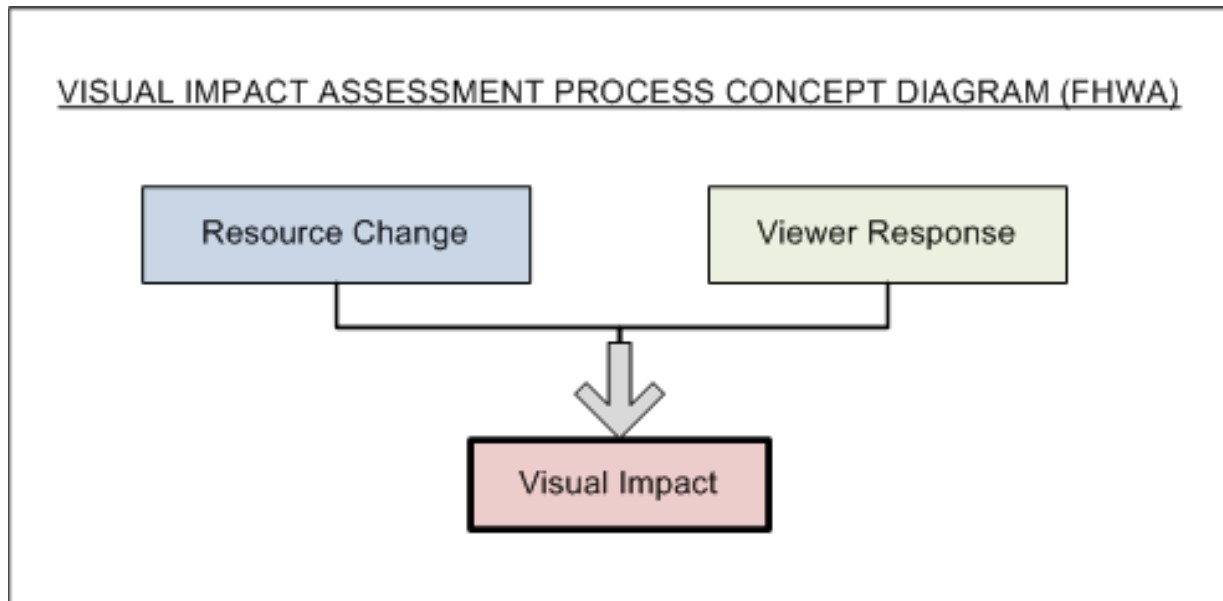
The narrative descriptions of viewer exposure and viewer sensitivity for each viewer group have been combined and averaged to establish the overall predicted viewer response of each group to visual changes resulting from the project (Table 6-1). Overall predicted viewer response would be moderate to high, depending on the type of view and viewer group.

Viewer Group	Exposure	Sensitivity	Viewer Response
Residents	High	High	High
Business Owners/Employees	Moderately High	Moderately High	Moderately High
Commuters	Moderately High	Moderately High	Moderately High
Visitors	Moderate	Moderately High	Moderately High

7.0 Environmental Impacts

Visual impacts are determined by assessing changes to the visual resources and predicting viewer response to those changes. These impacts can be beneficial or detrimental. A generalized visual impact assessment process is illustrated on Figure 7-1.

Figure 7-1. Federal Highway Administration Visual Impact Assessment Process Concept Diagram



7.1 Resource Change

Resource change is assessed by evaluating the visual character and the visual quality of the visual resources that comprise the project study area before and after the construction of the project. Resource change is one of the two major variables that determine visual impacts. The overall level of resource change has been qualitatively assessed by assigning one of five resource change levels: low, moderately low, moderate, moderately high, or high. Table 7-1 provides a reference for determining levels of visual impact by combining resource change and viewer response.

Table 7-1. Visual Impact Using Resource Change and Viewer Response

		Viewer Response				
		Low (L)	Moderately Low (ML)	Moderate (M)	Moderately High (MH)	High (H)
Resource Change	Low	L	ML	ML	M	M
	Moderately Low	ML	ML	M	M	MH
	Moderate	ML	M	M	MH	MH
	Moderately High	M	M	MH	MH	H
	High	M	MH	MH	H	H

Notes:

H=High; L=Low, M=Medium; MH=Medium High; ML=Medium Low

8.0 Impact Analysis

8.1 Thresholds of Significance

According to the *Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide* (City of Los Angeles 2006), the following thresholds were used to determine significance under CEQA:

- A. The project would result in a significant impact if it would result in an adverse effect on a scenic vista from a designated scenic resource because of obstruction of view.
- B. The project would result in a significant impact if it would substantially damage scenic resources including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.
- C. The project would result in a significant impact if it would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site or its surroundings.
- D. The project would result in a significant impact if it would create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area.

8.2 Criteria Requiring No Further Evaluation

The following CEQA effect criteria were determined to result in no impact or are otherwise inapplicable to the actions associated with the project.

- A. **Scenic Vistas** – There are no scenic vistas from a designated scenic resource that would be obstructed by the project; therefore, no additional discussion is required.
- B. **State Scenic Highways** – There are no state scenic highways in the project study area; therefore, no additional discussion is required.

8.3 Visual Character and Quality

THRESHOLD C	The project would result in a significant impact if it would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site or its surroundings.
------------------------	--

8.3.1 Visual Assessment Unit #1: William Mead Homes

Construction

Proposed Project

Construction vehicles, equipment, and machinery use would be visible from Key View #1a and Key View #1b at William Mead Homes. Vehicles and equipment and associated staging areas for throat track reconstruction would be contained within the railroad ROW during the full build-out condition. Construction activities would be temporary; therefore, impacts are considered less than significant.

Build Alternative

Construction vehicles, equipment, and machinery use would be visible from William Mead Homes. Compared to the proposed project, construction activities would extend outside of the railroad ROW directly adjacent to some of the apartment buildings. Construction activities would be temporary; therefore, impacts are considered less than significant.

Operations

Proposed Project

Although the visual quality of Visual Assessment Unit #1 is low, the proposed project would introduce new, noticeable infrastructure elements and attributes to the visual landscape that would contribute to a substantial degradation to existing visual character:

- Form (visual mass and shape)
- Dominance (position, size, or contrast)
- Scale (apparent size as it relates to the surroundings)

Views from Key View #1a and Key View #1b would consist of a retaining wall supporting new lead tracks that would run alongside the William Mead Homes complex. The retaining wall would present a new linear infrastructure element that would be a dominant feature, substantially larger than any of the current surroundings within the residential community. This is considered a significant impact.

