

3.16 Aesthetics and Visual Quality

Since publication of the Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS), the following substantive changes have been made to this section:

- Two footnotes were added to Section 3.16.2.1 regarding the Federal Railroad Administration’s (FRA) new regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which were adopted during the preparation of the Draft EIR/EIS, and updated Council on Environmental Quality regulations issued after release of the Draft EIR/EIS.
- The description of Key Viewpoint (KVP) 20 was updated to reflect the engineering and design refinements to the proposed Main Street grade separation.
- The description of Key Viewpoint 25 was updated to reflect the minor modifications to the design at Los Angeles Union Station to be consistent with Chapter 2.
- AVQ-MM#6 was removed from Section 3.16 Aesthetics and Visual Quality because, although it was included in the Draft EIR/EIS, it is not applicable to any of the impacts identified for the HSR Build Alternative.

The revisions and clarifications provided in this section of the Final EIR/EIS do not change the impact conclusions pertaining to aesthetics and visual quality presented in the Draft EIR/EIS.

3.16.1 Introduction

Section 3.16, Aesthetics and Visual Resources, of the EIR/EIS analyzes the potential impacts of the No Project Alternative and the High-Speed Rail (HSR) Build Alternative, and describes impact avoidance and minimization features (IAMF) that would avoid, minimize, or reduce these impacts. Where applicable, mitigation measures are proposed to further reduce, compensate for, or offset impacts of the HSR Build Alternative. Section 3.16 also defines the aesthetics and visual resources within the region and describes the affected environment in the resource study areas (RSA).

Aesthetics and Visual Quality

Through the public involvement process, stakeholders have identified visual impacts as a concern. New infrastructure (e.g., overhead contact systems, communications towers, high-speed rail vehicles, viaducts, and stations) has the potential to create visual impacts. This section discusses these potential visual changes.

The *Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section: Aesthetics and Visual Quality Technical Report* (California High-Speed Rail Authority [Authority] 2019b), *Historic Architectural Survey Report (HASR)* (Authority and FRA 2019), and *Finding of Effect* (Authority 2019a) provide additional technical details on aesthetics and visual resources. Additional details on aesthetics and visual resources are provided in the following appendix in Volume 2 of this Final EIR/EIS:

- Appendix 2-B, Impact Avoidance and Minimization Features
- Appendix 3.1-B, Regional and Local Policy Inventory

Seven other resource sections in this EIR/EIS provide additional information related to impacts on aesthetics and visual quality:

- **Section 3.2, Transportation**—Construction and operational changes caused by the HSR Build Alternative on the regional transportation system, including HSR crossings of transportation rights-of-way, shared transportation corridors, realigned roadways, and grade separations.
- **Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration**—Construction and operational changes caused by the HSR Build Alternative on sensitive receptors.
- **Section 3.12, Socioeconomics and Communities**—Construction and operational changes caused by the HSR Build Alternative on community character and cohesion.

- **Section 3.13, Station Planning, Land Use, and Development**—Construction and operational changes caused by the HSR Build Alternative on land use patterns and development.
- **Section 3.15, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space**—Construction and operational changes caused by the HSR Build Alternative on natural areas, parks, open space, and recreationists, including impediments to views.
- **Section 3.17, Cultural Resources**—Construction and operational changes caused by the HSR Build Alternative on resources with cultural or historical significance.
- **Section 3.19, Cumulative Impacts**—Construction and operational changes caused by the HSR Build Alternative and other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects.

3.16.1.1 Definition of Resources

The following are definitions for the aesthetics and visual resources analyzed in this EIR/EIS:

- **Visual or Landscape Character**—Visual or landscape character refers to an impartial description of what the landscape consists of, defined by the relationships between existing, visible natural and built landscape features. These relationships are considered in terms of form, line, color, texture, dominance, scale, diversity, and continuity. Visual character-defining resources and features include landforms, vegetation, land uses, buildings, transportation facilities, overhead utility structures and lighting, open space, viewpoints, and views to visual resources, waterbodies, historic structures, and downtown skylines.
- **Visual Resources**—Visual resources are components of the visible natural, cultural, or project environments. A visual resource is any visible site, object, or feature of the landscape. *Natural visual resources* include land, water, sky, vegetation, and animals that compose the natural environment. *Cultural visual resources* include buildings, structures, and artifacts that compose the cultural environment. *Project visual resources* include geometrics, structures, and fixtures that compose and give character to the project environment. Visual resources also include state-designated scenic routes and views toward and within natural areas, parks, and urban areas that have been identified as having historical or cultural importance or that include buildings of similar historical or cultural importance or notable landmark status.
- **Visual Quality**—Visual quality is a result of the interactive experience between viewers and their environment. Under the Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA) visual quality analysis system, visual quality is determined by evaluating the viewed landscape’s characteristics in terms of natural harmony, cultural order, and project coherence. The analysis of natural harmony, cultural order, and project coherence informs the overall visual quality ratings. Visual quality is rated as low, moderate-low, moderate, moderate-high, or high. To determine overall visual quality, the natural harmony, cultural order, and project coherence are also rated, and the ratings of these three factors determine the overall visual quality.
- **Viewer Groups and Viewer Sensitivity**—Viewers within the RSA represent people such as roadway/highway/rail users, residents, commercial viewers, office viewers, park and trail users, and industrial workers. There are two distinct groups of viewers: neighbors and travelers. Neighbors are those people who are adjacent to the highway and have “views of the road.” Travelers are those people who are using the highway and have “views from the road.” Neighbors and travelers can be further subdivided into categories that help to establish viewer preferences and their sensitivity to changes in visual resources. Viewer preferences are determined as part of the inventory phase, and viewer sensitivity is determined in the analysis phase.

3.16.2 Laws, Regulations, and Orders

This section describes the federal, state, regional, and local laws, regulations, orders, and plans that are applicable to aesthetics and visual quality.

3.16.2.1 Federal

United States Department of Transportation Act (Section 4(f)) (49 U.S. Code § 303)

Compliance with Section 4(f) is required for transportation projects undertaken by an operating administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation or that may receive federal funding and/or discretionary approvals. Section 4(f) protects the natural beauty of publicly owned land of parks, recreational areas, wildlife refuges, as well as historic sites of national, state, or local significance located on public or private land. The Authority may not approve the use of a Section 4(f) property, as defined in 49 U.S.C. § 303(c), unless it determines that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to avoid the use of the property and the action includes all possible planning to minimize harm resulting from such use, or the project has a *de minimis* impact on the 4(f) property consistent with the requirements of 49 U.S.C. § 303(d).

Federal Railroad Administration, Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts (64 Federal Register 28545)

On May 26, 1999, the FRA released *Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts* (FRA 1999). These FRA procedures supplement the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations Part 1500 et seq.) and describe FRA's process for assessing the environmental impacts of actions and legislation proposed by the agency and for the preparation of associated documents (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).^{1, 2} The FRA *Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts* states that "the EIS should identify any significant changes likely to occur in the natural environment and in the developed environment. The EIS should also discuss the consideration given to design quality, art, and architecture in project planning and development as required by U.S. Department of Transportation Order 5610.4." These FRA procedures state that an EIS should consider possible impacts on aesthetics and visual quality.

National Historic Preservation Act (54 U.S.C. Section 300101, et seq.)

The National Historic Preservation Act establishes the federal government policy on historic preservation. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties. Potential adverse effects include change in the physical features of the property's setting that contribute to its historic significance, or introduction of visual elements that diminish the integrity of the property's significant historic features.

Federal Land Policy and Management Act (43 U.S.C. 1701, et seq., 102(a), 103(c), 201(a), 505(a))

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act requires that public lands be managed to protect and minimize damage to scenic and aesthetic values. Under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the Bureau of Land Management uses a Visual Resource Management System (113 Stat. 224, Public Law 106-45-A, August 10, 1999) to manage resources under its jurisdiction. As applicable to sections within or affecting areas managed by the Bureau of Land Management, the evaluation of aesthetic and visual quality shall consider the rules or guidance under the Visual Resource Management System for the purpose of applying area specific management priorities.

¹ While this EIR/EIS was being prepared, FRA adopted new NEPA compliance regulations (23 Code of Federal Regulations [C.F.R.] 771). Those regulations only apply to actions initiated after November 28, 2018. See 23 C.F.R. 771.109(a)(4). Because this EIR/EIS was initiated prior to that date, it remains subject to FRA's Environmental Procedures rather than the Part 771 regulations.

² The Council on Environmental Quality issued new regulations on July 14, 2020, effective September 14, 2020, updating the NEPA implementing procedures at 40 C.F.R. 1500. However, this project initiated NEPA before the effective date and is not subject to the new regulations, relying on the 1978 regulations as they existed prior to September 14, 2020. All subsequent citations to Council on Environmental Quality regulations in this environmental document refer to the 1978 regulations, pursuant to 40 C.F.R. 1506.13 (2020) and the preamble at 85 Fed. Reg. 43340.

3.16.2.2 State

California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code § 21000 et seq.) and CEQA Guidelines (§ 15000 et seq.)

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires state and local agencies to identify the significant environmental impacts of their actions, including potential significant aesthetic and visual impacts, and to avoid or mitigate those impacts, when feasible.

State Scenic Highways (California Streets and Highways Code §§260 to 263)

The State Scenic Highways Program lists highways that are either eligible for designation as a scenic highway or are already designated as a scenic highway. A highway may be designated as scenic depending on how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the traveler's enjoyment of the view (California Department of Transportation 2019). The Streets and Highways Code establishes state responsibility for protecting, preserving, and enhancing the natural scenic beauty of California's scenic routes and areas that require special scenic conservation and treatment.

3.16.2.3 Regional and Local

Table 3.16-1 lists county and city general plan goals, policies, and ordinances relevant to the HSR Build Alternative.

Table 3.16-1 Regional and Local Plans and Policies

Title	Summary
Los Angeles County	
General Plan Conservation and Natural Resources Element (2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goal C/NR 13: Protect visual and scenic resources
City of Burbank	
General Plan Land Use Element (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy 8.8: Ensure that new development is compatible with the topography and geology of the hillside area and is incorporated into the natural setting. Policy 8.10: Consider and address the preservation of scenic views in the hillside area.
General Plan Open Space and Conservation Element (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy 7.1: Identify visually prominent ridgelines and establish regulations to promote their preservation. Policy 7.4: Balance both public good and private property rights when considering the restoration of viewsheds.
City of Glendale	
General Plan Open Space and Conservation Element (1993)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy 4: Natural and man-made aesthetic features should be recognized and identified as important resources to the community that require proper management. Goal 5: Preserve prominent ridgelines and slopes in order to protect Glendale's visual resources. Objective 2: Establish standards and design criteria which minimize the visual intrusion/impact of development in hillside areas.
Comprehensive Design Guidelines (2011)	The intent of the Comprehensive Design Guidelines is to provide predictability for property owners and developers, as well as residents and other stakeholders in the Glendale community.

Title	Summary
City of Los Angeles	
Community Plans establish neighborhood-specific goals and implementation strategies to achieve the broad objectives laid out in the City's General Plan. The City of Los Angeles General Plan Land Use Element consists of 35 Community Plan Areas (CPAs) that are the official guide to future development in the city of Los Angeles. The Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section is in the following CPAs: the Sunland-Tujunga-Lake View Terrace-Shadow Hills-East La Tuna Canyon CPA, the Northeast Los Angeles CPA, the Central City North CPA, and the Boyle Heights CPA.	
Sunland-Tujunga-Lake View Terrace-Shadow Hills-East La Tuna Canyon Community Plan (1997)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open Space Goal 5: A community with sufficient open space in balance with new development to serve the recreational, environmental, and health and safety needs of the community and to protect environmental and aesthetic resources. ▪ Open Space Policy 5-1.1: Encourage the retention of passive and visual open space which provides a balance to the urban development of the community. ▪ Open Space Policy 5-1.5: Protect Scenic Corridors by establishing development controls in harmony with each corridor's individual scenic character.
Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan (2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open Space Goal 4: Sufficient open space, in balance with development, to serve the recreational, environmental, and health needs of the community and to protect environmental and aesthetic resources. ▪ Open Space Objective 4-1: To preserve existing views in hillside areas.
Central City North Community Plan (2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open Space and Recreation Policy 4-2.1: To foster physical and visual links between a variety of open spaces and public spaces downtown.
Boyle Heights Community Plan (1998)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recreation Policy: Preserve and improve the existing recreation and park facilities and park space.
Alameda District Specific Plan – Appendix A: Urban Design Guidelines (1996)	An ordinance establishing a Specific Plan, known as the Alameda District Specific Plan, for a portion of the Central City North CPA.
Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan Revitalization: vision and goals (2007)	The Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan provides a framework for restoring the river's ecological function and for transforming it into an amenity for residents and visitors to the city.
City Center Redevelopment Plan: project objectives (2002)	To further the development of Downtown as the major center of the Los Angeles metropolitan region, within the context of the Los Angeles General Plan as envisioned by the General Plan Framework, Concept Plan, City-wide Plan portions, the Central City Community Plan, and the Downtown Strategic Plan.

3.16.3 Consistency with Plans and Laws

As indicated in Section 3.1, Introduction, CEQA and NEPA regulations require a discussion of inconsistencies or conflicts between a proposed undertaking and federal, state, regional, or local plans and laws.

Federal and state laws, listed in Section 3.16.2.1, Federal, and Section 3.16.2.2, State, pertain to aesthetics and visual resources. The Authority, as the federal and state lead agency proposing to construct and operate the HSR system, is required to comply with all federal and state laws and regulations and to secure all applicable federal and state permits prior to initiating construction of the project (Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327, under the NEPA Assignment Memorandum of Understanding between the FRA and the State of California, effective July 23, 2019, the Authority is the federal lead agency for review of the Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section.). Therefore, there would be no inconsistencies between the HSR Build Alternative and these federal and state laws and regulations.

The Authority is a state agency and therefore is not required to comply with local land use and zoning regulations; however, it has endeavored to design and construct the HSR project so that it is compatible with land use and zoning regulations. A total of 13 plans and 19 policies were reviewed. The HSR Build Alternative would be consistent with all plans and policies. Refer to Appendix 3.1-B, Regional and Local Policy Consistency Analysis, for a complete consistency analysis of local plans and policies.

3.16.4 Methods for Evaluating Impacts

The following sections summarize the RSAs and the methods used to analyze impacts on aesthetics and visual resources. As summarized in Section 3.16.1, Introduction, seven other sections in Chapter 3 also provide additional information related to aesthetics and visual resources: Section 3.2, Transportation; Section 3.4, Noise and Vibration; Section 3.12, Socioeconomics and Communities; Section 3.13, Station Planning, Land Use, and Development; Section 3.15, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space; Section 3.17, Cultural Resources; and Section 3.19, Cumulative Impacts.

3.16.4.1 Definition of Resource Study Area

As defined in Section 3.1, Introduction, RSAs are the geographic boundaries in which the Authority conducted environmental investigations specific to each resource topic. The RSA in urban environments for aesthetics and visual quality is at least the centerline plus 0.25 mile, depending on the visibility of project components. Table 3.16-2 provides a general definition and boundary description for each RSA within the project section as shown on Figure 3.16-1. To assess the direct impacts, the RSA has been divided into three landscape units, which are subsections of the project section that share similar characteristics. They account for the RSA's varying landform (topography), land cover (vegetation and structures), and atmospheric conditions (dust, fog, and precipitation), which can limit human sight. More information about the landscape units is provided in Sections 3.16.4 and 3.16.5.