Construction of a sound wall on top of the retaining wall would further contribute to the form, dominance, and scale of these key views, because a higher wall would be constructed at the William Mead Homes complex, resulting in a moderately high change to visual quality. Viewer response would be high; therefore, visual impacts would be high. This impact is considered a significant. Mitigation Measure AES-1 (described in Section 8.4.7) is proposed to mitigate impacts related to visual quality and aesthetics to a level less than significant.

Build Alternative

The build alternative requires the retaining wall supporting new lead tracks to be located closer to the William Mead Homes buildings to facilitate a dedicated track alignment through the throat segment. Encroachment outside of the existing railroad ROW requires reconfiguration of Bolero Lane, parking modifications, removal of an existing tree, and other civil improvements, including relocation of existing overhead power lines (Figure 8-3). The physical encroachment outside of the railroad ROW, combined with the scale of the retaining wall, would result in a moderate change to visual character and quality. Viewer response would be high; therefore, impacts would be moderately high. This impact is considered a significant impact.

Construction of a sound wall would further increase the scale of visual change, resulting in a moderately high change to visual quality. Viewer response would be high; therefore, visual impacts would be high. This

impact is considered a significant impact. Mitigation Measure AES-1 (described in Section 8.4.7) is proposed to mitigate impacts related to visual quality and aesthetics to a level less than significant.

Figure 8-1 through Figure 8-7 depict Key Views #1a and #1b in the existing and post-project conditions, with a new retaining wall, and with a new sound wall adjacent to the William Mead Homes complex. The visual simulations for Key Views #1a and #1b were prepared to illustrate the potential visual impacts resulting from a new retaining wall and sound wall at these locations. Visual simulations for Key View #1b depict the post-project condition for the proposed project and the build alternative.

Figure 8-1. Key View #1a – Existing Conditions



Figure 8-2. Key View #1a – Post-Project Conditions (Proposed Project)
(Retaining Wall and Sound Wall)



Figure 8-3. Key View #1a – Post-Project Conditions (Build Alternative)
(Retaining Wall and Sound Wall)



Figure 8-4. Key View #1b – Existing Conditions



Figure 8-5. Key View #1b – Post-Project Conditions
(Retaining Wall)



Figure 8-6. Key View #1b – Existing Conditions



Figure 8-7. Key View #1b – Post-Project Conditions (Retaining Wall and Sound Wall)



8.3.2 Visual Assessment Unit #2: Vignes Street Corridor

Construction

Proposed Project and Build Alternative

Construction vehicles, equipment, and machinery use would be visible from Key Views #2a and #2b during the full build-out condition. Construction activities would extend into the road during construction of the new Vignes Street Bridge abutments and related track and civil work in the throat segment. Construction activities would be temporary; therefore, impacts are considered less than significant. The proposed project and build alternative would result in similar impacts.

Operation

Proposed Project and Build Alternative

Views from Key Views #2a and #2b would consist of a new railroad bridge façade on the crossing over Vignes Street and retaining walls to support new lead tracks in the throat segment (Figure 8-8 through Figure 8-11). The new bridge would increase the scale of vertical elements in the visual landscape; however, within much of the corridor, the change would not substantially affect existing views in the full build-out condition due to the presence of existing infrastructure. Commuters on Vignes Street would have more proximal views as they approach the bridge.

The bridge would be placed in the same location as the existing bridge. The change in the height of the bridge over Vignes Street would result in a low change to visual character. Viewer response would be low for business owners/employees and visitors; therefore, impacts would be low for these viewer groups. Viewer response would be moderate for commuters; therefore, impacts would be moderately low for this viewer group. Impacts are considered less than significant. The proposed project and build alternative would result in similar impacts.

Figure 8-8. Key View #2a – Vignes Street Bridge (view looking west toward bridge)
Existing Conditions



Figure 8-9. Key View #2a – Vignes Street Bridge (view looking west toward bridge)
Post-Project Conditions



Figure 8-10. Key View #2b – Vignes Street Bridge (view looking east toward bridge)
Existing Project Conditions



Figure 8-11. Key View #2b – Vignes Street Bridge (view looking east toward bridge)
Post-Project Conditions



8.3.3 Visual Assessment Unit #3: Cesar Chavez Avenue Corridor/Mozaic Apartments

Construction

Proposed Project and Build Alternative

Construction vehicles, equipment, and machinery use would be visible from Key Views #3a and #3b during the full build-out condition. Construction activities would extend into the road during construction of the new bridge abutments and related track and civil work for the elevated rail yard. Construction activities would be temporary; therefore, impacts are considered less than significant. The proposed project and build alternative would result in similar impacts.

Operations

Proposed Project and Build Alternative

Views from Key Views #3a and #3b in the full build-out condition would consist of a new railroad bridge façade on the crossing over Cesar Chavez Avenue, retaining walls to support the new lead tracks and elevated rail yard, and platform canopies (Figure 8-12 through Figure 8-15). The new bridge would support tracks that would be elevated 10 to 15 feet higher than the existing top-of-rail at this location. Some of the canopies would also be visible from viewers along Cesar Chavez Avenue and residents of the Mozaic Apartments.

The new bridge would be replaced in the same location as the existing bridge, although the new canopies would introduce a more modern element into the railroad ROW. The new bridge and retaining walls to support elevated tracks would increase the scale of vertical and horizontal infrastructure elements in the visual landscape; however, the change would not substantially affect existing views. Commuters on Cesar Chavez Avenue would have more proximal views as they approach the bridge.

The change in the height and span of the bridge over Cesar Chavez Avenue, along with the introduction of new retaining walls, would result in a low change to visual character. Viewer response would be low for business owners/employees and visitors; therefore, impacts would be low for these viewer groups. Viewer response would be moderate for commuters; therefore, impacts would be moderately low for this viewer group. Impacts are considered less than significant. The proposed project and build alternative would result in similar impacts.

Figure 8-12. Key View #3a – Cesar Chavez Avenue (view looking west toward bridge)
Existing Conditions



Figure 8-13. Key View #3a – Cesar Chavez Avenue (view looking west toward bridge)
Post-Project Conditions



Figure 8-14. Key View #3b – Cesar Chavez Avenue Bridge (view looking east toward bridge)
Existing Conditions



Figure 8-15. Key View #3b – Cesar Chavez Avenue Bridge (view looking east toward bridge)
Post-Project Conditions



8.3.4 Visual Assessment Unit #4: Alameda Street Corridor/Father Serra Park

Construction

Proposed Project and Build Alternative

Construction vehicles, equipment, and machinery use would be visible from Key Views #4a and #4b during the full build-out condition. Construction activities would require use of cranes and other heavy equipment during construction of the new passenger concourse and the elevated rail yard. With the exception of the cranes required to construct the new above-grade passenger concourse, no other construction-related equipment is expected to be visible from Key Views #4a and #4b because no work is proposed on the western extent of the LAUS campus. Construction activities would be temporary and not visible for prolonged periods of time because of the distance from the key views; therefore, impacts are considered less than significant. The proposed project and build alternative would result in similar impacts.

Operations

Proposed Project

From Key Views #4a and #4b (Figure 8-17 and Figure 8-19), views from the Alameda Street corridor and Father Serra Park looking east toward LAUS would include a small segment of the elevated portion of the above-grade passenger concourse. Views of the elevated portion of the new passenger concourse are expected to take place intermittently for short durations of time as viewers pass LAUS along Alameda Street or utilize the public spaces in the vicinity. The elevated portion of the above-grade passenger concourse would introduce new infrastructure behind the historic LAUS entrance that would include design elements consistent with other transportation-related infrastructure and development in the project study area. The primary viewers would be commuters, tourists, business persons, and nearby residents. Figure 8-17 through Figure 8-19 depict the elevated portion of the new above-grade passenger concourse that would be visible to primary viewers in this Visual Assessment Unit.

As depicted in the simulations, the elevated portion of the above-grade passenger concourse visible from portions of Father Serra Park and the adjacent Plaza area would result in a moderately-high change to visual character. Views looking east from Key Views #4a and #4b have changed substantially over time, and the visual landscape has changed dramatically over the last eight decades due to construction of LAUS, modernization of Alameda and Los Angeles Streets, and construction of US-101 and the El Monte Busway, high rise condominium buildings, Gateway Plaza, and the MWD Headquarters. While vantage points would be limited due to the topography and existing development within the study area, viewer response would be moderately-high for commuters, business persons, and nearby residents due to the historic integrity of LAUS. No changes to the visual quality of LAUS would occur due to the preservation of the historic main building (e.g., tile roof, stucco wall cladding, arched main entrance, decorated beams, and tile floors) and other features, such as the ticketing halls, arcades, clock tower, and patios. The new expanded passageway is located under the rail yard and would not be visible from Key Views #4a and #4b. Therefore, these impacts are considered less than significant.

Build Alternative

Compared to the proposed project, a reduced magnitude of impact from Key Views #4a and #4b would result from implementation of the at-grade passenger concourse with a grand canopy. No direct impact would occur because no changes to the visual quality of LAUS would occur due to the preservation of the historic main building (e.g., tile roof, stucco wall cladding, arched main entrance, decorated beams, and tile floors) and other features, such as the ticketing halls, arcades, clock tower, and patios. For this reason, visual simulations for Key View #4a and #4b are not depicted for the build alternative.

Figure 8-16. Key View #4a – Los Angeles Union Station Entrance (view looking southeast from Alameda Street toward Los Angeles Union Station) Existing Conditions



Figure 8-17. Key View #4a – Los Angeles Union Station Entrance (view looking southeast from Alameda Street toward Los Angeles Union Station) Post-Project Conditions



Figure 8-18. Key View #4b – Los Angeles Union Station Entrance (view looking east from Father Serra Park toward Los Angeles Union Station) Existing Conditions



Figure 8-19. Key View #4b – Los Angeles Union Station Entrance (view looking east from Father Serra Park toward Los Angeles Union Station) Post-Project Conditions



8.3.5 Visual Assessment Unit #5: Commercial Street/US-101 Corridor

Construction

Proposed Project and Build Alternative

Construction vehicles, equipment, and machinery use would be visible from travelers on US-101, Alameda Street, Commercial Street, Center Street, and other roadways in the run-through segment during the interim and full build-out conditions. Construction activities would occur in staging areas along Commercial Street directly adjacent to industrial and commercial land uses. Construction activities would be temporary; therefore, impacts are considered less than significant. The proposed project and build alternative would result in similar impacts.

Operations

Proposed Project and Build Alternative

Views from Key Views #5a, #5b, and #5c would consist of new run-through structures south of LAUS, including the common viaduct/deck that would cross over US-101 (Figure 8-20 through Figure 8-25) that would be constructed in the interim condition. For the proposed project, portions of the new above-grade passenger concourse would also be visible along Commercial Street from Key View #5b and other similar viewpoints south of US-101; however, the new expanded passageway is located under the rail yard and would not be visible from Key Views #5a, #5b, and #5c. For the build alternative, views of at-grade

passenger concourse elements would not be visible from south of LAUS, with exception of the grand canopy over the elevated rail yard.

The run-through track structures would be highly visible south of LAUS following construction in the interim condition. The viaduct over US-101 would be constructed of materials similar to those used in the Alameda Street overhead crossing and the Gold Line viaduct, but it would be a more prominent structure than the existing Gold Line viaduct over US-101 due to the width of the structure required to accommodate up to ten run-through tracks. The proposed project and build alternative would substantially add transportation infrastructure elements to the existing visual environments south of LAUS, but the proposed improvements would be in context with the existing transportation infrastructure in this assessment unit, as it is primarily a transportation corridor with multiple highway and railroad-oriented uses. The scale of the highway corridor and surrounding development is linear and large; therefore, the addition of the run-through track viaduct structure and embankment would not significantly impact the low visual character of this visual assessment unit.

- From Key View #5a, looking southeast from LAUS toward Commercial Street, the run-through track structures would present a new, dominant feature in the foreground landscape, and would reduce the visibility of aging industrial buildings and overhead power lines in the background.
- From Key View #5b, looking north from Commercial Street toward US-101 and LAUS, the run-through track structure over US-101 and the elevated portion of the above-grade passenger concourse (proposed project) would dominate the views from Commercial Street looking toward LAUS, the Metropolitan Water District building and the Metro Headquarters Building. A reduced magnitude of visual effect would be realized from the grand canopy above the rail yard associated with the build alternative.
- From Key View #5c, introduction of the run-through track structure would require placement of outrigger bents over the intersection of Commercial Street and the US-101 on-/off-ramps, and would result in potential shadow impacts on Commercial Street below. Overhead bridges with associated bents and abutments within public ROW, and at freeway on-and off-ramp locations, are a common infrastructure element within and adjacent to Caltrans ROW. There are no scenic resources, residential land uses, or other sensitive land uses that would be significantly impacted by the run-through track structures at this location in Segment 3.