Table 3.16-2 Definition of Resource Study Area

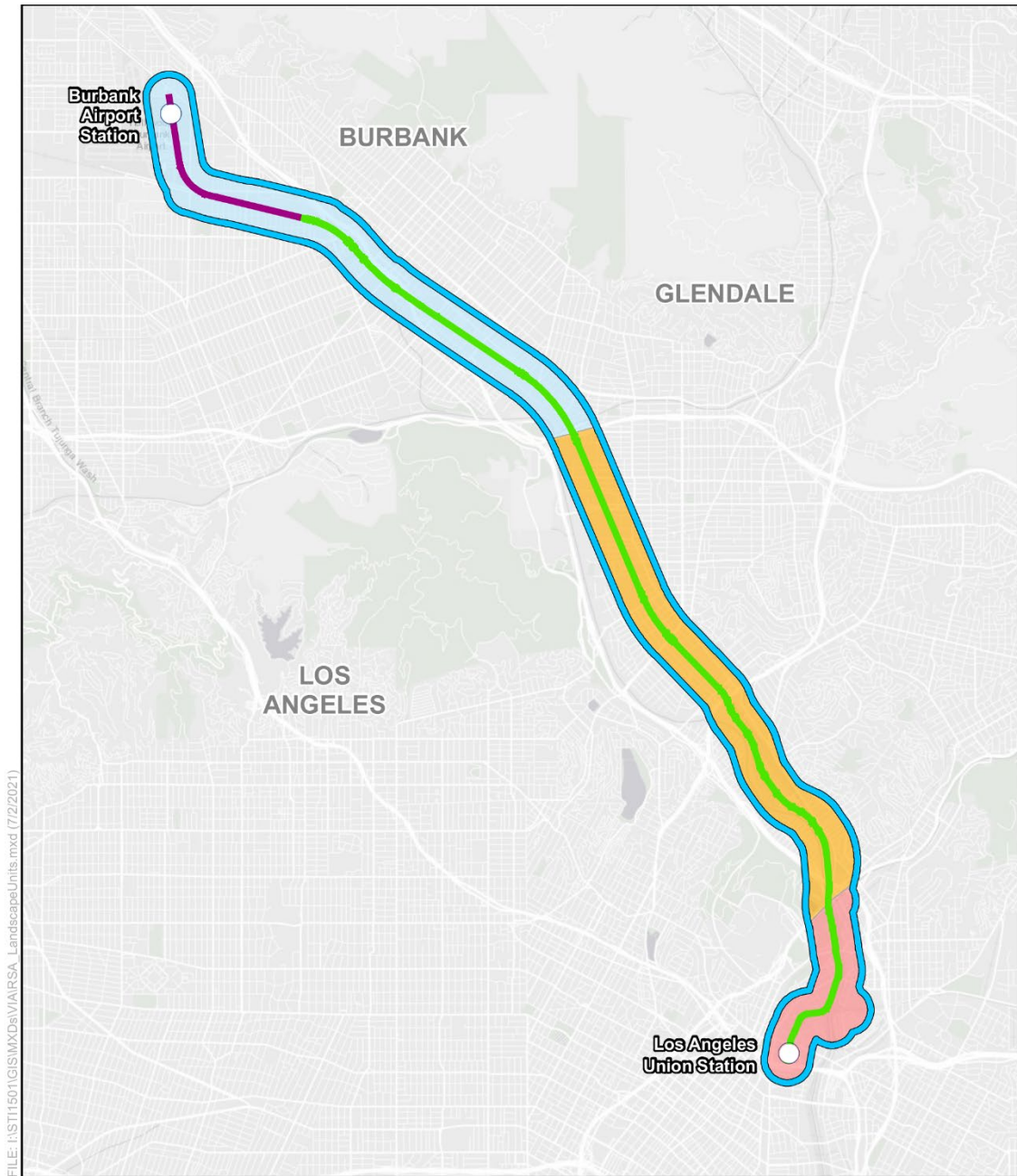
General Definition	Resource Study Area Boundary and Definition
Upper San Fernando Valley Landscape Unit	The Upper San Fernando Valley Landscape Unit extends from Lockheed Drive to SR 134 (approximately 6.5 miles) and includes a fixed buffer extending 0.25 mile from the project centerline.
Lower San Fernando Valley Landscape Unit	The Lower San Fernando Valley Landscape Unit extends from SR 134 to SR 110 (approximately 3.4 miles) and includes a fixed buffer extending 0.25 mile from the project centerline.
Downtown Los Angeles Landscape Unit	The Downtown Los Angeles Landscape Unit extends from SR 110 to LAUS (approximately 4.5 miles) and includes a fixed buffer extending 0.25 mile from the project centerline.

LAUS = Los Angeles Union Station

SR = State Route

Considering the anticipated scale of the project and the urban environment of the project section, the zone of highest visual concern generally is not expected to extend beyond a foreground distance of 0.25 mile from the project footprint. Beyond foreground viewing distances of 0.25 mile, the project section would have a limited visual presence. Although there are instances in which visual changes may be experienced beyond 0.25 mile from the project footprint, this distance was not selected for the extent of the RSA because views would generally be blocked by tall vegetation, buildings, and other intervening development.

Where the project section would be elevated on berms or structures, the potential increased visibility of the project section was evaluated in highly site-specific ways. In addition, views of the alignments from specific "view corridors" along major arterials, channels or rivers, freeways, railways, or other transportation corridors were also addressed as appropriate throughout the analysis and were considered in the selection of representative key viewpoints (KVP) along the proposed alignment.



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SOURCE: National Geographic/Esri (2018); CHSRA (6/2021)

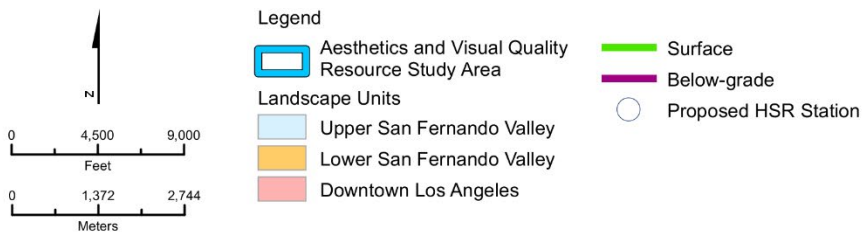


Figure 3.16-1 Aesthetics and Visual Quality Resource Study Area

3.16.4.2 Impact Avoidance and Minimization Features

The HSR Build Alternative incorporates standardized HSR features to avoid and minimize impacts. These features are referred to as IAMFs. The Authority would implement IAMFs during project design and construction. As such, the analysis of impacts of the HSR Build Alternative in this section factors in all applicable IAMFs. Appendix 2-B, Impact Avoidance and Minimization Features, provides a detailed description of IAMFs that are included as part of the HSR Build Alternative design. IAMFs applicable to aesthetics and visual resources include:

- AVQ-IAMF#1, Aesthetic Options—Balances a consistent, project-wide aesthetic with the local context for the HSR nonstation structures.
- AVQ-IAMF#2, Aesthetic Review Process—Requires identification of key nonstation structures recommended for aesthetic compatibility treatment, consultation with local jurisdictions on how best to involve the community in the process, solicitation of input from local jurisdictions on their aesthetic preferences, and evaluation of aesthetic preferences for potential cost, schedule, and operations impacts.
- AQ-IAMF#1, Fugitive Dust Emissions—Reduces construction-related air quality emissions by requiring the preparation of a fugitive dust plan.
- CUL-IAMF#6, Pre-Construction Conditions Assessment, Plan for Protection of Historic Architectural Resources, and Repair of Inadvertent Damage—Reduces visual impacts of construction and operation of HSR elements on historic architectural resources.

3.16.4.3 Methods for NEPA and CEQA Impact Analysis

This section describes the sources and methods the Authority used to analyze potential impacts on aesthetics and visual quality from implementing the HSR Build Alternative. These methods apply to both NEPA and CEQA unless otherwise indicated. Refer to Section 3.1.5.4, Methods for Evaluating Impacts, for a description of the general framework for evaluating impacts under NEPA and CEQA. Refer to the *Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section Aesthetics and Visual Quality Technical Report* (Authority 2019b) for information regarding the methods and data sources used in this analysis. Laws, regulations, and local planning documents (Section 3.16.2) that regulate aesthetics and visual quality were also considered in the evaluation of impacts on aesthetics and visual quality.

The *California High-Speed Rail Project EIR/EIS Environmental Methodology Guidelines*, Version 5.09 (Authority and FRA 2017), is used to evaluate aesthetics and visual quality impacts. This methodology is based on the federal guidelines provided in the FHWA *Guidelines for the Visual Impact Assessment of Highway Projects* (FHWA 2015). The assessment methodology provides an approach and terminology for analyzing impacts on visual quality using changes in visual character and viewer sensitivity. The methodology for visual assessment includes the following components:

- Establish the RSA for aesthetics and visual quality, including affected viewsheds, and establish landscape units.
- Inventory and describe the affected environment, affected viewers, and existing visual quality, and identify KVPs and views for visual assessment.
- Assess visual compatibility and viewer sensitivity, and analyze the project's visual impacts.
- Propose methods to mitigate significant visual impacts.

Analysts used the following methods to evaluate potential direct and indirect impacts on aesthetics and visual quality.

Visual Character

Visual or landscape character is an impartial description of what the landscape consists of, defined by the relationships between existing, visible natural and built landscape features. These relationships are considered in terms of form, line, color, texture, dominance, scale, diversity, and

continuity. Visual character-defining resources and features include landforms, vegetation, land uses, buildings, transportation facilities, overhead utility structures and lighting, open space, viewpoints, and views to visual resources, waterbodies, historic structures, and downtown skylines. Examples of the visual or landscape character found along the Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section of the HSR system include industrial facilities, automobile-oriented retail shopping centers, single-family and multifamily residences, undeveloped vacant lots, a downtown business district, and parks.

Landscape Units and Key Viewpoints

With an understanding of the overall visual character in the RSA, the analyst defined *landscape units* to capture visual environments sharing similar character. Landscape units are used to “break up” long, linear projects into logical geographic entities for which impacts from a proposed project can be assessed, and can be conceived of as a spatially defined landscape with a particular visual identity—a distinctive “outdoor room” (FHWA 2015). Each landscape unit generally has similar visual character, although the visual characteristics of smaller locations within each landscape unit may differ from the overall unit’s character. The landscape units addressed in this analysis include: Upper San Fernando Valley, Lower San Fernando Valley, and Downtown Los Angeles. They represent spatially closed or visually bounded areas, each having distinct landscape character, interrelated visual elements, or specific viewer groups.

Within each landscape unit, KVPs were established in locations where the visual character is representative of the landscape unit and experienced by viewer groups in the RSA. To assist in characterizing the existing visual conditions of the landscape units and in determining impacts on them, KVPs are used to provide examples of existing views of the landscape within each landscape unit. Analysis of KVPs is used to illustrate how a proposed project would change those views. KVPs represent specific locations within a landscape unit from which a proposed project would be visible. These locations are typically selected to represent either (1) “typical” views from common types of viewing areas from which a proposed project could be seen, such as a highway or residential area, or (2) specific areas such as parks, viewpoints, and historic districts that may be affected by a proposed project. KVPs are useful for depicting the range of visual character and visual quality found within a landscape unit. The views from KVPs selected for analysis serve as site-specific examples of existing visual conditions so analysts can simulate the view with the project section in place to assess impacts. In total, 25 KVPs were evaluated along the project section alignment.

Visual Resources and Visual Quality

Visual resources are components of the natural, cultural, or project environments that are capable of being seen. A visual resource is any site, object, or feature of the landscape that is capable of being seen. *Natural visual resources* include land, water, vegetation, and animals that compose the natural environment. *Cultural visual resources* include buildings, structures, and artifacts that compose the cultural environment. *Project visual resources* include geometrics, structures, and fixtures that compose the project environment. Visual resources also include state-designated scenic routes and views toward and within natural areas, parks, and urban areas that have been identified as having historical or cultural importance or that include buildings of similar historical or cultural importance or notable landmark status.

The noteworthy visual resources within the RSA were identified throughout each landscape unit. Visual resources were evaluated according to several factors, including size, scale, and massing; overall visual interest and contribution to local visual character; architectural importance or uniqueness; cultural/historical importance; proximity to the rail corridor; and available lines of sight to or from the resource and the proposed alignment. The visual resources inventory includes parks, recreational facilities, and cultural resources. For further discussion on the HSR project’s potential impacts on those resources, please see the respective technical reports and EIR/EIS sections for those resource areas.

Visual quality is a result of the interactive experience between viewers and their environment. Under the FHWA visual quality analysis system, visual quality is determined by evaluating the

viewed landscape's characteristics in terms of natural harmony, cultural order, and project coherence. The analysis of natural harmony, cultural order, and project coherence informs the overall visual quality ratings. Visual quality is rated as low, moderate-low, moderate, moderate-high, or high. To determine overall visual quality, the natural harmony, cultural order, and project coherence are also rated, and the ratings of these three factors determine the overall visual quality. The existing visual quality of the study area was determined by analysts who are familiar with the Authority's and FHWA's methodology and who visited the RSA on several occasions. Changes in visual character and the viewer sensitivity determine the degree of impact on visual quality from a proposed project, which is rated as beneficial, neutral, or adverse.

Compatibility is defined as the ability of the environment to absorb the proposed project, with both the project and the environment having harmonious or congruent visual character. The proposed project can be considered compatible (not contrasting) or incompatible (contrasting) with the natural, cultural, or project environments.

Viewer Groups and Viewer Sensitivity

Viewers within the RSA represent people such as roadway/highway/rail users, residents, commercial viewers, office viewers, park and trail users, and industrial workers. There are two distinct groups of viewers: neighbors and travelers. Neighbors are those people who are adjacent to the proposed transportation corridor and have views of the corridor. Travelers are those people who are using the corridor and have views from the corridor. Neighbors and travelers can be further subdivided into categories that help to establish viewer preferences and their sensitivity to changes in visual resources. Viewer preferences are determined as part of the inventory phase, and viewer sensitivity is determined in the analysis phase.

Viewer preference and sensitivity vary among viewer types. Viewer sensitivity is the degree to which viewers are sensitive to changes in the visual character of visual resources. It is the consequence of two factors, viewer exposure and viewer awareness. Viewer exposure is a measure of proximity (the distance between viewer and the visual resource being viewed), extent (the number of viewers viewing), and duration (how long the visual resources are viewed). The greater the exposure, the greater the likelihood that viewers will be concerned about visual impacts. Viewer awareness is a measure of attention (level of observation, based on routine and familiarity), focus (level of concentration), and protection (legal and social constraints on the use of visual resources). The greater the attention, the greater the likelihood that viewers will be concerned about visual impacts.

Low viewer sensitivity exists when few viewers experience a defined view or when viewers are not particularly concerned about the view (e.g., commuters on a freeway). High viewer sensitivity exists when many viewers experience a view frequently or for a long duration or when the viewers (many or few), such as those in a residential neighborhood, are likely to be very aware of and concerned about the view. Generally, residents and recreationists are highly sensitive viewers. Local business employees and commuters are less sensitive viewers, although viewer sensitivity in established downtown areas can be high. In these areas, particularly in parks or along sidewalks, viewers are likely to have expectations of a built environment that is particular to an identifiable urban core, including specific structures; expectations related to such views lead to higher viewer sensitivity.

The FHWA's visual quality methodology recognizes that most views are seen by a variety of viewer types with different sensitivities to changes in the viewed landscape. The most sensitive viewer type is used to determine the potential impact of a proposed project on viewers.

Using engineering drawings, the analyst produced photo-simulations of each KVP showing how the project would appear at that point along the project section alignment. The photo-simulations were evaluated for their change to visual quality using the same methodology that was applied to evaluate the visual quality of the existing view from the KVP. The change in visual quality was then considered in combination with the viewer sensitivity to determine the direct and indirect impact on visual quality.