The changes in views and scale from the run-through track structures would be moderately high, although, in context with the surrounding transportation infrastructure and industrial land uses, the proposed project or the build alternative would result in a low change to visual character and quality (resource change). As there are no scenic highways, residential land uses, or other sensitive land uses at this location, viewer response would vary from moderately high for business owners/employees experiencing new, large structures, while the visual response of visitors and commuters on US-101 (northbound and southbound travelers) would be moderately-low as there would be minimal disruption to their visual expectations.

Travelers along northbound and southbound US-101 would be subject to the greatest duration of views of the US-101 viaduct structure, mainly because they would be traveling toward and under the viaduct, and in some cases during heavy traffic. Views are anticipated to be no different than any other overhead crossings within Caltrans ROW. Although travelers along US-101 may be subject to a visual change with introduction of new run-through track infrastructure, the aesthetics of the proposed abutments and bents to support the US-101 viaduct would be designed consistent with other overhead crossings within Caltrans ROW, and this portion of US-101 is not a protected scenic highway.

For the proposed project, US-101 travelers would have limited views of the elevated portion of the new passenger concourse (northbound travelers especially) primarily because the portion of US-101 south of LAUS is at a lower elevation than the railyard, views of the new passenger concourse would be perpendicular to the direction travelers would be facing, and the existing retaining wall at the south end of LAUS is the primary visible feature in this area. Upon implementation of the proposed project, the rail yard would be elevated up to 15-feet higher than the existing condition, the southern retaining wall would be expanded, and the above-grade passenger concourse would be constructed in the center of the rail yard, located on average 550 feet – and no closer than 360 feet – north of the US-101 ROW, further reducing the visibility of the concourse to travelers along US-101. Therefore, impacts would be moderate for business persons and low for visitors and commuters. Based on these considerations, this impact is considered less than significant. For the build alternative, views of the grand canopy may be visible, but at a reduced scale compared to the above-grade passenger concourse, due to the height. Based on these considerations, impacts are less than significant.

Figure 8-20. Key View #5a – US-101/Commercial Street (view looking southeast from Los Angeles Union Station toward US-101/Commercial Street) Existing Conditions



Figure 8-21. Key View #5a – US-101/Commercial Street (view looking southeast from Los Angeles Union Station toward US-101/Commercial Street) Post-Project Conditions



Figure 8-22. Key View #5b – Commercial Street (view looking north from Commercial Street toward US-101 and Los Angeles Union Station) Existing Conditions



Figure 8-23. Key View #5b – Commercial Street (view looking north from Commercial Street toward US-101 and Los Angeles Union Station) Post-Project Conditions



Figures 8-24. Key View #5c – Commercial Street (view looking east from US-101 on/off ramps toward embankment) Existing Conditions



Figure 8-25. Key View #5c – Commercial Street (view looking east from US-101 on/off ramps toward embankment) Post-Project Conditions



8.3.6 Visual Assessment Unit #6: Los Angeles Union Station

Proposed Project

Within Visual Assessment Unit #6, the proposed project would include the construction of a new above-grade passenger concourse with new expanded passageway during the full build-out condition. New vertical circulation elements and standard amenities, including benches, variable message signs, new lighting, closed-circuit television security cameras, ticket vending machines, passenger waiting areas, and trash receptacles, would be distributed throughout the concourse. Similar to existing conditions, the rail yard would be within an exterior environment, although it would be elevated approximately 15 feet within this visual assessment unit, and elevated portion of the above-grade passenger concourse would be visible above the tracks. The elevated rail yard would block some existing views of commercial/industrial developments in this visual assessment unit.

The above-grade passenger concourse with new expanded passageway would introduce new, noticeable visual elements in the landscape that would be larger in scale and more modern than the existing visual elements. The elevated portion of the above-grade passenger concourse would present a new, dominant feature in the landscape and would introduce new vertical building elements above the rail yard that would provide prominent views within and outside of LAUS. As a result, viewers would have panoramic views of Downtown Los Angeles. The scale and modern architectural style of the new above-grade passenger concourse would result in changes to the character of the visual assessment unit; however, the design of the new above-grade passenger concourse would be compatible with the surrounding visual landscape in Downtown Los Angeles, would include sustainable design features consistent with the vision for LAUS, and would improve upon the aesthetics in the existing rail yard, ramp areas, and pedestrian passageway.

The expanded passageway is a minor element to the new above-grade passenger concourse directed at reducing passenger travel times for connection between transit modes. The new expanded passageway is located under the rail yard and is not a primary visual feature compared to the above-grade portion of the passenger concourse.

Because the design of the new above-grade passenger concourse would be compatible with the existing setting and would be expected to improve the existing aesthetics, the proposed project would result in a moderately high and beneficial change to visual character and quality (resource change). Viewer response would be moderately high for business owners/employees and visitors; therefore, impacts would be moderately high for these viewer groups. Viewer response would be moderate for commuters. Impacts on business owners/employees, visitors, and commuters are anticipated to be beneficial.

Residents of the Mozaic Apartments would have the most prominent views of the new above-grade passenger concourse, particularly those residents with units facing south or east. These residents would have a full view of the new structural elements for extended periods of time; therefore impacts would be moderately-high. The view toward the concourse would be to the southeast, which currently is an open air view of the existing rail yard. Based on these considerations, impacts are considered less than significant.

Build Alternative

The at-grade passenger concourse would replace the existing pedestrian passageway, ramps, and railings leading to the platforms and would introduce new modern concourse amenities with larger open aisles for enhanced ingress/egress throughout. The existing pedestrian passageway would be demolished. The scale and modern architectural style of the at-grade passenger concourse would result in changes to the character of the visual assessment unit; however, the design of the passenger concourse would be compatible with the surrounding visual landscape in Downtown Los Angeles, would include sustainable design features consistent with the vision for LAUS, and would improve upon the existing aesthetics in the existing rail yard, ramp areas, and pedestrian passageway.

Because the design of the at-grade passenger concourse would be compatible with the existing setting and would be expected to improve the existing aesthetics, the build alternative would result in a moderately high and beneficial change to visual character and quality (resource change). Viewer response would be moderately high for business owners/employees and visitors; therefore, impacts would be moderately high for these viewer groups. Viewer response would be moderate for commuters. Impacts on business owners/employees, visitors, and commuters would be beneficial. Based on these considerations, impacts are considered less than significant.

8.3.7 Views of New Passenger Concourse within Visual Assessment Unit #6

Architectural representations of the above-grade passenger concourse with new expanded passageway and the at-grade passenger concourse, depicting the interior and exterior views from within Visual Assessment Unit #6, were prepared. The renderings are conceptual, subject to change, and provided to illustrate the extent of architectural expansion and renovation proposed for LAUS.

Proposed Project - Above-Grade Passenger Concourse

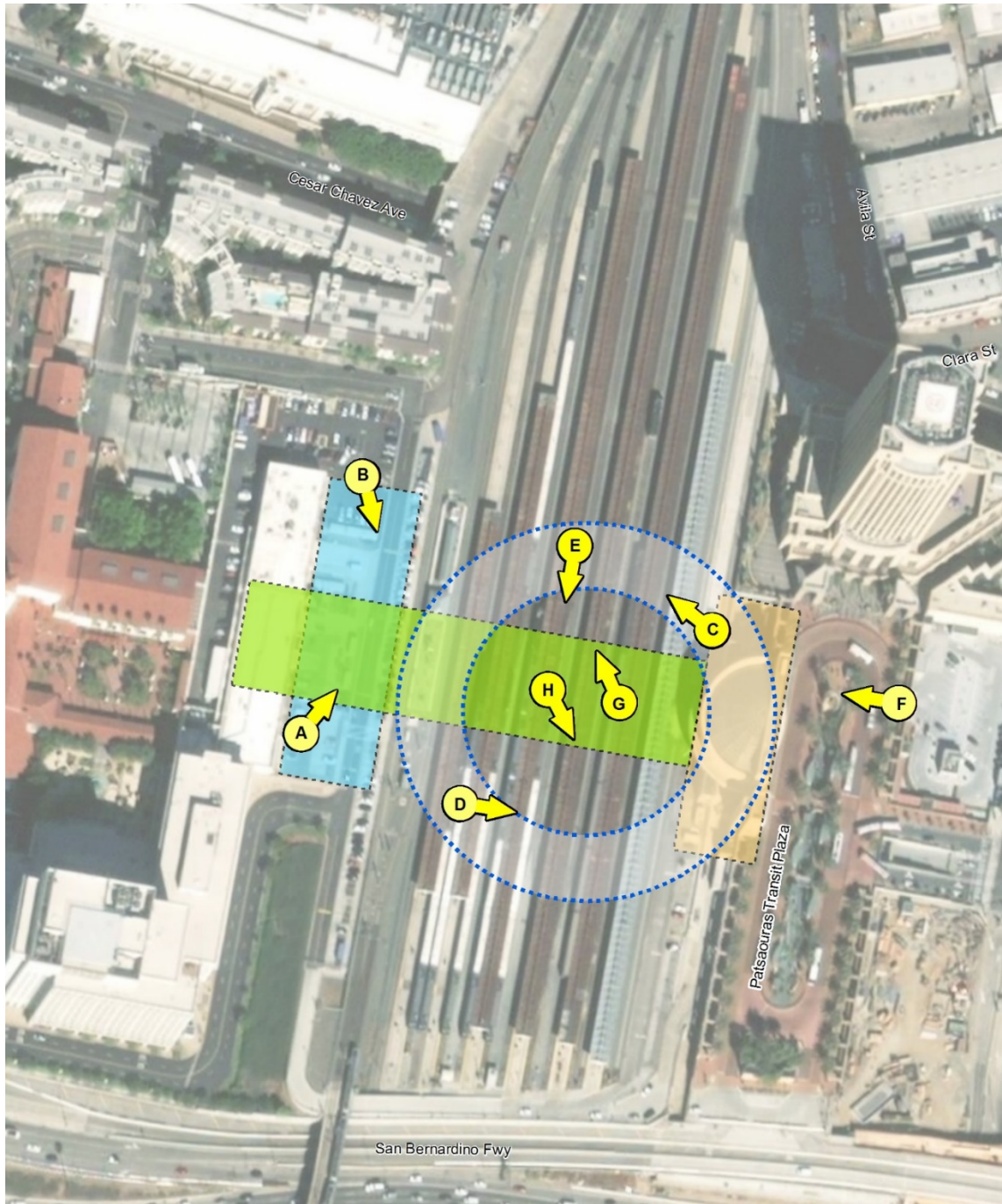
Figure 8-26 depicts the viewpoint locations that were selected to depict the new above-grade passenger concourse. Figure 8-27 through Figure 8-34 depict views of and within the West Plaza, East Plaza, ingress/egress areas, waiting areas, vertical circulation elements, platforms areas, and new expanded passageway (Views A through H).

Build Alternative - At-Grade Passenger Concourse

Figure 8-35 depicts the viewpoint locations that were selected to depict the at-grade passenger concourse. Figure 8-36 through Figure 8-41 depict views of and within the West Plaza, East Plaza, ingress/egress areas, waiting areas, vertical circulation elements, and platforms areas (Views A through F).


(THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

Figure 8-26. Viewpoint Locations of the New Above-Grade Passenger Concourse with New Expanded Passageway



LEGEND

-  Proposed East Plaza
-  Proposed West Plaza
-  Proposed Above-Grade Passenger Concourse (View A-F)
-  New Expanded Passageway (View G and H)

 Viewpoint Location



0 Feet 100

(THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK)

Figure 8-27. View A - Exterior View of West Plaza Looking North



Figure 8-28. View B - Exterior View of West Plaza Looking South



Figure 8-29. View C - Interior View of Vertical Circulation Elements Looking Northwest



Figure 8-30. View D - Interior View of Retail Space and Waiting Areas Looking East



Figure 8-31. View E - Exterior View of Platforms Looking North



Figure 8-32. View F - Exterior View of East Plaza Looking Southwest

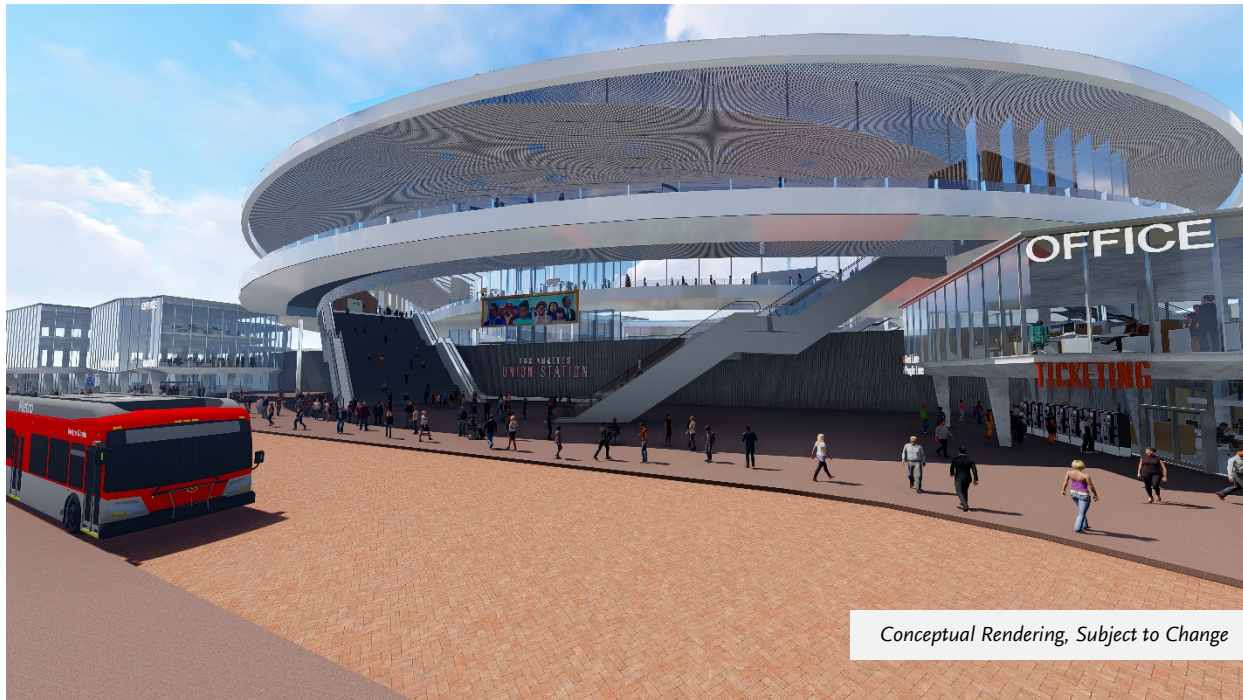


Figure 8-33. View G – New Expanded Passageway (Interior View Looking North)






Figure 8-34. View H – New Expanded Passageway (Interior View Looking South)



Figure 8-35. Viewpoint Locations of the New At-Grade Passenger Concourse (Build Alternative)



LEGEND

-  Proposed East Plaza
-  Proposed West Plaza
-  At-Grade Passenger Concourse (Build Alternative)(View A-F)
-  Existing Passenger Passageway

 Passenger Concourse Viewpoint Location



0 Feet 100

(THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK)

Figure 8-36. View A - Exterior View of West Plaza Looking North



Figure 8-37. View B - Interior View of Vertical Circulation Elements Looking North



Figure 8-38. View C - Interior View of Core Retail Space and Waiting Areas Looking East



Figure 8-39. View D - Exterior View of Platforms and Historic LAUS Looking West



Figure 8-40. View E - Interior View of East Plaza Looking East



Figure 8-41. View F - Exterior View of East Plaza Looking West



8.4 Lighting and Glare

THRESHOLD D	The project would result in a significant impact if it would create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area.
------------------------	--

8.4.1 Visual Assessment Unit #1: William Mead Homes

Construction

Proposed Project and Build Alternative

Work in Visual Assessment Unit #1 is not expected to occur at night, although some nighttime construction may be required for safety and to maintain optimal train operations during construction. During nighttime construction activities, temporary lighting may be used at discrete locations for certain construction activities. The project study area is currently an urban area with multiple sources and types of lighting typically associated with a large, metropolitan city. The use of construction lighting during nighttime hours would not change the visual character of the area or degrade the visual quality because lighting would only be temporary, and would be placed in select locations. Due to the proximity of nearby residences to the construction work zone, residences of William Mead Homes would be exposed to higher levels of lighting during the nighttime hours for a temporary duration throughout project construction. This is considered a significant impact for the proposed project and build alternative. Mitigation Measure AES-2 (described in Section 8.4.7) is proposed to reduce construction-related light and glare impacts to a level less than significant.

Operations

Proposed Project and Build Alternative

The proposed project and build alternative would result in an increased number of trains and signals in the throat segment, which would result in an increase in lighting as trains move through the area; however, some of this lighting may be blocked by the sound wall required as part of Mitigation Measure NV-1. Any new light poles that may be required for safety purposes are also anticipated to be blocked by the sound wall.

Visual Assessment Unit #1 is within a developed urban area, and there is a limited amount of light-sensitive land uses (residences in Segments 1 and 2). The additional lighting within an existing railroad ROW in an area heavily utilized by transportation uses would be minor, and impacts related to lighting would not be expected to substantially affect the surrounding area. Impacts are considered less than significant for the proposed project and build alternative.

8.4.2 Visual Assessment Unit #2: Vignes Street Corridor

Construction

Proposed Project and Build Alternative

Work in Visual Assessment Unit #2 may occur at night during the full build-out condition, although construction activities during nighttime hours would not expose residents or other sensitive receptors to higher levels of light during those hours. Impacts are considered less than significant for the proposed project and build alternative.

Operations

Proposed Project and Build Alternative

Views within Visual Assessment Unit #2 would be limited primarily to the new bridge that would support new lead tracks over Vignes Street in the full build-out condition. The bridge would be elevated over Vignes Street; however, there would be no additional light or glare associated from the key views in the throat segment (Key Views #2a and #2b). Impacts are considered less than significant for the proposed project and build alternative.