Field Study

An analyst who is familiar with the Authority's methodology and has on-the-ground familiarity with the project footprint throughout this project section visited the RSA during different seasons to tour and photograph the aesthetic and visual quality of the RSA, its landscape units, and the KVPs. The field study of existing visual resources included identifying landforms, vegetation, land uses, buildings, transportation facilities, overhead utility structures and lighting, open space, viewpoints and views to visual resources, waterbodies, historic structures, developed areas, and apparent upkeep and maintenance of property. The analyst also reviewed engineering drawings of the project section infrastructure components and aerial images of the RSA.

3.16.4.4 Method for Determining Significance under CEQA

CEQA requires that an EIR identify the significant environmental impacts of a project (CEQA Guidelines § 15126). One of the primary differences between NEPA and CEQA is that CEQA requires a significance determination for each impact using a threshold-based analysis (see 3.1.5.4, Methods for Evaluating Impacts, for further information). By contrast, under NEPA, significance is used to determine whether an EIS will be required; NEPA requires that an EIS be prepared when the proposed federal action (project) as a whole has the potential to "significantly affect the quality of the human environment." Accordingly, Section 3.16.9, CEQA Significance Conclusions, summarizes the significance of the environmental impacts on aesthetics and visual quality for the HSR Build Alternative. The Authority used the following thresholds to determine if a significant impact on aesthetics and visual quality would occur as a result of the HSR Build Alternative. A significant impact is one that would:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a designated State Scenic Highway corridor.
- In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings (public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, a significant impact is one that would conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Visual change and the sensitivity of people who view the affected landscape determine the level and degree of impact of a proposed project. For this project, level of impact was determined for KVPs according to the following:

- If a visual change of two categories or more (e.g., from high to moderate) occurred and the changes were viewed by people with high or moderate viewing sensitivity, the visual quality impact was considered to be significant for the CEQA determination.
- If a visual change of one or more categories occurred (e.g., from high to moderate-high or from moderate to low) in an area with people who have high viewer sensitivity, the visual quality impact was considered to be significant for the CEQA determination.
- If viewers with moderate to low sensitivity observed a visual change in one category, the visual quality impact was considered to be less than significant for the CEQA determination.
- Visual changes observed by people with low viewer sensitivity were assumed to have visual quality impacts that were considered to be less than significant for the CEQA determination.

In many instances, the presence of the HSR Build Alternative would alter visual character, but not enough to lower the visual quality category. These impacts are considered less than significant for the CEQA determination.

Other considerations include whether the project would (1) introduce elements that would conflict with the visual character of a historic district or a federally or state-listed or eligible historic property, or (2) substantially affect the scenic values of a park, recreational destination, or other feature or area that has been identified as an important visual resource.

3.16.5 Affected Environment

This section describes the affected environment for aesthetics and visual resources in the RSA. This information provides the context for the environmental analysis and evaluation of impacts.

A summary of stakeholder issues and concerns related to potential visual and aesthetic impacts from public outreach efforts can be found in Chapter 9, Public and Agency Involvement.

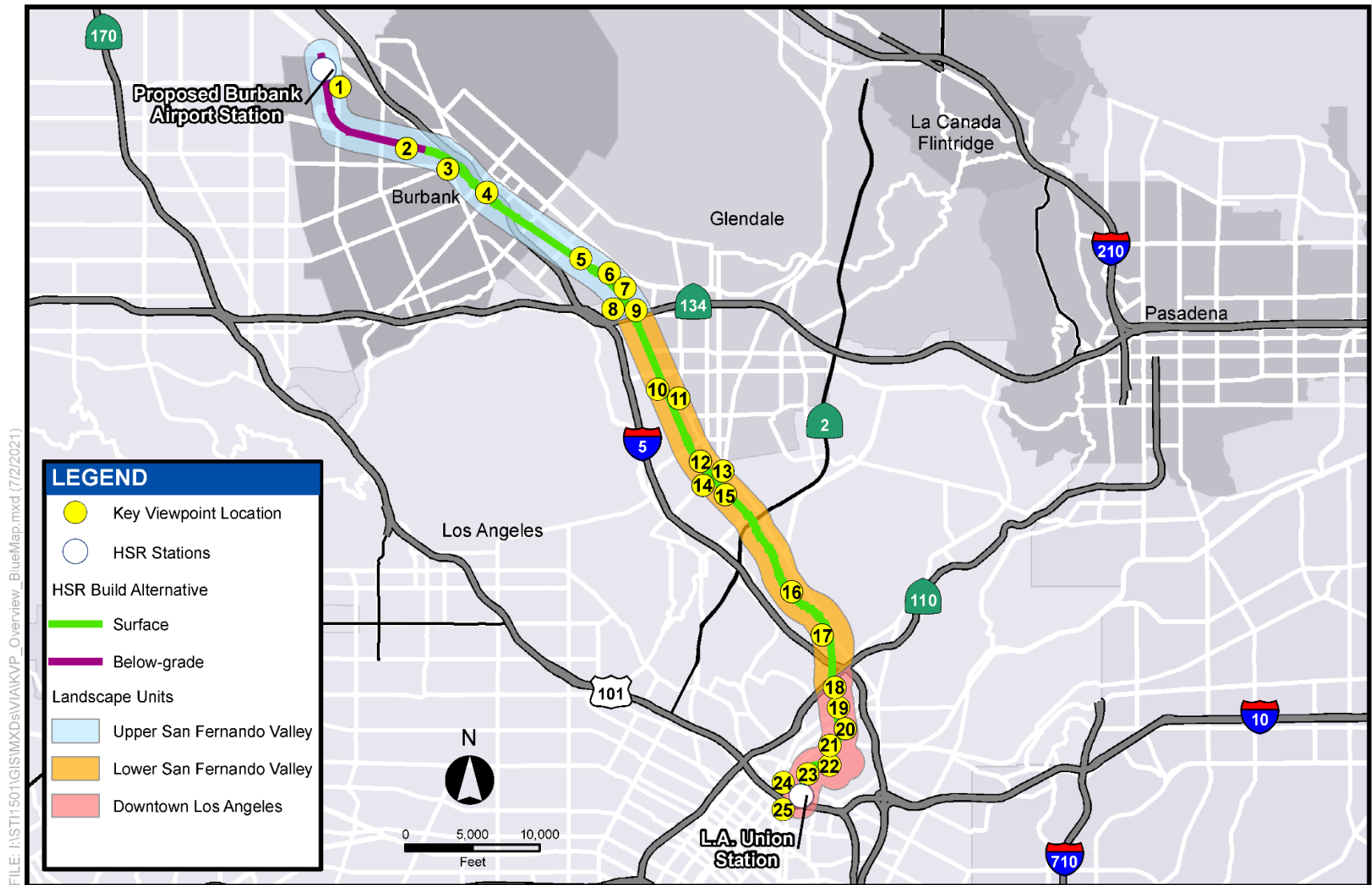
To ensure clarity in presentation, the project section is divided into three landscape units: Upper San Fernando Valley Landscape Unit (Lockheed Drive to State Route [SR] 134); Lower San Fernando Valley Landscape Unit (SR 134 to SR 110); and Downtown Los Angeles Landscape Unit (SR 110 to Los Angeles Union Station [LAUS]).

Figure 3.16-2 provides an overview map of the RSA, the three landscape units, and the 25 KVPs. The specific locations of the KVPs are also mapped in Appendix B of the *Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section Aesthetics and Visual Quality Technical Report* (Authority 2019b).

3.16.5.1 Upper San Fernando Valley Landscape Unit

Overall Setting

The Upper San Fernando Valley Landscape Unit extends from Hollywood Burbank Airport to SR 134 (approximately 6.5 miles) and includes portions of the Cities of Los Angeles, Burbank, and Glendale. The cultural environment of the Upper San Fernando Valley Landscape Unit generally consists of industrial and commercial uses adjacent to the existing rail corridor (part of the project environment) and Hollywood Burbank Airport. Residential uses are also part of the cultural environment, but they are often buffered from the existing rail corridor and Hollywood Burbank Airport by commercial or industrial properties. The natural environment of the Upper San Fernando Valley Landscape Unit, which includes the San Gabriel Mountains, primarily consists of elements outside the project footprint but viewed from the RSA. The visual character throughout the Upper San Fernando Valley Landscape Unit is typified by the existing rail corridor and industrial/commercial corridor as well as development surrounding the existing railroad corridor.



Source: California High-Speed Rail Authority and Federal Railroad Administration, 2017

Figure 3.16-2 Key Viewpoint Locations

Existing Visual Resources

The sections below describe the visual resources within the Upper San Fernando Valley Landscape Unit based on analysis of aerial and satellite mapping, site surveys, and policy documents. Each of the visual resources is categorized as either a natural environment or a cultural environment. Visual resources within the Burbank to Los Angeles Section are illustrated on Figure 5-1 in the *Aesthetics and Visual Quality Technical Report* and described in more detail in the following sections.

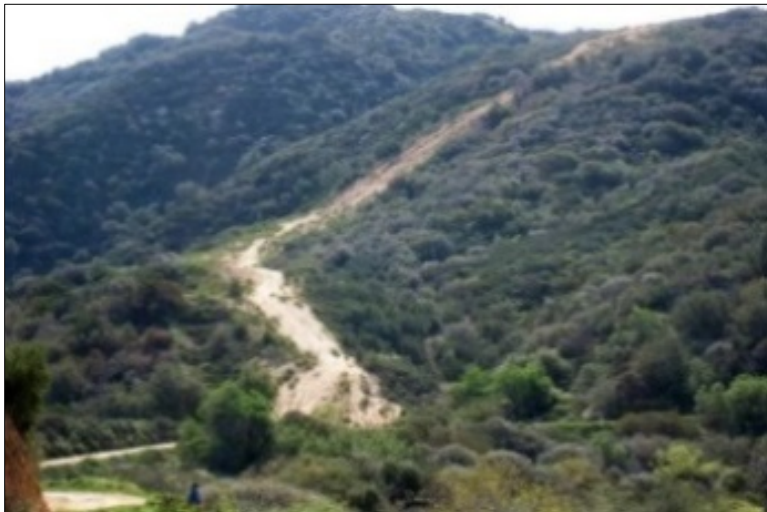
San Gabriel Mountains (Natural Environment)

The San Gabriel Mountains are a mountain range in northern Los Angeles County. The mountain range is part of the Transverse Ranges and lies between the Los Angeles Basin and the Mojave Desert, with Interstate 5 bordering to the west and Interstate 15 bordering to the east.



La Tuna Canyon Park Hills (Natural Environment)

The 1,100-acre La Tuna Canyon Park provides trail access into the steep upper reaches of the Verdugo Mountains. The La Tuna Canyon trail connects with Verdugo Fire Road (also called Backbone Road), which offers 13 miles of trails across almost the whole length of the Verdugo Mountains.



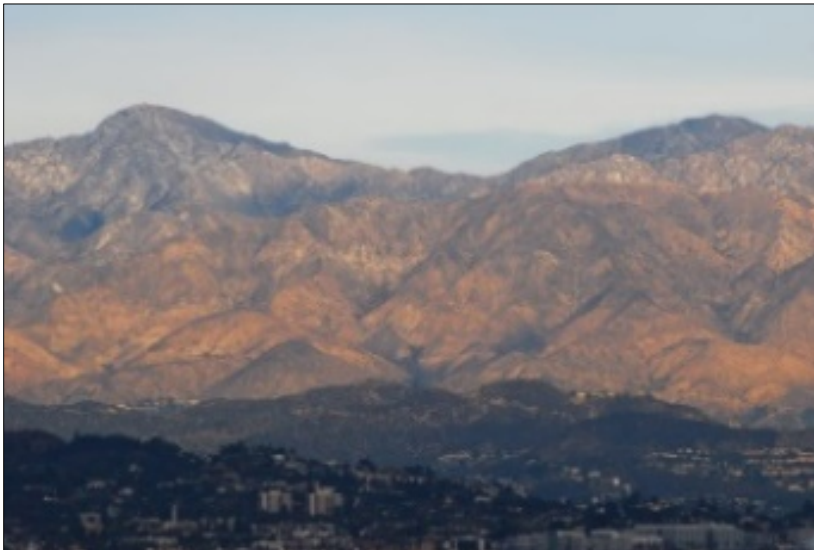
Downtown Burbank Metrolink Station (Cultural Environment)

The Downtown Burbank Metrolink Station is a passenger rail station near downtown Burbank. It is served by Metrolink’s Antelope Valley line to Lancaster and its Ventura County line to East Ventura, both terminating at LAUS.



Santa Monica Mountains/Hollywood Hills (Natural Environment)

This mountain range extends approximately 40 miles east-west from the Hollywood Hills in Los Angeles to Point Mugu in Ventura County. The range is of moderate height (the maximum elevation is 3,111 feet), with no particularly craggy or prominent peaks outside the Sandstone Peak and Boney Mountains area. While rugged and wild in many areas, the range includes a substantial amount of human activity and development, including houses, roads, businesses, and recreational centers.



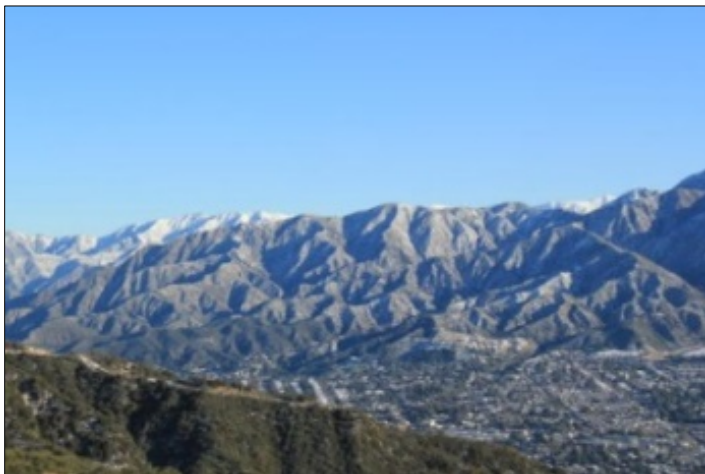
Pelanconi Park (Natural Environment)

This park is at 1000 Grandview Avenue in the city of Glendale. Amenities in the park include a playground, a basketball court, a baseball field, and picnic spots.



Verdugo Mountains (Natural Environment)

The Verdugo Mountains are a northwest-southwest-trending, lens-shaped series of ridges approximately 9 miles long and varying from 3 to 4 miles in width. The mountains are separated on the north and northeast from the main body of the San Gabriel Mountains by extensive alluvial fans of the Sunland-Tujunga and La Crescenta areas. Big Tujunga Wash borders the Verdugo Mountains on the north, and the San Fernando Valley borders the mountains on the south-southwest. On the east, the Verdugo Wash separates the Verdugo Mountains from the San Rafael Hills.



Los Angeles River (Natural Environment)

The historic Los Angeles River starts in the Simi Hills and Santa Susana Mountains and flows through Los Angeles County, from Canoga Park in the western end of the San Fernando Valley nearly 48 miles southeast to its mouth in Long Beach. The Los Angeles River now flows through a concrete channel on a fixed course, which was built after a series of floods in the early 20th century.



Los Angeles River Bike Path (Cultural Environment)

The Los Angeles River Bike Path is a Class I bicycle and pedestrian path in the greater Los Angeles area running northeast along the Los Angeles River. The Los Angeles River Bike Path consists of two main sections—the Long Beach to Vernon section and the Glendale Narrows Elysian Valley section—within this landscape unit. In addition, there are additional short sections that currently do not connect with other existing sections along the river.



Verdugo Wash (Natural Environment)

Verdugo Wash is a 9.4-mile-long tributary of the Los Angeles River in the city of Glendale.



Viewers

There are a variety of land uses throughout the Upper San Fernando Valley Landscape Unit and commercial business workers as well as residents/recreationists in areas that neighbor the existing railroad corridor. Other primary viewer groups include motorists, commuters, haulers, transit riders, pedestrians, and bicyclists who use local roadways and thoroughfares that parallel, traverse, and/or are otherwise adjacent to the existing railroad corridor.

Table 3.16-3 provides standardized descriptions of these viewer groups and their typical visual and aesthetic preferences.

Table 3.16-3 Existing Viewer Groups and Preferences

Viewer Group	Viewer Group Preferences
Residential Viewers	Residential viewers are owners or renters. Therefore, residential viewers tend to be uninterested in change unless they have been able to participate in defining the change.
Recreational Viewers	Recreational viewers provide or participate in active and passive recreational uses such as organized sporting events, indoor and outdoor leisure activities, and cultural events. Recreational viewers are often focused on their recreational activity, and although they tend to be unsupportive of visual changes that would negatively affect the recreational setting, they tend to be supportive of visual improvements that enhance their recreational experience. Recreational services provided for visitors can be permanent, while the visitors themselves are more transitory.
Retail Viewers	Retail viewers include merchants that sell goods and services and the shoppers who buy them. Merchants generally want heightened visibility free of competing visual intrusions, while shoppers need to be able to easily find their destination and, once there, concentrate on the shopping experience. Merchants tend to be more permanent than shoppers, although shoppers often frequent the same stores repeatedly, giving them a sense of permanence.
Commercial Viewers	Commercial viewers are those occupying or using office buildings, warehouses, and other commercial structures. Commercial viewers' visual preferences vary depending on the business and may be more aligned with retail, institutional, or industrial viewers' visual preferences than those of residential viewers. Workers are often permanent, while visitors and customers are transitory.



Viewer Group	Viewer Group Preferences
Institutional Viewers	Institutional viewers provide or receive services from such places as schools or hospitals that provide social services to the community. Consequently, institutions often promote a public image to adjacent viewers. Therefore, the presentation of their buildings and grounds is critical, and they tend to be well maintained. Signage or orientation and wayfinding are commonly associated with institutional facilities. Workers and employees of the institution are present for longer durations, while visitors are more transitory.
Civic Viewers	Civic viewers provide or receive services from a government organization, such as a military reservation or a federal, state, or local agency. Views of government facilities may or may not be desired, depending on the particular organization and work being performed. Workers and employees of the civic uses are present for longer durations, while visitors are more transitory.
Industrial Viewers	Industrial viewers mine or harvest raw materials; manufacture goods and services; or transport goods, services, and people, and often require large amounts of land that has limited exposure to the public. Industrial viewers' visual preference is generally utilitarian unless they want to enhance the public presentation and views of their facility. Industrial viewers tend to be primarily workers with few transitory visitors.
Agricultural Viewers	Agricultural viewers are agricultural workers in fields and pastures who maintain crops or herd animals. Cultural order and natural harmony are critical components of the landscape. Some agricultural viewers are permanent, but many are transient, although they may return to the same area seasonally.
Travelers	Travelers can include pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, and rail users who use various modes of transportation for commuting, touring, and shipping. Pedestrians use only their feet (or a wheelchair or other device), most often on a sidewalk or trail. Cyclists use bicycles at greater speeds than pedestrian travel, and may use trails, traffic lanes, and sidewalks. Motorists use vehicles with engines (e.g., cars, trucks, buses, motorcycles, mopeds, or any other technology that is not self-propelled, regardless of fuel source). Motorists move at higher speeds than other groups. By necessity, the driver of a motor vehicle focuses less on the view outside the vehicle. The driver's primary interest is in project coherence, although natural harmony and cultural order also provide resources used for wayfinding. Good natural harmony and cultural order can increase driver attentiveness. Passengers within vehicles and railcars move at high rates of speed and may be focused on views outside the vehicle or railcar, or on activities within the vehicle or railcar (e.g., talking, reading, working, eating, people watching, or napping). Passengers prefer evidence of good natural harmony and cultural order. Commuters travel the same route regularly, have a repeated routine, and are often single drivers, but they may also be passengers. Trips can include commuting to work or to a favorite or frequent destination (e.g., campground, cabin, sports arena, or relative's home). Tourists travel individually or in groups through an area for enjoyment, often with a set destination. Their trips are generally more adventurous, cover longer distances, and take more time than commuting trips. Shippers are generally single drivers moving goods on routine routes of varying distances.



Source: California High-Speed Rail Authority and Federal Railroad Administration, 2016



Visual Quality



Table 3.16-4 qualitatively rates the natural harmony, cultural order, and project coherence of KVPs 1 through 9 to determine their existing visual quality. Viewer groups and viewer preference were considered to determine the existing visual quality of each KVP.


Table 3.16-4 Upper San Fernando Valley Landscape Unit—Existing Visual Quality

KVP #	KVP Photo and Description	Natural Harmony	Cultural Order	Project Coherence	Primary Viewer Group	Existing Visual Quality
1	 <p data-bbox="300 735 814 784"><i>Existing view from N Hollywood Way in the city of Burbank, looking northwest</i></p>	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Motorists using N Hollywood Way	Moderate-Low
2	 <p data-bbox="300 1198 867 1222"><i>Existing view from Pacific Avenue in the city of Burbank, looking northeast</i></p>	Moderate-High	Moderate	Moderate	Motorists using W Pacific Avenue	Moderate

KVP #	KVP Photo and Description	Natural Harmony	Cultural Order	Project Coherence	Primary Viewer Group	Existing Visual Quality
3	 <p data-bbox="298 669 844 721"><i>Existing view from W Burbank Boulevard in the city of Burbank, looking northeast</i></p>	Moderate-High	Moderate	Low	Motorists using W Burbank Boulevard	Moderate
4	 <p data-bbox="298 1123 865 1153"><i>Existing view from N Front Street in the city of Burbank, looking southwest</i></p>	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	Moderate	Visitors and commuters traveling through the downtown Burbank Metrolink station	Moderate-High

KVP #	KVP Photo and Description	Natural Harmony	Cultural Order	Project Coherence	Primary Viewer Group	Existing Visual Quality
5	 <p data-bbox="298 634 848 656"><i>Existing view from Sonora Avenue in the city of Glendale, looking south</i></p>	Low	Moderate	Low	Pedestrians using Sonora Avenue	Moderate-Low
6	 <p data-bbox="298 1105 800 1149"><i>Existing view from Pelanconi Park in the city of Glendale, looking southwest</i></p>	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Recreational visitors to Pelanconi Park	Moderate-Low

KVP #	KVP Photo and Description	Natural Harmony	Cultural Order	Project Coherence	Primary Viewer Group	Existing Visual Quality
7	 <p data-bbox="298 711 865 766"><i>Existing view from Pelanconi Avenue/Flower Street in the city of Glendale, looking southwest</i></p>	Low	Moderate	Low	Residents and pedestrians using Flower Street/ Pelanconi Avenue	Low
8	 <p data-bbox="298 1211 865 1266"><i>Existing view from the Los Angeles River Bike Path in the city of Glendale, looking northeast</i></p>	High	Moderate	Moderate	Pedestrians and bicyclists using the Los Angeles River Bike Path	Moderate-High

KVP #	KVP Photo and Description	Natural Harmony	Cultural Order	Project Coherence	Primary Viewer Group	Existing Visual Quality
9	 <p data-bbox="298 711 861 753"><i>Existing view from San Fernando Road over the Verdugo Wash in the city of Glendale, looking southwest</i></p>	Low	Moderate	Low	Motorists using San Fernando Road	Moderate-Low

Source: California High-Speed Rail Authority and Federal Railroad Administration, 2017
 KVP = key viewpoint

3.16.5.2 Lower San Fernando Valley Landscape Unit

Overall Setting

The Lower San Fernando Valley Landscape Unit extends from SR 134 to SR 110 (approximately 3.4 miles) and includes portions of the cities of Glendale and Los Angeles. The city of Glendale is divided into 34 neighborhoods, which are delineated by streets, washes, and mountain ridges. Each neighborhood has a unique history and character, and as these neighborhoods developed, they were incorporated to become the City of Glendale. Land uses within this landscape unit include, but are not limited to, single-family and multifamily residential neighborhoods, educational facilities, commercial businesses and services, and light industrial and manufacturing uses, as well as parks and open space. Similar to the Upper San Fernando Valley Landscape Unit, the residential uses within this landscape unit are buffered by commercial or industrial uses adjacent to the existing rail corridor. The visual character through the Lower San Fernando Landscape Unit is typified by industrial/commercial land uses in the corridor and surrounding the existing railroad corridor, as well as the residential neighborhoods throughout the city of Glendale.

Existing Visual Resources

The sections below describe the visual resources within the Lower San Fernando Valley Landscape Unit based on analysis of aerial and satellite mapping, site surveys, and policy documents. Each of the visual resources is categorized as either a natural environment or a cultural environment.

Glendale Transportation Center (Cultural Environment)

The historic Glendale Transportation Center is an Amtrak and Metrolink rail station in the city of Glendale. Originally known as the Glendale Southern Pacific Railroad Depot, the Glendale Transportation Center was built by the Southern Pacific Railroad in the Mission Revival Style in 1923. In 1997, it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Rio de Los Angeles State Park (Cultural Environment)

Rio de Los Angeles State Park is a California State Park along the Los Angeles River. It is north of downtown Los Angeles in the neighborhood of Cypress Park. The 247-acre park includes restored wetlands featuring native plants, as well as sports fields, a children's playground, and a recreation building. The park was built on a brownfield of an abandoned freight-switching facility called Taylor Yard, which was used by the Union Pacific Railroad and the Southern Pacific Railroad from the 1920s through 1985.



Los Angeles River (Natural Environment)

The Los Angeles River starts in the Simi Hills and Santa Susana Mountains. It flows through Los Angeles County, from Canoga Park in the western end of the San Fernando Valley nearly 48 miles southeast to its mouth in Long Beach. The Los Angeles River now flows through a concrete channel on a fixed course, which was built after a series of floods in the early 20th century.



Los Angeles River Bike Path (Cultural Environment)

The Los Angeles River Bike Path is a Class I bicycle and pedestrian path in the greater Los Angeles area running northeast along the Los Angeles River. The Los Angeles River Bike Path consists of two main sections—the Long Beach to Vernon section and the Glendale Narrows Elysian Valley section—within the Lower San Fernando Valley Landscape Unit. In addition, there are additional short sections that currently do not connect with other existing sections along the river.



Verdugo Mountains (Natural Environment)

The Verdugo Mountains are a northwest-southwest-trending, lens-shaped series of ridges approximately 9 miles long and varying from 3 to 4 miles in width. The mountains are separated on the north and northeast from the main body of the San Gabriel Mountains by extensive alluvial fans of the Sunland-Tujunga and La Crescenta areas. Big Tujunga Wash borders the Verdugo Mountains on the north, and the San Fernando Valley borders the mountains on the south-southwest. On the east, the Verdugo Wash separates the Verdugo Mountains from the San Rafael Hills.



San Gabriel Mountains (Natural Environment)

The San Gabriel Mountains are a mountain range in northern Los Angeles County. The mountain range is part of the southern California Transverse Ranges and lies between the Los Angeles Basin and the Mojave Desert, with Interstate 5 to the west and Interstate 15 to the east.



Taylor Yard Parcel/G2 Site (Cultural Environment)

Taylor Yard is a 41-acre former railyard with over 2 miles of Los Angeles River frontage near downtown Los Angeles, opposite Elysian Park and just north of Arroyo Seco. It is the largest undeveloped parcel along the Los Angeles River, and the City of Los Angeles intends to purchase this parcel and restore and revitalize the land for public use. More details regarding the restoration of Taylor Yard are provided in the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan (City of Los Angeles 2007).



Viewers



Primary viewer groups in the Lower San Fernando Valley Landscape Unit include various industrial and commercial business workers, as well as residents/recreationists in areas that neighbor the existing railroad corridor and the HSR Build Alternative. Other viewer groups include motorists, commuters, haulers, transit riders, pedestrians, and bicyclists who use local roadways and thoroughfares that are parallel to, traverse, and/or are otherwise adjacent to the existing railroad corridor.



Table 3.16-3 provides standardized descriptions of these viewer groups and their typical visual and aesthetic preferences.



Visual Quality



Table 3.16-5 measures the existing visual character of the affected environment by qualitatively rating the natural harmony, cultural order, and project coherence to determine the existing visual quality of KVPs 10 through 17. Viewer groups and viewer preference also were taken into account to determine existing visual quality at each KVP.

Table 3.16-5 Lower San Fernando Valley Landscape Unit—Existing Visual Quality

KVP #	KVP Photo and Description	Natural Harmony	Cultural Order	Project Coherence	Primary Viewer Group	Existing Visual Quality
10	 <p data-bbox="296 760 890 808"><i>Existing view from W San Fernando Road in the city of Los Angeles, looking east</i></p>	Low	Low	Low	Motorists using Alger Street	Low
11	 <p data-bbox="296 1274 890 1310"><i>Existing view from San Fernando Road in the city of Los Angeles, looking west</i></p>	Low	Low	Low	Motorists using San Fernando Road	Low

KVP #	KVP Photo and Description	Natural Harmony	Cultural Order	Project Coherence	Primary Viewer Group	Existing Visual Quality
12	 <p data-bbox="289 683 905 740"><i>Existing view from the Glendale Transportation Center in the city of Los Angeles, looking southeast</i></p>	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Visitors and commuters traveling through the historic Glendale Transportation Center	Moderate
13	 <p data-bbox="289 1151 905 1201"><i>Existing view from Glendale Boulevard in the city of Los Angeles, looking southwest</i></p>	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Motorists using Glendale Boulevard	Moderate-Low

KVP #	KVP Photo and Description	Natural Harmony	Cultural Order	Project Coherence	Primary Viewer Group	Existing Visual Quality
14	 <p data-bbox="289 639 905 667"><i>Existing view from Casitas Avenue in the city of Los Angeles, looking northeast</i></p>	Low	Low	Low	Residents and pedestrians using Casitas Avenue	Low
15	 <p data-bbox="289 1094 905 1122"><i>Existing view from Casitas Avenue in the city of Los Angeles, looking northeast</i></p>	Low	Low	Low	Residents and pedestrians using Casitas Avenue	Low

KVP #	KVP Photo and Description	Natural Harmony	Cultural Order	Project Coherence	Primary Viewer Group	Existing Visual Quality
16	 <p data-bbox="289 695 894 743"><i>Existing view from Rio de Los Angeles State Park in the city of Los Angeles, looking southwest</i></p>	High	Moderate	Moderate	Visitors to Rio de Los Angeles State Park	Moderate-High
17	 <p data-bbox="289 1123 894 1172"><i>Existing view from the Los Angeles River Bike Path in the city of Los Angeles, looking southeast</i></p>	Low	Moderate	Low	Pedestrians and bicyclists using the Los Angeles River Bike Path	Moderate-Low

Source: California High-Speed Rail Authority and Federal Railroad Administration, 2017
 KVP = key viewpoint

3.16.5.3 Downtown Los Angeles Landscape Unit

Overall Setting

The Downtown Los Angeles Landscape Unit extends from SR 110 to LAUS (approximately 4.5 miles) and is wholly within the city of Los Angeles. This landscape unit generally consists of land uses for manufacturing, warehousing, rail yards, and other commercial uses. The visual character throughout is typified by the industrial/commercial corridor and development surrounding the existing railroad corridor.

Existing Visual Resources

The sections below describe the visual resources within the Downtown Los Angeles Landscape Unit, based on analysis of aerial and satellite mapping, site surveys, and policy documents. Each of the visual resources is categorized as either a natural environment or a cultural environment.

Elysian Park (Natural Environment)

Elysian Park is the second-largest park in the city of Los Angeles, covering 600 acres. It is also the oldest park in the city, founded in 1886 by the Elysian Park Enabling Ordinance. Elysian Park encompasses Chavez Ravine, where Dodger Stadium is located.