8.4.3 Visual Assessment Unit #3: Cesar Chavez Avenue Corridor/Mosaic Apartments

Construction

Proposed Project and Build Alternative

Construction activities adjacent to the Mosaic Apartments could occur during nighttime hours during the full build-out condition. The use of construction lighting during nighttime hours would not change the visual character of the area or degrade the visual quality because lighting would only be temporary and would be placed in select locations. Due to the proximity of nearby residences to the construction work zone, residences of the Mosaic Apartments would be exposed to higher levels of lighting during the nighttime hours for a temporary duration throughout project construction. This is considered a significant impact for the proposed project and build alternative. Mitigation Measure AES-2 (described in Section 8.4.7) is proposed to reduce construction-related light and glare impacts to a level less than significant.

Operations

Proposed Project and Build Alternative

Views within Visual Assessment Unit #3 would primarily consist of the new bridge that would support new lead tracks over Cesar Chavez Avenue, new passenger platform canopies, and the elevated portion of the above-grade passenger concourse (for the proposed project). The bridge would be elevated, and lights

would be incorporated into the design of the elevated rail yard and new passenger concourse to meet current applicable safety standards in the full build-out condition. Project lighting would also be designed to comply with applicable rules, standards, and guidelines, including Metro rail design criteria (Metro 2013), SCRRRA design criteria (SCRRRA 2014), Illuminating Engineering Society standards (IES 2011a, 2011b, 2014), California Building Standards Code 2013 (Title 24), and LEED standards for new construction. These guidelines include requirements for lighting pollution reduction to minimize impacts on nearby residents by using lighting that complies with CALGreen maximum allowable glare ratings (California Building Standards Code 2013 – Title 24, Part 11) and minimizes backlighting, uplighting, and glare.

The project-related capacity enhancements would facilitate an increased number of trains through LAUS, which would increase the light from trains as they move through the area. On each of the seven elevated platforms, new lighting would be incorporated into the design for safety purposes, which may result in added light for some of the units in the Mozaic Apartments, if not properly designed and installed. The new platform canopies also have the potential to result in additional daytime glare. Currently, there is a large amount of illumination in this visual assessment unit from the existing station, and the amount of lighting added by the proposed project or the build alternative would not represent a noticeable or significant increase over existing levels. For residents in the Mozaic Apartment units nearest to the above-grade passenger concourse for the proposed project, exposure to more direct light and glare could occur (see Visual Assessment Unit #6) in the full build-out condition. Compared to the proposed project, operations-related light and glare impacts for Visual Assessment Unit #3 would be reduced under the build alternative because the at-grade passenger concourse would be constructed below the rail yard. This is considered a significant impact for the proposed project and a less than significant impact for the build alternative. Mitigation Measure AES-3 (described in Section 8.4.7) is proposed to reduce operations-related light and glare impacts of the proposed project to a level less than significant.

8.4.4 Visual Assessment Unit #4: Alameda Street Corridor/Father Serra Park

Construction

Proposed Project and Build Alternative

The minor construction equipment and activities that would be visible from key views in this visual assessment unit would not be subject to greater amounts of light or glare that would cause visual impacts during the full build-out condition when the concourse elements are constructed. This is considered a less than significant impact for the proposed project and build alternative.

Operations

Proposed Project and Build Alternative

Views of proposed infrastructure within Visual Assessment Unit #4 would be very limited in the full build-out condition, and would have little nighttime change because of illumination. The new above-grade passenger concourse would be illuminated similarly to a modern office building rather than a highly illuminated event venue; therefore, the light levels would not be significant for users along the corridor or

those observing from Father Serra Park site across Alameda Street to the west. As a result, impacts are considered less than significant for the proposed project and build alternative.

8.4.5 Visual Assessment Unit #5: Commercial Street/US-101 Corridor

Construction

Proposed Project and Build Alternative

The construction equipment and activities that would be visible from key views in this visual assessment unit would not be subject to greater amounts of light or glare that would cause visual impacts along US-101 or Commercial Street during the interim condition. Freeway users on US-101 would be exposed to greater amounts of nighttime lighting depending on construction schedules. Commercial Street contains numerous vacant and undeveloped lots in addition to commercial and industrial uses that would not be sensitive to additional lighting for construction purposes. As a result, the impact is considered less than significant under the proposed project and build alternative.

Operations

Proposed Project and Build Alternative

The proposed project and build alternative would include the construction of run-through tracks over US-101 and along Commercial Street, and additional viaduct structures east of Center Street. The scale of the run-through track infrastructure may generate shadows on US-101 and Commercial Street given the time of year and time of day (interim and full build-out conditions); however, there are no residential land uses or other sensitive land uses that would be impacted by the run-through tracks at this location. Lighting would be installed within the soffit of the US-101 viaduct for safety purposes and would be designed in accordance with American National Standards Institute/Illuminating Engineering Society of North America Recommended Practice for Tunnel Lighting (IES 2011c). The proposed project and build alternative would facilitate an increased number of trains, adding a new light source through this portion of the project study area. However, there is currently a large amount of lighting in this visual assessment unit from transportation, commercial, and industrial uses, and the amount of lighting added by the run-through tracks would not be substantially noticeable. The proposed project or the build alternative are not expected to result in additional daytime glare in this visual assessment unit.

Because Visual Assessment Unit #5 is within a developed urban area, and because additional lighting would be minor, impacts related to lighting would not be expected to substantially affect the surrounding area. Impacts are considered less than significant for the proposed project and build alternative.

8.4.6 Visual Assessment Unit #6: Los Angeles Union Station

Proposed Project and Build Alternative

Views within Visual Assessment Unit #6 are limited primarily to the elevated portion of the new passenger concourse (for the proposed project), rail yard tracks and platforms, and to a lesser degree, the run-through structures. The proposed project and build alternative would include the reconstruction and raising of the rail yard during the full build-out condition. The elevated portion of the new passenger concourse would include a new light source similar to an office building that would include lighting on multiple levels throughout the facility. A new source of glare could occur from the glass on the structure or from the new canopies. The new passenger concourse would likely be visible from a distance; however, there is a large amount of existing lighting in this visual assessment unit from transportation, commercial, and industrial uses, and the existing station currently has a large amount of lighting spilling out into this visual assessment unit. Therefore, the amount of project-related lighting would not be substantially different for either the proposed project or build alternative relative to current conditions.