Los Angeles State Historic Park (Cultural Environment)

Los Angeles State Historic Park is a state park currently in development within the Chinatown neighborhood of the city of Los Angeles. Also known as the Cornfield, the former Southern Pacific Railroad River Station and brownfield site consists of a long open space area between Spring Street and the tracks of the Metro Rail Gold Line. Located outside the main commercial and residential area in the northeast portion of Chinatown, the area is adjacent to and southeast of the Elysian Park neighborhood. Los Angeles State Historic Park is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but it is a local City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument called the River Station Area.



Los Angeles Union Station (Cultural Environment)

LAUS was built in 1939 and is in downtown Los Angeles at 800 N Alameda Street, between U.S. Route 101 and E Cesar E. Chavez Avenue. LAUS was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. It is a major transportation hub, providing access to Amtrak, Metrolink, the Metro Rail Red Line, the Metro Rail Gold Line, and several surface transportation modes. The station is a mix of Spanish Mission, Moorish, and Streamline Moderne architectural styles. The station is also adjacent to the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) building and the Metropolitan Water District building.



Viewers



Primary viewer groups in the Downtown Los Angeles Landscape Unit include employees of and visitors to businesses throughout the downtown Los Angeles industrial corridor, as well as residents, recreationists, and tourists in areas that neighbor the existing railroad corridor. Other primary viewer groups include motorists, commuters, haulers, transit riders, pedestrians, and bicyclists who use local roadways and thoroughfares that are parallel to, traverse, and/or are otherwise adjacent to the existing railroad corridor.



Table 3.16-3 provides standardized descriptions of these viewer groups and their typical visual and aesthetic preferences.



Visual Quality



Table 3.16-6 measures the existing visual character of the affected environment by qualitatively rating the natural harmony, cultural order, and project coherence to determine the existing visual quality of KVPs 18 through 25. Viewer groups and viewer preference were taken into account to determine existing visual quality at each KVP.

Table 3.16-6 Downtown Los Angeles Landscape Unit—Existing Visual Quality

KVP #	KVP Photo and Description	Natural Harmony	Cultural Order	Project Coherence	Primary Viewer Group	Existing Visual Quality
18	 <p data-bbox="306 729 810 777"><i>Existing view from Elysian Park in the city of Los Angeles, looking southeast</i></p>	High	Moderate	Moderate	Visitors to Elysian Park	Moderate-High
19	 <p data-bbox="306 1125 827 1174"><i>Existing view from Los Angeles State Historic Park in the city of Los Angeles, looking northeast</i></p>	Low	Moderate	Low	Visitors to Los Angeles State Historic Park	Moderate-Low

KVP #	KVP Photo and Description	Natural Harmony	Cultural Order	Project Coherence	Primary Viewer Group	Existing Visual Quality
20	 <p data-bbox="302 696 858 722"><i>Existing view from Albion Street in the city of Los Angeles, looking south</i></p>	Low	Low	Low	Pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists using Albion Street	Low
21	 <p data-bbox="302 1107 858 1133"><i>Existing view from N Main Street in the city of Los Angeles, looking east</i></p>	Low	Low	Low	Pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists using N Main Street	Low

KVP #	KVP Photo and Description	Natural Harmony	Cultural Order	Project Coherence	Primary Viewer Group	Existing Visual Quality
22	 <p data-bbox="304 652 808 701"><i>Existing view from Leroy Street in the city of Los Angeles, looking southeast</i></p>	Low	Low	Low	Residents and pedestrians using Leroy Street	Low
23	 <p data-bbox="304 1091 829 1140"><i>Existing view from Bauchet Street in the city of Los Angeles, looking southwest</i></p>	Low	Moderate	Low	Pedestrians and motorists using Bauchet Street	Moderate-Low

KVP #	KVP Photo and Description	Natural Harmony	Cultural Order	Project Coherence	Primary Viewer Group	Existing Visual Quality
24	 <p data-bbox="296 654 873 711"><i>Existing view from E Cesar E. Chavez Avenue in the city of Los Angeles, looking southeast</i></p>	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Motorists or pedestrians using E Cesar E. Chavez Avenue	Moderate
25	 <p data-bbox="296 1092 873 1144"><i>Existing view from the Mosaic at Union Station Apartments in the city of Los Angeles, looking southeast</i></p>	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Residents and pedestrians traveling to or from the Mosaic at Union Station Apartments	Moderate-Low

Source: California High-Speed Rail Authority and Federal Railroad Administration, 2017
 KVP = key viewpoint

3.16.6 Environmental Consequences

3.16.6.1 Overview

This section evaluates how the No Project Alternative and the HSR Build Alternative could affect aesthetics and visual resources. The impacts of the HSR Build Alternative are described and organized as follows.

- **Construction Impacts**
 - Impact AVQ #1: Visual Disturbance during Construction
 - Impact AVQ #2: Nighttime Lighting during Construction
- **Operations Impacts**
 - Impact AVQ #3: Visual Quality in the Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section

3.16.6.2 No Project Alternative

Under the No Project Alternative, the Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section of the California HSR Project would not be constructed. Effects or impacts associated with the proposed project would not occur for viewers identified below under the HSR Build Alternative. Reasonably foreseeable future projects, as described under the cumulative impacts discussion in Section 3.19, Cumulative Impacts, of this EIR/EIS, would still occur under the No Project Alternative. Effects or impacts would involve changes related to new or improved roadways and future residential or commercial development that could affect aesthetics and visual resources in their own right. For example, the widening of transportation corridors would not necessarily degrade the visual quality of the area, but the indirect effects that could occur from increased development (to the extent permitted by local agencies) alongside these corridors, along with increasing billboard-type signage through the area, could result in the incremental degradation of views of the existing landscape. The significance of this alteration would vary depending on specific location. Collectively, these changes could substantially degrade visual quality from moderate to moderately low or low in areas of generally moderate visual quality but with high-sensitivity viewers. However, each of the projects would require environmental documentation, and final effects determinations under NEPA and significance determinations under CEQA would be speculative at this point. Speculation notwithstanding, in the context of the affected landscape units, the incremental changes under the No Project Alternative could result in effects under NEPA and would range from less than significant to significant and unavoidable under CEQA.

3.16.6.3 High-Speed Rail Build Alternative

This section describes potential impacts related to aesthetics and visual quality from the proposed HSR project using the NEPA and CEQA impact criteria discussed in Section 3.16.4, Methods for Evaluating Impacts. Impacts are determined based on the extent to which the project may either (1) benefit visual quality by enhancing visual resources or creating better views of those resources and improving the experience of visual quality by viewers, or, conversely, (2) have an adverse effect on visual quality by degrading visual resources or obstructing or altering desired views (FHWA 2015). Impacts are assessed after consideration of the following IAMFs but before consideration of project mitigation measures, which are identified in Section 3.16.7.

Construction Impacts

Impact AVQ #1: Visual Disturbance during Construction

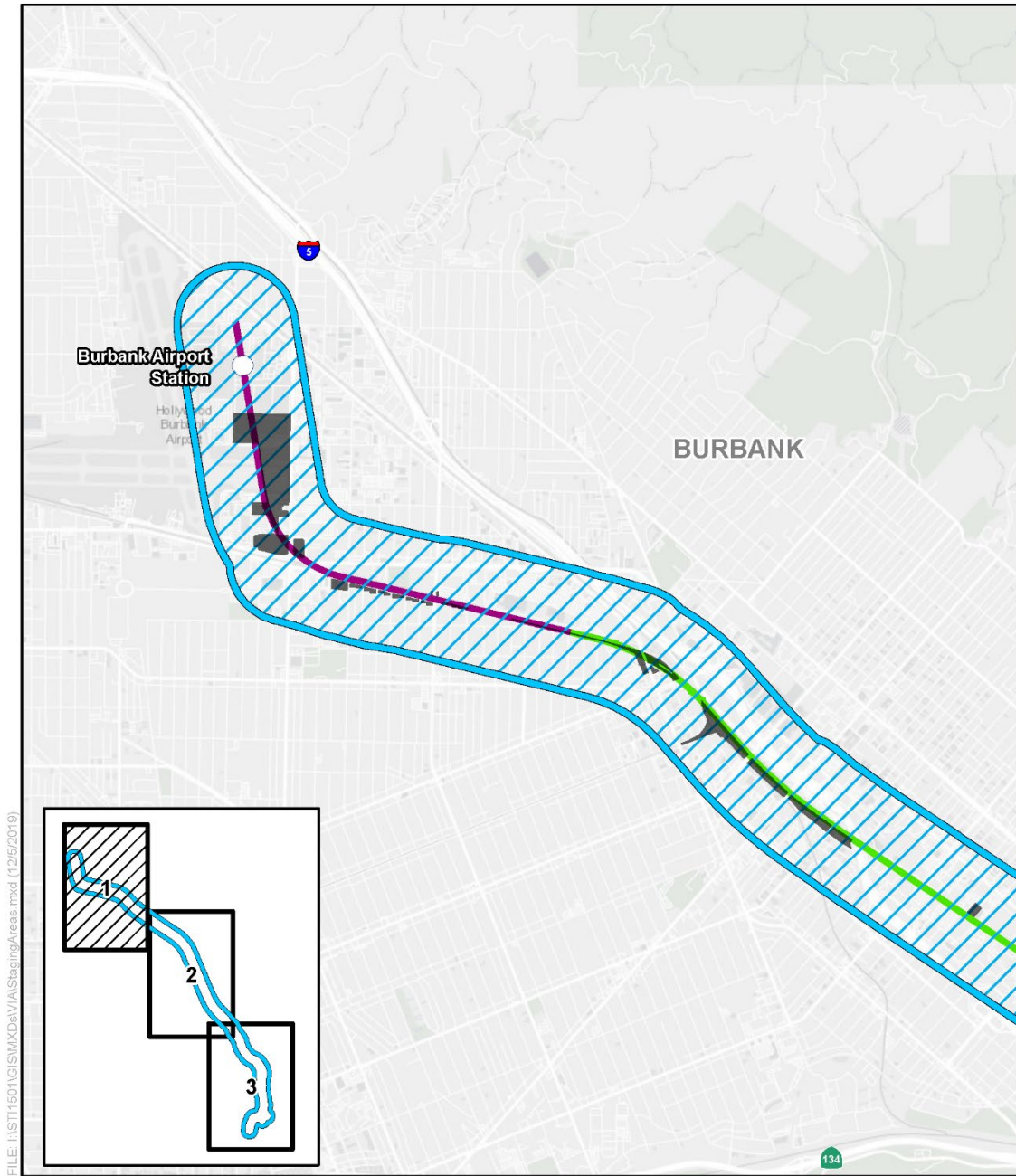
Construction of the Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section would involve the temporary use of two types of facilities in various locations: large construction staging areas and smaller construction laydown areas. These sites would include activities that could contribute to the degree of the impact, such as the movement of materials by trucks to and from construction sites; the disposal of spoils from excavation and grading; and clearing, demolition, grading, and construction of the HSR guideway. Additional construction activity details are provided in Chapter

2, Alternatives. Highly visible construction activities near sensitive viewers would cause temporary degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.

Construction staging areas would be used to stockpile materials and provide areas for materials preparation, storage of equipment, maintenance of equipment, operations preparation, and construction offices. Approximately 18 construction staging areas have been identified for the HSR Build Alternative, as shown on Figure 3.16-3 (Sheets 1 through 3), although they may be changed during construction. Most of the identified staging areas for the HSR Build Alternative are currently vacant lots. However, the staging areas that would require demolishing structures would introduce a major visual change because the pre-construction visual environment would include existing buildings while the post-construction visual environment would either include vacant lots or the development of new structures. The exact location of each construction staging area would be finalized prior to construction. Staging areas could introduce major visual changes to their immediate surroundings, with unsightly, visually chaotic aggregations of stored materials and equipment. However, the proposed staging areas would generally be surrounded by commercial or industrial lands, away from high-sensitivity viewer groups. To minimize potential impacts associated with construction staging and laydown areas during the construction period, the construction contractor would prepare a technical memorandum identifying how it would minimize construction-related aesthetic and visual quality disruption, per the requirements included in AVQ-MM#1. This technical memorandum would include the requirement that, to the extent feasible, contractors shall not locate construction staging sites within the immediate foreground distance (0 to 500 feet) of existing residential neighborhoods, recreational areas, or other land uses that include high-sensitivity viewers. This technical memorandum would be reviewed and approved by the Authority.

Soil movement during construction, such as grading, excavation, and import or export by truck, could cause the release of dust, which could impair visibility. AQ-IAMF#1 has been included to avoid substantial visibility effects due to dust. AQ-IAMF#1 requires the contractor to prepare a fugitive dust control plan that identifies measures such as covering all materials transported on public roads, watering exposed graded surfaces, and stabilizing all disturbed graded areas. This fugitive dust control plan would be reviewed and approved by the Authority.

The addition of intrusion protection railings to the three historic bridges in the visual RSA would conflict with the visual character of these historic properties, create a significant impact to the scenic values of these visual/cultural resources, and cause aesthetic degradation of existing visual quality. The three historic bridges are the Los Angeles River Bridge in the Arroyo Seco Parkway Historic District, the Broadway Viaduct, and the Spring Street Viaduct. Implementation of AVQ-IAMF#1 and CUL-IAMF#6 would promote context-sensitive visual unity, intactness, and integrity. AVQ-IAMF#1 would promote project-wide aesthetic consistency with the local context, and CUL-IAMF#6 would provide a pre-construction condition assessment. Protective barriers are required on highway, roadway, freight, and pedestrian structures that cross over the HSR. Providing a solid barrier on these structures where they cross over the electrified components of the system is critical for the safe operation of the train and the protection of both passengers and rail employees. Solid barriers on these overcrossings are required to extend to the edge of the rail right-of-way or 30 feet from the centerline of the outermost track, whichever is greater, at a minimum height of 8 feet. Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#3 and CUL-MM#12 are required to reduce impacts. Implementing AVQ-MM#3 would require the contractor to work with the Authority and local jurisdictions to incorporate Authority-approved aesthetic preferences into final design and construction, which would partially alleviate aesthetic degradation to the existing character or quality of the three affected bridges and their surroundings by providing the opportunity for design input from the jurisdiction. Implementation of CUL-MM#12 would also partially alleviate construction impacts on the historic bridges by requiring consultation with interested parties to achieve a barrier design that meets safety goals while introducing the minimum physical and visual effects on the historic property.



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SOURCE: National Geographic/Esri (2018); CHSRA (6/2021)

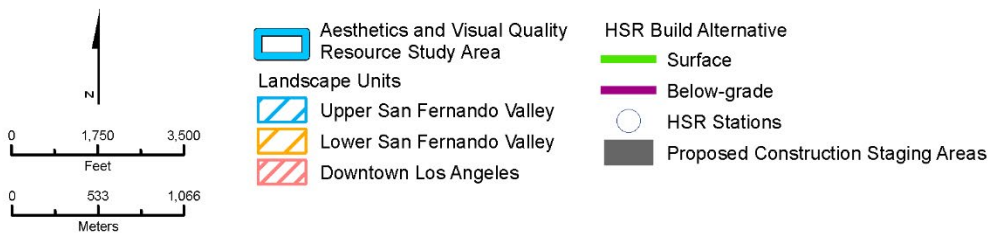
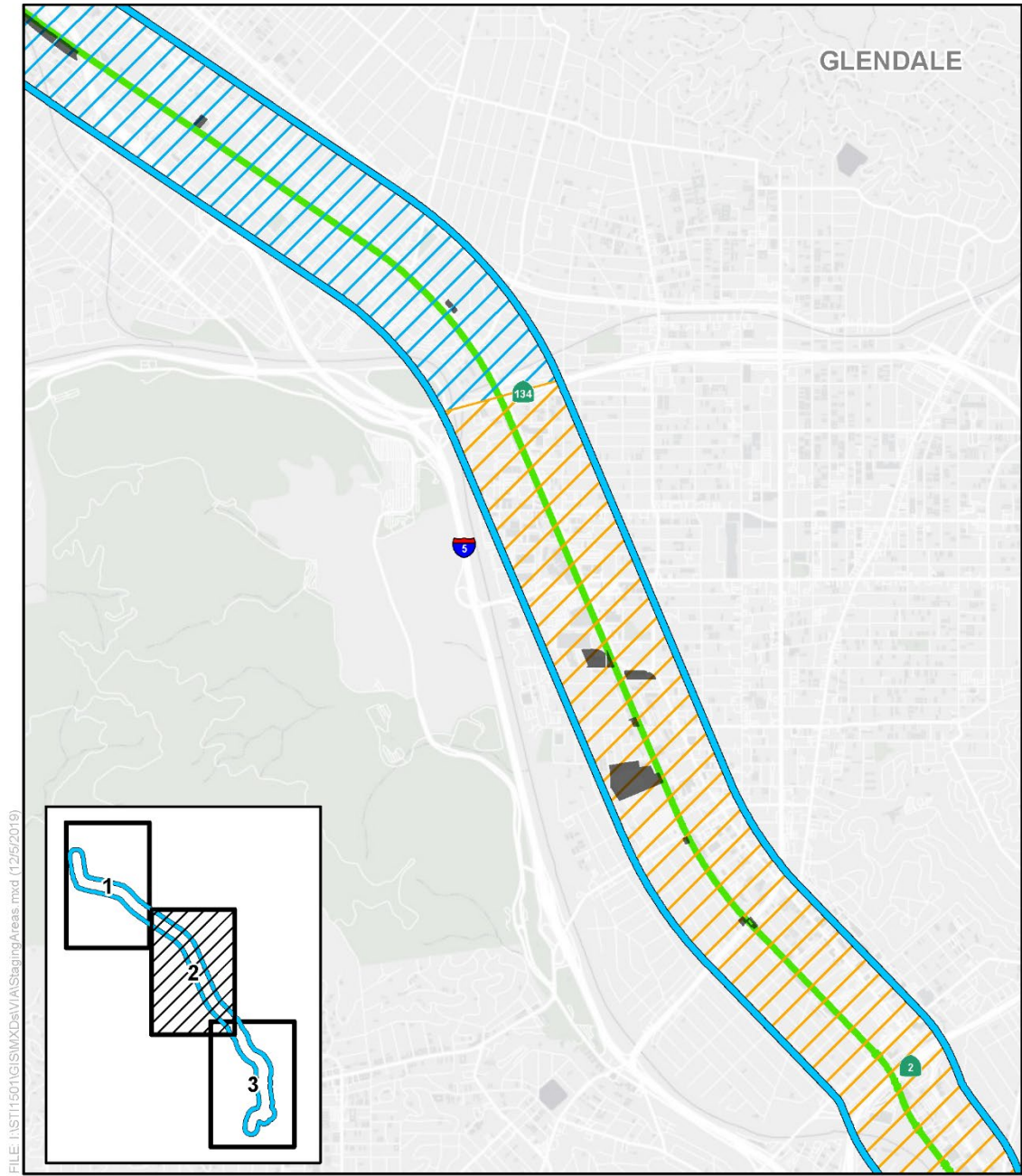


Figure 3.16-3 Proposed Construction Staging Areas
(Sheet 1 of 3)



SOURCE: National Geographic/Esri (2018); CHSRA (6/2021)

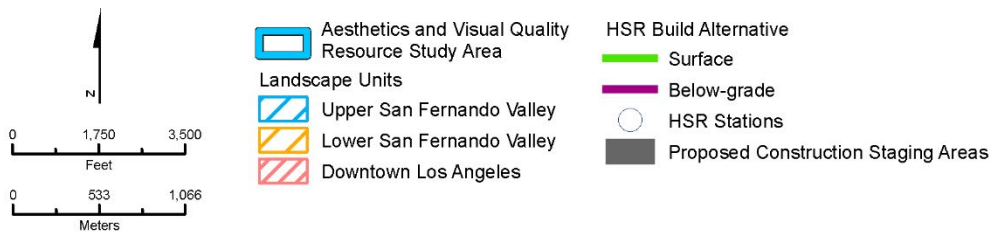
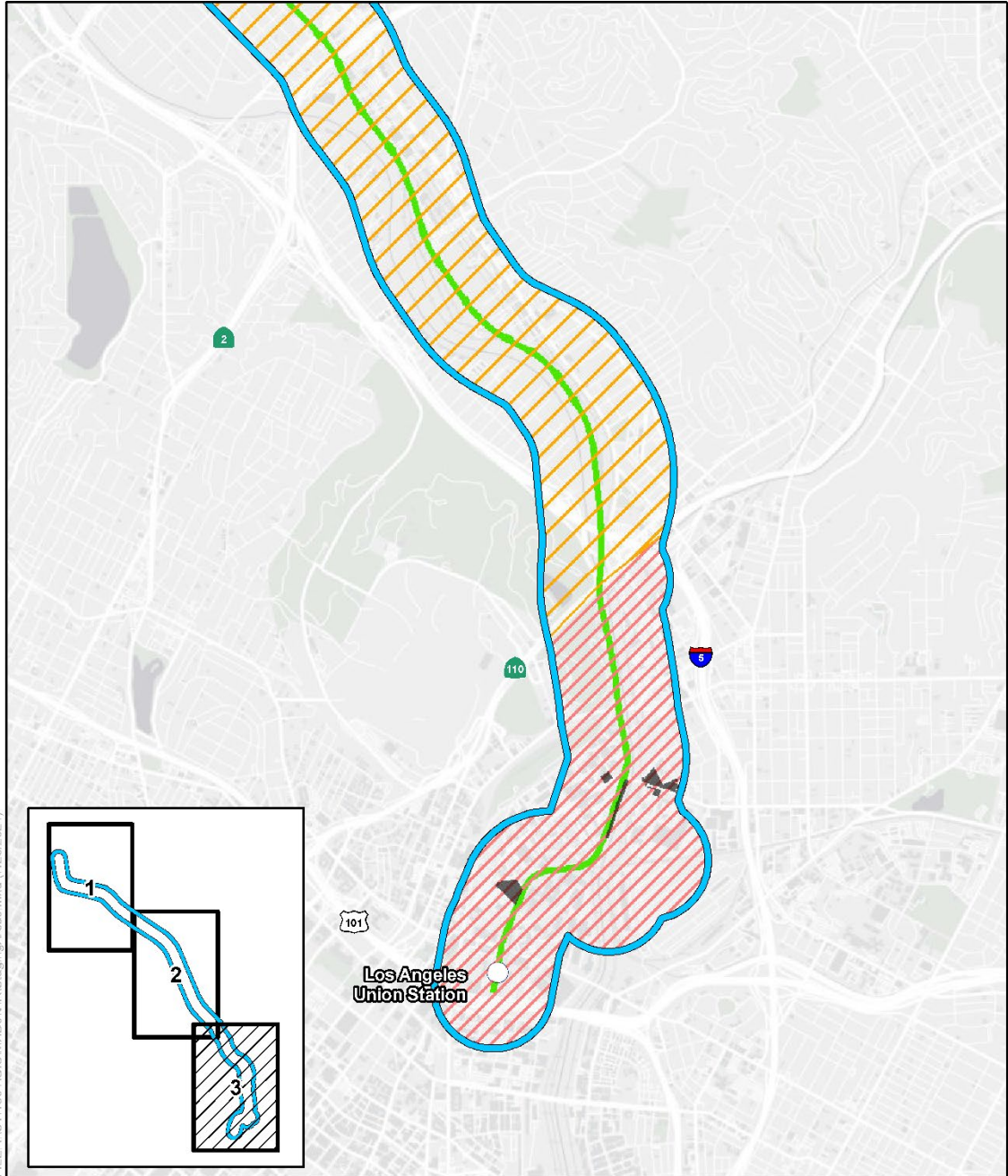
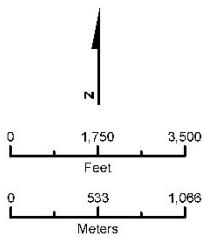


Figure 3.16-3 Proposed Construction Staging Areas
(Sheet 2 of 3)



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SOURCE: National Geographic/Esri (2018); CHSRA (6/2021)



- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Aesthetics and Visual Quality Resource Study Area | HSR Build Alternative Surface |
| Landscape Units | Below-grade |
| Upper San Fernando Valley | HSR Stations |
| Lower San Fernando Valley | Proposed Construction Staging Areas |
| Downtown Los Angeles | |

Figure 3.16-3 Proposed Construction Staging Areas
(Sheet 3 of 3)

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed above in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. However, highly visible construction activities near sensitive viewers would be significant under CEQA. The construction activities would cause potentially significant aesthetic degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. AQ-IAMF#1 has been included to avoid substantial visibility effects due to dust. AQ-IAMF#1 requires the contractor to prepare a fugitive dust control plan that identifies measures such as covering all materials transported on public roads, watering exposed graded surfaces, and stabilizing all disturbed graded areas. This fugitive dust control plan would be reviewed and approved by the Authority. Even with the application of AQ-IAMF #1, mitigation measure AVQ-MM#1 is required to reduce impacts. The contractor would prepare a technical memorandum identifying how it would minimize construction-related aesthetic and visual quality disruption. This technical memorandum would be reviewed and approved by the Authority. With implementation of AVQ-MM#1, impacts on substantial degradation of existing visual character or quality due to construction activities near sensitive viewers would be less than significant under CEQA.

The construction of intrusion protection railings on the three historic bridges would be significant under CEQA because the railings would conflict with the visual character of these historic properties and create a significant impact to the scenic values of these visual/cultural resources. Implementation of AVQ-IAMF#1 and CUL-IAMF#6 would promote context-sensitive visual unity, intactness, and integrity. AVQ-IAMF#1 would promote project-wide aesthetic consistency with the local context, and CUL-IAMF#6 would provide a pre-construction condition assessment. Even with the application of these IAMFs, mitigation measures AVQ-MM#3 and CUL-MM#12 are required to reduce impacts. Implementing AVQ-MM#3 would require the contractor to work with the Authority and local jurisdictions to incorporate Authority-approved aesthetic preferences into final design and construction, which would partially alleviate aesthetic degradation to the existing character or quality of the three affected bridges and their surroundings by providing the opportunity for design input from the jurisdiction. Implementation of CUL-MM#12 would also partially mitigate construction impacts on the historic bridges by requiring consultation with interested parties to achieve a barrier design that meets safety goals while introducing the minimum physical and visual effects on the historic property. However, the visual degradation caused by the intrusion protection railings and the residual impacts after mitigation on the three historic bridges from the HSR Build Alternative's security features would still be significant and unavoidable under CEQA.

Impact AVQ #2: Nighttime Lighting during Construction

Lighting of temporary structures (e.g., trailers, fencing, and parking) and for nighttime construction would occur throughout the length of the right-of-way. Some of the required construction laydown areas as well as nighttime construction activities would be near sensitive viewers and residential neighborhoods. Some of the lighting could spill over to off-site areas, resulting in a potentially significant visual disturbance affecting viewers, visual character, and visual quality.

Mitigation measures AVQ-MM#1 and AVQ-MM#2 are required to minimize disruption from lighting around construction laydown areas and nighttime construction activities to nearby residents and motorists. The contractor would prepare a technical memorandum to identify how the project would minimize construction-related visual/aesthetic disruption, including avoiding the location of staging sites within the immediate foreground distance (0 to 500 feet) of existing residential neighborhoods and other highly sensitive viewers (if unavoidable, the contractor staging sites would be screened from viewers using solid screening materials). In addition, the contractor would prepare a technical memorandum to verify how to shield lighting and direct it downward in such a manner as to minimize the light that falls outside the construction site boundaries. Therefore, these measures would reduce visual impacts associated with construction near sensitive viewers.

CEQA Conclusion

The nighttime lighting impacts of the HSR Build Alternative during construction would be significant under CEQA. Mitigation measures AVQ-MM#1 and AVQ-MM#2 are required to reduce impacts. These measures require the contractor to prepare technical memoranda to identify how the contractor would minimize visual/aesthetic impacts during construction (including the use of solid-material screening of staging areas) and to verify how to shield nighttime construction lighting that falls outside the construction boundaries. With implementation of AVQ-MM#1 and AVQ-MM#2, nighttime lighting impacts would be less than significant under CEQA.

Operations Impacts

Impact AVQ #3: Visual Quality in the Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section

Table 3.16-7 provides a summary of how the built elements of the HSR Build Alternative would change the existing visual quality for each KVP in the three landscape units. Determinations of this effect on aesthetics and visual quality according to NEPA and CEQA criteria, after AVQ-IAMF#1 and AVQ-IAMF#2 are applied, are provided below.

Table 3.16-7 Summary of Visual Quality Changes and Impacts at Key Viewpoints

KVP # and Location	Existing Visual Quality	Viewer Sensitivity	Project's Visual Change	Visual Quality Effect	NEPA Evaluation	CEQA Impact Determination
Upper San Fernando Valley Landscape Unit						
KVP 1: N Hollywood Way, looking northwest	Moderate-Low	Moderate	Moderate	Beneficial	No Effect	Less than Significant
KVP 2: Pacific Avenue, looking northeast	Moderate	Low	Low	Neutral	No Effect	Less than Significant
KVP 3: W Burbank Boulevard, looking northeast	Moderate	Low	Low	Neutral	No Effect	Less than Significant
KVP 4: N Front Street, looking southwest	Moderate-High	Low	Low	Neutral	No Effect	Less than Significant
KVP 5: Sonora Avenue, looking south	Moderate-Low	Low	High	Adverse	Impact	Significant and Unavoidable
KVP 6: Pelanconi Park, looking southwest	Moderate-Low	High	High	Adverse	Impact	Significant and Unavoidable
KVP 7: Pelanconi Avenue/Flower Street, looking southwest	Low	Moderate	High	Adverse	Impact	Significant and Unavoidable
KVP 8: Los Angeles River Bike Path, looking northeast	Moderate-High	Moderate-Low	Low	Neutral	No Effect	Less than Significant
KVP 9: San Fernando Road, looking southwest	Moderate-Low	Moderate	Low	Neutral	No Effect	Less than Significant

KVP # and Location	Existing Visual Quality	Viewer Sensitivity	Project's Visual Change	Visual Quality Effect	NEPA Evaluation	CEQA Impact Determination
Lower San Fernando Valley Landscape Unit						
KVP 10: San Fernando Road, looking east	Low	Low	High	Beneficial	No Effect	Less than Significant
KVP 11: San Fernando Road, looking west	Low	Low	High	Beneficial	No Effect	Less than Significant
KVP 12: Glendale Transportation Center, looking southeast	Moderate	Low	Low	Neutral	No Effect	Less than Significant
KVP 13: Glendale Boulevard, looking southwest	Moderate-Low	Moderate	Moderate-Low	Neutral	No Effect	Less than Significant
KVP 14: Casitas Avenue, looking northeast	Low	Moderate-High	Moderate-Low	Neutral	No Effect	Less than Significant
KVP 15: Casitas Avenue, looking northeast	Low	Moderate-High	Moderate-Low	Neutral	No Effect	Less than Significant
KVP 16: Rio de Los Angeles State Park, looking southwest	Moderate-High	Moderate	Moderate	Neutral	No Effect	Less than Significant
KVP 17: Los Angeles River Bike Path, looking southeast	Moderate-Low	Moderate	Moderate-Low	Neutral	No Effect	Less than Significant
Downtown Los Angeles Landscape Unit						
KVP 18: Elysian Park, looking southeast	Moderate-High	Moderate-Low	Low	Neutral	No Effect	Less than Significant
KVP 19: Los Angeles State Historic Park, looking northeast	Moderate-Low	Low	Low	Neutral	No Effect	Less than Significant
KVP 20: Albion Street, looking south	Low	Moderate	High	Neutral	No Effect	Less than Significant
KVP 21: N Main Street, looking east	Low	Moderate	High	Neutral	No Effect	Less than Significant
KVP 22: Leroy Street, looking southeast	Low	Moderate-High	Low	Neutral	No Effect	Less than Significant
KVP 23: Baughet Street, looking southwest	Moderate-Low	Moderate-Low	Low	Neutral	No Effect	Less than Significant

KVP # and Location	Existing Visual Quality	Viewer Sensitivity	Project's Visual Change	Visual Quality Effect	NEPA Evaluation	CEQA Impact Determination
KVP 24: E Cesar E. Chavez Avenue, looking southeast	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Neutral	No Effect	Less than Significant
KVP 25: Mosaic at Union Station Apartments, looking southeast	Moderate-Low	Moderate	Moderate	Neutral	No Effect	Less than Significant

CEQA = California Environmental Quality Act
 KVP = key viewpoint
 NEPA = National Environmental Policy Act

AVQ-IAMF #1 applies to KVPs 1 through 25. Through implementation of AVQ-IAMF#1, the Authority is seeking to balance a consistent aesthetic throughout the state with the local context for the nonstation structures throughout the Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section. Examples of aesthetic options would be provided to the Cities of Burbank, Glendale, and Los Angeles that can be applied to nonstandard structures in the project section. Through implementation of AVQ-IAMF#2, the Authority would consult with local jurisdictions on how best to involve the community in the process and would work with the contractor and local jurisdictions to review designs and local aesthetic preferences and incorporate them into final design and construction.