New lighting would be installed along the entire length of each new elevated platform. Lighting would be placed below canopies, which would reduce the majority of light spill outside of rail yard; however, impacts would be significant if these elements are not properly designed or placed throughout the facility to minimize impacts on nearby drivers and residential land uses. Additionally, the new canopies themselves could also generate a new source of daytime glare.

New sources of light and glare for residents of the Mozaic Apartments and nearby drivers is considered a significant impact. Mitigation Measure AES-3 (described in Section 8.4.7) is proposed to mitigate operations-related light and glare-related impacts to a level less than significant for the proposed project or build alternative.

8.4.7 Mitigation Measures

The following measures would be incorporated into the proposed project or build alternative to mitigate impacts to a level less than significant.

AES-1 Aesthetic Treatments for Retaining Walls/Sound Walls: Retaining walls in Segments 1 and 2, and the sound wall in Segment 1, shall be designed in consideration of the scale and architectural style of the adjacent William Mead Homes and Mozaic Apartments. Based on feedback received during project development from residents of the William Mead Homes property, Metro shall coordinate with the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles regarding aesthetic enhancements to the retaining wall/sound wall at that location. Materials, color, murals, landscaping, and/or other aesthetic treatments shall be integrated into the design of the retaining wall/sound wall to minimize the dominance and scale of the retaining wall/sound wall.

AES-2 Minimize Nighttime Work and Screen Direct Lighting: Nighttime construction activities near residential areas shall be avoided to the extent feasible. If nighttime work is required, the

construction contractor shall install temporary lighting in a manner that directs light toward the construction area, and shall install temporary shields as necessary so that light does not spill over into residential areas.

AES-3 Screen Direct Lighting and Glare: During final design, all new or replacement lighting shall comply with maximum allowable CALGreen glare ratings (California Building Standards Code 2013 – Title 24, Part 11) and shall be designed to be directed away from residential units. Screening elements, including landscaping, shall also be incorporated into the design where feasible. Low-reflective glass and materials shall also be utilized as part of the elevated portion of the above-grade passenger concourse and the new canopies to reduce daytime glare impacts.

(THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

9.0 Significance Summary

9.1 Visual Character and Quality

Based on the level of resource change and viewer response, the proposed project and build alternative would result in significant impact on residents in Visual Assessment Unit #1, resulting from the retaining wall and sound wall. With the incorporation of mitigation measures, impacts on residents in Visual Assessment Unit #1 would be reduced to a level less than significant. No significant impacts would result within Visual Assessment Unit #2 through Visual Assessment Unit #5. Beneficial impacts would occur in Visual Assessment Unit #6.

Table 9-1 summarizes the level of resource change, anticipated level of viewer response, and resulting visual impact.

Table 9-1. Summary of Visual Character and Quality Impacts		
Visual Assessment Unit	Significance (Before Mitigation)	Significance (After Mitigation)
Visual Assessment Unit #1 - Direct (Residents)	Significant	Less than Significant
Visual Assessment Unit #1 - Indirect (Residents)	Significant	Less than Significant
Visual Assessment Unit #2 (Business Owners/Visitors)	Less than Significant	Less than Significant
Visual Assessment Unit #2 (Commuters)	Less than Significant	Less than Significant
Visual Assessment Unit #3 (Business Persons/Visitors)	Less than Significant	Less than Significant
Visual Assessment Unit #3 (Commuters)	Less than Significant	Less than Significant
Visual Assessment Unit #4 (Business Persons/ Residents/Commuters)	Less than Significant	Less than Significant
Visual Assessment Unit #5 (Business Persons)	Less than Significant	Less than Significant
Visual Assessment Unit #5 (Visitors/Commuters)	Less than Significant	Less than Significant
Visual Assessment Unit #6 (Business Persons/ Visitors/Commuters)	Beneficial	Beneficial

Table 9-1. Summary of Visual Character and Quality Impacts

Visual Assessment Unit	Significance (Before Mitigation)	Significance (After Mitigation)
Visual Assessment Unit #6 (Residents)	Less than Significant	Less than Significant

9.2 Lighting and Glare

The proposed project and build alternative would result in significant impacts resulting from nighttime construction-related light and glare within the vicinity of residences in Visual Assessment Units #1, #3, and #6. With the incorporation of mitigation measures, impacts on residents are considered less than significant.

10.0 References

- City of Los Angeles. 1995. *The Framework Element of the Los Angeles General Plan*. July 27, 1995. Retrieved July 14, 2016, from <https://planning.lacity.org/cwd/framwk/contents.htm>.
- . 1996. *Alameda District Specific Plan*. June 18, 1996. Retrieved July 14, 2016, from <https://planning.lacity.org/complan/specplan/pdf/ALAMEDA.PDF>
- . 2000. *Central City North Community Plan (A Part of the General Plan – City of Los Angeles)*. December 15, 2000. Retrieved July 14, 2016, from <http://planning.lacity.org/complan/pdf/ccncptxt.pdf>
- . 2006. *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide: Your Resource for Preparing CEQA Analyses in Los Angeles*. <http://www.environmentla.org/programs/Thresholds/Complete%20Threshold%20Guide%202006.pdf>
- . 2016. *Mobility Plan 2035, an Element of the General Plan*. January 20, 2016. Retrieved July 19, 2016, from <https://planning.lacity.org/documents/policy/mobilityplmemo.pdf>
- Federal Highway Administration. 2015. *Guidelines for the Visual Impact Assessment of Highway Projects*. January 2015. https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/env_topics/other_topics/VIA_Guidelines_for_Highway_Projects.aspx
- Illuminating Engineering Society (IES). 2011a. *The Lighting Handbook*. Tenth Edition: Reference and Application.
- . 2011b. *Sustainable Lighting: An Introduction to the Environmental Impacts of Lighting*. <https://www.ies.org/product/sustainable-lighting-an-introduction-to-the-environmental-impacts-of-lighting/>.
- . 2011c. *Tunnel Lighting*. <https://www.ies.org/product/tunnel-lighting/>.
- . 2014. *Lighting for Exterior Environments*. <https://www.ies.org/product/lighting-for-exterior-environments/>.
- Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro). 2013. *Metro Rail Design Criteria, Section 7 /Electrical, Revision 09/13/13*
- Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA). 2014. *Design Criteria Manual, Section 7: Stations*. November 2014. https://www.metrolinktrains.com/globalassets/about/engineering/scrra_design_criteria_manual.pdf.

(THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY BLANK)