The following discussion explains the anticipated changes in visual quality for each KVP. The upper image in each figure captures the existing view from the KVP and the lower image illustrates the visual simulation of the final built elements of the HSR Build Alternative during operation.

Key Viewpoint 1: View from N Hollywood Way in the City of Burbank, Looking Northwest

KVP 1 represents views for motorists using N Hollywood Way (Figure 3.16-4). The area along N Hollywood Way would be transformed into a transit center for buses and shuttles, with shelters and small buildings scattered throughout (see Figure 2-29, Preliminary Station Concept Layout Plan—Burbank Airport Station, in Chapter 2, Alternatives). As shown on Figure 3.16-4, the proposed transit center would be heavily landscaped with trees, enhancing the presently low level of natural harmony. Pick-up/drop-off facilities for private automobiles, a transit center for buses and shuttles, and surface parking areas would be visible to motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians traveling along N Hollywood Way. However, although there are sidewalks on most of the streets surrounding Hollywood Burbank Airport, the area lacks buildings with a scale that is pedestrian-oriented abutting the sidewalk.

Separate from the Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section, the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport Authority is moving forward to build a two-story, 14-aircraft-gate replacement terminal at Hollywood Burbank Airport. About 2,450 parking spaces would be between the replacement terminal and N Hollywood Way. The replacement terminal would be developed prior to the development of the HSR Build Alternative and would add to the existing industrial and commercial visual character of the area around Hollywood Burbank Airport.



Existing view from N Hollywood Way in the city of Burbank, looking northwest.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative/Burbank Airport Station (surface elements and landscaping) from N Hollywood Way in the city of Burbank, looking northwest.

Figure 3.16-4 Key Viewpoint 1

The proposed Burbank Airport Station would introduce a moderate visual change to the area. However, because the replacement terminal would be developed prior to the Burbank Airport Station, the change in the existing visual character along N Hollywood Way would be minor. The proposed Burbank Airport Station would be visually compatible with the natural and cultural environments. The Burbank Station would also add landscaping that enhances the natural harmony, and the scale of the existing environment would be broken up from large paved lots, which would improve cultural order. Overall viewer exposure would be low due to the dynamic view³ and short viewing durations. Viewer awareness of commuting motorists would be low because the more routine the scene is to a viewer, the less sensitive the viewer is. On the other hand, viewer awareness of visiting motorists would be high because the scene would be more unique to visitors and the viewer would thus be more sensitive to it. Given an overall exposure ranking of low and an average awareness ranking of moderate, overall viewer sensitivity to KVP 1 would be moderate. Most project features included in the proposed Burbank Airport Station would not alter the visual character along N Hollywood Way, and the Burbank Airport Station would improve cultural order. Therefore, even with moderate viewer sensitivity, the overall visual quality effect would be beneficial.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed above in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. The impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 1 would be less than significant under CEQA. The HSR elements, particularly the proposed transit center, would be heavily landscaped with trees, enhancing the presently low level of natural harmony of the existing views of the roadway corridor. This would result in a beneficial effect on visual quality. Therefore, CEQA does not require mitigation.

Key Viewpoint 2: View from Pacific Avenue, Looking Northeast

KVP 2 represents views for motorists using W Pacific Avenue (Figure 3.16-5). The HSR Build Alternative at KVP 2 would be visible to pedestrians and motorists at this location. Visual changes to the area would be low due to the existing Metrolink and Union Pacific Railroad non-electrified tracks (which would be relocated within the existing rail corridor). The visual simulation for KVP 2 captures the view of the Verdugo Mountains and illustrates that even with the introduction of overhead catenary lines into the viewshed, the HSR Build Alternative would not reduce natural harmony by interrupting existing views of the Verdugo Mountains for motorists using Pacific Avenue. The minimal visual change to the existing cultural order is attributed to several factors, including existing utility lines in the viewshed, the Metrolink and UPRR non-electrified tracks, and the fact that the HSR Build Alternative would not exceed the height of the existing surrounding warehouse buildings. Because the HSR Build Alternative would not interrupt existing views of the resources visible from KVP 2, it would be visually compatible with the natural and cultural environments. Overall viewer exposure would be low due to the dynamic view and short viewing durations. Viewer awareness of commuting and visiting motorists would be low due to the low visual change. Given an exposure ranking of low and an awareness ranking of low, overall viewer sensitivity to the proposed project features in KVP 2 would be low. The proposed project would be visually compatible with the natural and cultural environments, viewer sensitivity in the area would be low, and the overall visual quality effect would be neutral.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. The impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 2 would be less than significant under CEQA because the HSR Build Alternative would be compatible with the natural and cultural environments and would not reduce natural harmony by interrupting existing views of the Verdugo Mountains for motorists using Pacific Avenue. Therefore, CEQA does not require mitigation.

³ The viewshed of a traveler moving along a highway is considered dynamic in that it is constantly changing.



Existing view from Pacific Avenue in the city of Burbank, looking northeast.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative from Pacific Avenue in the city of Burbank, looking northeast.

Figure 3.16-5 Key Viewpoint 2

Key Viewpoint 3: View from W Burbank Boulevard, Looking Northeast

KVP 3 represents views for motorists using W Burbank Boulevard (Figure 3.16-6). The existing W Burbank Boulevard roadway bridge would be reconstructed to cross over the electrified and non-electrified tracks, and Burbank Boulevard would be raised in elevation on the west side. The visual simulation illustrates that the proposed project would be barely visible to motorists at this location and visual changes to the cultural order and the area would be low. The visual simulation for KVP 3 also captures the view of the Verdugo Mountains and the reconstructed W Burbank Boulevard overcrossing. It shows that the HSR Build Alternative would not interrupt existing views of the Verdugo Mountains for motorists using W Burbank Boulevard or change the existing natural harmony. The HSR Build Alternative would be visually compatible with the natural and cultural environments. Overall viewer exposure would be low due to the barely visible proposed project features. Viewer awareness of commuting and visiting motorists would be low due to the low visual change. Given an exposure ranking of low and an awareness ranking of low, overall viewer sensitivity to the proposed project features in KVP 3 would be low. The proposed project would be visually compatible with the natural and cultural environments, viewer sensitivity in the area would be low, and the overall visual quality effect would be neutral.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. The impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 3 would be less than significant under CEQA. The HSR Build Alternative would be visually compatible with the natural and cultural environments and would not interrupt existing views of the Verdugo Mountains. Therefore, CEQA does not require mitigation.



Existing view from W Burbank Boulevard in the city of Burbank, looking northeast.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative from W Burbank Boulevard in the city of Burbank, looking northeast.

Figure 3.16-6 Key Viewpoint 3

Key Viewpoint 4: View from N Front Street, Looking Southwest

KVP 4 represents views for visitors and commuters traveling through the existing Downtown Burbank Metrolink station (Figure 3.16-7). Under the HSR Build Alternative, the Metrolink station would be modified as an early action project (more details provided in Chapter 2) with HSR tracks, overhead catenary lines, and an HSR platform placed on the west side of the station. The project also proposes the addition of a new parking lot. Visitors and commuters waiting on the station platform would have a high exposure to the proposed modifications. KVP 4 illustrates that the HSR Build Alternative would not interrupt existing views for Metrolink users and would not alter the existing project coherence. Given that the HSR Build Alternative would modify an existing station, visual changes to the cultural order and natural harmony would be low and the HSR Build Alternative would be visually compatible with the natural and cultural environments. The overall visual quality effect would be neutral.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. The impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 4 would be less than significant under CEQA. The HSR Build Alternative would result in low visual changes to the cultural order and natural harmony and would be visually compatible with the natural and cultural environments, resulting in a neutral effect on visual quality or character. Therefore, CEQA does not require mitigation.



Existing view from N Front Street in the city of Burbank, looking southwest.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative from N Front Street in the city of Burbank, looking southwest.

Figure 3.16-7 Key Viewpoint 4

Key Viewpoint 5: View from Sonora Avenue, Looking South

At KVP 5, the project proposes to grade-separate Sonora Avenue as an early action project (see the descriptions of early action projects in Chapter 2) to maintain functionality of the HSR Build Alternative and to reduce conflicts. KVP 5 represents views for pedestrians using Sonora Avenue. Figure 3.16-8 illustrates the proposed grade separation where Sonora Avenue would be lowered in elevation for a length of approximately 650 feet between Air Way and San Fernando Road. At the lowest point of the undercrossing, Sonora Avenue would be approximately 8 feet below the existing grade. The height of the new retained-fill structure would be approximately 28 feet. The visual simulation for KVP 5 illustrates that the proposed grade separation and overhead catenary lines would interrupt existing views of the Santa Monica Mountains/Hollywood Hills for pedestrians along Sonora Avenue, which would decrease the existing natural harmony and change visual quality.

It is anticipated that pedestrians using Sonora Avenue would experience a high level of exposure to visual changes given the duration of travel time for pedestrians, as well as the number of local residents using Sonora Avenue for shopping purposes. However, there are no apprehending details (no specific visual element or focal point on which the viewer is focused) in KVP 5, and many pedestrians would experience a low level of awareness of visual changes. Additionally, KVP 5 is adjacent to existing Metrolink tracks and viewer sensitivity in the area would be low.

Although awareness of and sensitivity to visual change would be low, the permanent construction of the grade separation would introduce a prominent visual element to the existing cultural environment. In order to reduce impacts to the existing natural and cultural environments, the contractor shall work with the Authority and local jurisdictions to incorporate the Authority-approved aesthetic preferences for nonstation structures into final design and construction. AVQ-MM#3 requires the contractor to submit a technical memorandum to the Authority to document compliance. However, even with implementation of AVQ-MM#3, the proposed grade separation would be out of scale with the surrounding commercial uses and the project scale would contrast with the existing cultural environment. The overall effect to visual quality would be adverse.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. However, the impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 5 would be significant under CEQA. The HSR Build Alternative would introduce overhead catenary lines that would interrupt existing views of the Santa Monica Mountains/Hollywood Hills, which would decrease the existing natural harmony. The introduction of the new grade separation also would introduce a prominent visual element to the existing cultural environment. Mitigation measure AVQ-MM#3 is required to reduce impacts. This measure requires the contractor to work with the Authority and local jurisdictions to incorporate the Authority-approved aesthetic preferences for nonstation structures into final design and construction. However, after mitigation, the impact would remain significant and unavoidable under CEQA.



Existing view from Sonora Avenue in the city of Glendale, looking south.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative from Sonora Avenue in the city of Glendale, looking south.

Figure 3.16-8 Key Viewpoint 5

Key Viewpoint 6: View from Pelanconi Park, Looking Southwest

At KVP 6, the project proposes to grade-separate Grandview Avenue as an early action project (more details provided in Chapter 2) to maintain functionality of the HSR Build Alternative and to reduce conflicts. KVP 6 represents views for recreational visitors to Pelanconi Park. Figure 3.16-9 illustrates the proposed grade separation where Grandview Avenue would be slightly lowered approximately 2 to 3 feet to cross under the HSR Build Alternative and the relocated Metrolink non-electrified tracks (the existing rail corridor on the retained fill). The HSR Build Alternative would be built on approximately 30 feet of retained fill and the top of the overhead catenary structure would extend an additional 24 feet. The visual simulation for KVP 6 illustrates that the proposed grade separation and overhead catenary lines would interrupt existing views of the Santa Monica Mountains/Hollywood Hills for recreational visitors to Pelanconi Park, which would decrease the natural harmony and change visual quality.

It is anticipated that recreational visitors to Pelanconi Park would experience a high level of exposure to visual changes given the proximity of the park to the proposed grade separation. Recreational viewers are often focused on their recreational activity. However, if visitors to the park are participating in passive activities, their focus could remain on the existing view of the Santa Monica Mountains/Hollywood Hills, and their overall awareness of visual change would be high. Given the high viewer exposure to and awareness of visual change, viewer sensitivity in the area would be high.

The permanent construction of the grade separation would introduce a prominent visual element to the existing cultural environment. The scale of the proposed grade separation would be visually compatible with the surrounding existing two-story commercial buildings and light industrial uses near the existing tracks. However, the proposed grade separation would be out of scale with the existing one-story residential uses near Pelanconi Park, and the project scale would contrast with the existing cultural environment. In order to reduce impacts to the existing residential environment, the contractor shall work with the Authority and local jurisdictions to incorporate the Authority-approved aesthetic preferences for nonstation structures into final design and construction. AVQ-MM#3 requires the contractor to submit a technical memorandum to the Authority to document compliance. However, even with implementation of AVQ-MM#3, the proposed grade separation would be out of scale with the surrounding residential uses and the project scale would contrast with the existing cultural environment. The overall effect to visual quality would be adverse.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. However, the impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 6 would be significant under CEQA. The HSR Build Alternative would introduce proposed grade separation and overhead catenary lines would interrupt existing views of the Santa Monica Mountains/Hollywood Hills, which would decrease the natural harmony particularly for recreational visitors to Pelanconi Park. The permanent construction of the grade separation would introduce a prominent visual element to the existing cultural environment. Mitigation measure AVQ-MM#3 is required to reduce impacts. This measure requires the contractor to work with the Authority and local jurisdictions to incorporate the Authority-approved aesthetic preferences for nonstation structures into final design and construction. However, after mitigation, the impact would remain significant and unavoidable under CEQA.



Existing view from Pelanconi Park in the city of Glendale, looking southwest.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative from Pelanconi Park in the city of Glendale, looking southwest.

Figure 3.16-9 Key Viewpoint 6

Key Viewpoint 7: View from Pelanconi Avenue/Flower Street, Looking Southwest

At KVP 7, the project proposes to grade-separate Pelanconi Avenue/Flower Street as an early action project (more details provided in Chapter 2) to maintain the functionality of the HSR Build Alternative and to reduce conflicts. KVP 7 represents views for residents and pedestrians using Flower Street/Pelanconi Avenue. Figure 3.16-10 illustrates the proposed grade separation where Flower Street would be lowered in elevation between Air Way and San Fernando Road, and the lowest point of the undercrossing would be approximately 10 feet below the existing grade. The existing median would be modified on Flower Street, but the overall width of Flower Street would remain the same. San Fernando Road would be lowered in grade between Norton Avenue and Alma Street, and Pelanconi Avenue would be extended to connect to San Fernando Road. The height of the new retained-fill structure would be approximately 28 feet. The visual simulation for KVP 7 illustrates that the proposed grade separation would obstruct existing views of the Santa Monica Mountains/Hollywood Hills and illustrates that the HSR Build Alternative would interrupt existing views for pedestrians using Flower Street, which would decrease natural harmony and change visual quality.

It is anticipated that pedestrians using Flower Street/Pelanconi Avenue would experience a high level of exposure to visual changes given the duration of travel time for pedestrians. However, viewer awareness of visual change would be low given the proximity to existing commercial and light industrial land uses as well as the Metrolink tracks. Additionally, KVP 7 is adjacent to existing tracks and viewer sensitivity in the area would be low.

The permanent construction of the grade separation would introduce a prominent visual element to the existing cultural environment. The proposed grade separation would be out of scale with the existing residential uses near Pelanconi Avenue/Flower Street, and the project scale would contrast with the existing cultural environment. In order to reduce impacts to the existing residential environment, the contractor shall work with the Authority and local jurisdictions to incorporate the Authority-approved aesthetic preferences for nonstation structures into final design and construction. AVQ-MM#3 requires the contractor to submit a technical memorandum to the Authority to document compliance. However, even with implementation of AVQ-MM#3, the proposed grade separation would be out of scale with the surrounding residential uses and the project scale would contrast with the existing cultural environment. Overall, the effect to visual quality would be adverse.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. However, the impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 7 would be significant under CEQA. The HSR Build Alternative would introduce a proposed grade separation that would obstruct existing views of the Santa Monica Mountains/Hollywood Hills and interrupt existing views for pedestrians using Flower Street, which would decrease natural harmony and change visual quality. The construction of the grade separation would introduce a prominent visual element to the existing cultural environment that would be out of scale with the existing residential uses near Pelanconi Avenue/Flower Street. Mitigation measure AVQ-MM#3 is required to reduce impacts. This measure requires the contractor to work with the Authority and local jurisdictions to incorporate the Authority-approved aesthetic preferences for nonstation structures into final design and construction. However, after mitigation, the impact would remain significant and unavoidable under CEQA.



Existing view from Pelanconi Avenue/Flower Street in the city of Glendale, looking southwest.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative from Pelanconi Avenue/Flower Street in the city of Glendale, looking southwest.

Figure 3.16-10 Key Viewpoint 7

Key Viewpoint 8: View from the Los Angeles River Bike Path, Looking Northeast

KVP 8 represents views for pedestrians and bicyclists using the Los Angeles River Bike Path (Figure 3.16-11). The visual simulation for KVP 8 captures the proposed surface alignment, which includes the side profile of railcars and the overhead contact system, and illustrates that the HSR Build Alternative would not interrupt existing views of the Los Angeles River and the San Gabriel Mountains for pedestrians or bicyclists using the Los Angeles River Bike Path. Because the HSR Build Alternative would not interrupt existing views of the visual resource visible from KVP 8, it would be visually compatible with the natural and cultural environments. Exposure for cyclists would be low due to the dynamic view and short viewing durations. Exposure for pedestrians would also be low due to the distance between the pedestrian and the proposed project on the opposite side of the Los Angeles River. Viewer awareness of pedestrians or bicyclists would depend on the routine of the viewer. If bicycling or walking along the Los Angeles River Bike Path is a routine, then the viewer awareness is low. Conversely, if traveling along the Los Angeles River Bike Path is a new venture for the pedestrian or bicyclist, the viewer awareness is high. Given an overall exposure ranking of low and an average awareness ranking of moderate, overall viewer sensitivity would be moderate-low. The overall visual quality effect would be neutral.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. The impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 8 would be less than significant under CEQA. The HSR Build Alternative would not interrupt existing views of the Los Angeles River and the San Gabriel Mountains and would be visually compatible with the natural and cultural environments, resulting in a neutral effect on visual quality or character. Therefore, CEQA does not require mitigation.



Existing view from the Los Angeles River Bike Path in the city of Glendale, looking northeast.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative from the Los Angeles River Bike Path in the city of Glendale, looking northeast.

Figure 3.16-11 Key Viewpoint 8

Key Viewpoint 9: View from San Fernando Road, Looking Southwest

KVP 9 represents views for motorists using San Fernando Road (Figure 3.16-12). The HSR Build Alternative crosses the Verdugo Wash where an existing Metrolink bridge would be rebuilt as a new, wider clear-span structure to accommodate the additional tracks for HSR. The visual simulation for KVP 9 shows the view of Verdugo Wash and illustrates that the HSR Build Alternative would not interrupt existing views of Verdugo Wash for travelers using San Fernando Road. Thus, the HSR Build Alternative would maintain the existing natural harmony and introduce a low visual change in the area. Because the HSR Build Alternative would not interrupt existing views of the visual resource visible from KVP 9, it would be visually compatible with the natural and cultural environments.

Viewer awareness of commuting motorists would be low because the more routine the scene is to a viewer, the less sensitive the viewer is. Given an overall exposure ranking of low and an average awareness ranking of moderate, overall viewer sensitivity would be moderate. Because the proposed project would introduce a new, wider clear-span structure in the same location as the existing location and overhead catenary lines that would not interrupt existing views of Verdugo Wash for travelers using San Fernando Road, and given the moderate viewer sensitivity in the area, the overall visual quality effect would be neutral.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. The impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 9 would be less than significant under CEQA. The HSR Build Alternative would not interrupt existing views of Verdugo Wash, would maintain the existing natural harmony, and would be visually compatible with the natural and cultural environments, resulting in a neutral effect on visual quality or character. Therefore, CEQA does not require mitigation.



Existing view from San Fernando Road in the city of Glendale, looking southwest.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative from San Fernando Road in the city of Glendale, looking southwest.

Figure 3.16-12 Key Viewpoint 9

Key Viewpoint 10: View from W San Fernando Road, Looking East

At KVP 10, the project proposes to grade-separate Goodwin Avenue as an early action project (more details provided in Chapter 2) in order to maintain functionality of the HSR Build Alternative and to reduce conflicts. KVP 10 represents views for motorists using W San Fernando Road/Alger Street. Figure 3.16-13 illustrates the proposed grade separation where Goodwin Avenue would be realigned and depressed to cross under a new railroad bridge supporting the HSR and non-electrified tracks. The realignment of Goodwin Avenue would remove the existing parking lot north of Goodwin Avenue. A new roadway bridge would also be required to carry Alger Street over the depressed Goodwin Avenue, connecting to W San Fernando Road. A sidewalk on Alger Street would replace the existing shoulder where trucks currently park along Alger Street. The new depressed roadway would curve north from Brunswick Avenue, cross under the new roadway and railroad bridges, and connect with Pacific Avenue on the east side of the railroad right-of-way. The lowest point of the undercrossing would be approximately 17 feet below the existing grade. The visual simulation for KVP 10 illustrates that the HSR Build Alternative would introduce new views of the Verdugo Mountains to residents along the west side of Alger Street, which would improve the existing natural harmony. The visual simulation for KVP 10 shows that the proposed grade separation would result in changes to visual quality.

It is anticipated that motorists using W San Fernando Road/Alger Street would experience a low level of exposure to visual changes given the dynamic view and short viewing durations. There are no apprehending details in the foreground or background of KVP 10. Additionally, KVP 10 is adjacent to existing tracks and viewer sensitivity in the area would be low.

Although the proposed grade separation would introduce a high visual change in the area, the overall viewer sensitivity would be low and the grade separation would not be out of character with the existing cultural order. The grade separation would improve natural order by providing new views of the Verdugo Mountains. In addition, with implementation of AVQ-IAMF#1, the grade separation would be designed to reduce intrusiveness to primary viewer groups.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. With implementation of AVQ-IAMF#1, the grade separation would be designed to reduce intrusiveness to primary viewer groups. The impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 10 would be less than significant under CEQA. The HSR Build Alternative would introduce new railroad bridges, resulting in high visual changes in the area; however, the new bridges would not be out of character with the existing cultural order. The project would also introduce new views of the Verdugo Mountains, which would improve existing natural harmony. The overall visual quality effect would be beneficial. Therefore, CEQA does not require mitigation.



Existing view from W San Fernando Road in the city of Los Angeles, looking east.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative from W San Fernando Road in the city of Los Angeles, looking east.

Figure 3.16-13 Key Viewpoint 10

Key Viewpoint 11: View from San Fernando Road, Looking West

As mentioned under KVP 10, the HSR Build Alternative proposes to grade-separate Goodwin Avenue as an early action project (more details provided in Chapter 2), with Goodwin Avenue realigned and depressed to cross under a new railroad bridge supporting the HSR and non-electrified tracks. KVP 11 represents views for motorists using San Fernando Road. Figure 3.16-14 illustrates the proposed grade separation, where Goodwin Avenue would be realigned and depressed to cross under a new railroad bridge supporting the HSR and non-electrified tracks. The visual simulation for KVP 11 illustrates that the HSR Build Alternative would introduce new views of Griffith Park to residents near the east side of San Fernando Road, which would improve the existing natural harmony. The visual simulation for KVP 11 shows that the proposed grade separation would result in changes to visual quality.

It is anticipated that motorists using San Fernando Road would experience a low level of exposure to visual changes given the dynamic view and short viewing durations. There are no apprehending details in the foreground or background of KVP 11. Additionally, KVP 11 is adjacent to existing tracks and viewer sensitivity in the area would be low.

Although the proposed grade separation would introduce a high visual change in the area, the overall viewer sensitivity would be low and the grade separation would not be out of character with the existing cultural order. The grade separation would improve natural order by providing new views of the Griffith Park. In addition, with implementation of AVQ-IAMF#1, the grade separation would be designed to reduce intrusiveness to primary viewer groups.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. With implementation of AVQ-IAMF#1, the grade separation would be designed to reduce intrusiveness to primary viewer groups. The impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 11 would be less than significant under CEQA. The HSR Build Alternative would introduce a grade separation so Goodwin Avenue would travel under a new railroad bridge adjacent to existing tracks. The project would introduce a high visual change in the area, although it would not be out of character with the existing cultural order. The HSR Build Alternative also would introduce new views of Griffith Park, which would improve the existing natural harmony. This would result in an overall beneficial effect on visual quality. Therefore, CEQA does not require mitigation.



Existing view from San Fernando Road in the city of Los Angeles, looking east.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative from San Fernando Road in the city of Los Angeles, looking east.

Figure 3.16-14 Key Viewpoint 11

Key Viewpoint 12: View from the Historic Glendale Transportation Center, Looking Southeast

KVP 12 represents views for visitors and commuters traveling through the existing historic Glendale Transportation Center (Figure 3.16-15). Under the HSR Build Alternative, the Glendale Transportation Center would be modified with HSR tracks, overhead catenary lines, and a fence placed on the west side of the station. The project does not propose any changes to the historic Glendale Transportation Center building. The existing storage units behind the HSR track/train would be removed. The HSR Build Alternative would alter existing views for Metrolink users on the train. However, proposed project features in KVP 12 would not alter the existing project coherence, visual changes to the area would be low, and the HSR Build Alternative would be visually compatible with the natural and cultural environments. Visitors and commuters waiting on the station platform would be close to the proposed project and would have a high exposure to any visual changes caused by the proposed project. However, viewer awareness of commuting motorists would be low because the more routine the scene is to a viewer, the less sensitive the viewer is. Although viewer exposure would be high, given the low viewer awareness and the fact that KVP 12 is in an existing station, viewer sensitivity in the area would be low. Given that the proposed project would not alter the visual character of the existing historic Glendale Transportation Center or interrupt existing views, and given the low viewer sensitivity in the area, the overall visual quality effect would be neutral.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. The impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 12 would be less than significant under CEQA. The HSR Build Alternative would be visually compatible with the natural and cultural environments and would not alter the visual character of the existing historic Glendale Transportation Center or interrupt existing views. Given the low viewer sensitivity in the area, the overall visual quality effect would be neutral. Therefore, CEQA does not require mitigation.



Existing view from the Glendale Transportation Center in the city of Los Angeles, looking southeast.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative from the Glendale Transportation Center in the city of Los Angeles, looking southeast.

Figure 3.16-15 Key Viewpoint 12

Key Viewpoint 13: View from Glendale Boulevard, Looking Southwest

KVP 13 represents views for motorists using Glendale Boulevard (Figure 3.16-16). The HSR Build Alternative would cross Glendale Boulevard where an existing Metrolink bridge would be rebuilt and widened to accommodate the additional tracks for the HSR system. The visual simulation for KVP 13 shows the addition of fencing and the overhead catenary lines for the HSR Build Alternative. Although the exact location and height of sound barriers is currently uncertain, there is a potential for a sound barrier to be visible from this KVP. AVQ-MM#7 requires that, prior to any ground-disturbing activity, the contractor shall design a range of sound barrier treatments for visually sensitive areas, such as those areas where residential views of open landscaped areas would change or in urban areas where sound barriers would adversely affect the existing character and setting. The visual simulation for KVP 13 illustrates that the scale of the rebuilt Metrolink bridge and additional HSR tracks would be visually compatible with the existing project and cultural environments and would not interrupt existing views motorists have of Glendale Boulevard. The visual changes to the area would be moderate-low.

Overall viewer exposure would be high due to the proximity of the existing Metrolink bridge and the high number of motorist viewers using Glendale Boulevard. However, viewer awareness of commuting and visiting motorists would be low due to the lack of specific visual elements in KVP 13. Given an exposure ranking of high and an awareness ranking of low, overall viewer sensitivity to the proposed project features in KVP 13 would be moderate. With implementation of AVQ-MM#7, the modifications to the Metrolink bridge would be visually compatible with the existing cultural environment, and the overall visual quality effect would be neutral.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. Although the exact location and height of sound barriers is currently uncertain, there is a potential for a sound barrier to be visible from KVP 13. AVQ-MM#7 requires that, prior to any ground-disturbing activity, the contractor shall design a range of sound barrier treatments for visually sensitive areas, such as those areas where residential views of open landscaped areas would change or in urban areas where sound barriers would adversely affect the existing character and setting. The HSR Build Alternative would be visually compatible with the existing natural and cultural environments and would not interrupt existing views motorists have of Glendale Boulevard. Modifications to the Metrolink bridge would be visually compatible with the existing cultural environment, resulting in a neutral effect on visual quality or character. With implementation of AVQ-MM#7, the impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 13 would be less than significant under CEQA.



Existing view from Glendale Boulevard in the city of Los Angeles, looking southwest.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative from Glendale Boulevard in the city of Los Angeles, looking southwest.

Figure 3.16-16 Key Viewpoint 13

Key Viewpoint 14: View from Casitas Avenue, Looking Northeast

KVP 14 represents views for residents and pedestrians using Casitas Avenue (Figure 3.16-17). As the HSR Build Alternative travels south through the city of Glendale, the adjacent land uses become more residential. Residential groups represented by KVP 14 would experience a high level of exposure to the proposed project. Although the exact location and height of sound barriers is currently uncertain, there is a potential for a sound barrier to be visible from KVP 14. AVQ-MM#7 requires that, prior to any ground-disturbing activity, the contractor shall design a range of sound barrier treatments for visually sensitive areas, such as those areas where residential views of open landscaped areas would change or in urban areas where sound barriers would adversely affect the existing character and setting. In order to reduce potential impacts to adjacent residential uses, the contractor would plant trees (minimum 24-inch box and 8 feet in height) along the edges of the HSR right-of-way in locations adjacent to residential areas to visually screen the residential area. AVQ-MM#4 requires that the contractor prepare a technical memorandum within 90 days of completing any construction section or segment documenting the species of trees that were incorporated into the edges of the HSR right-of-way adjacent to residential uses. With implementation of AVQ-MM#7 and AVQ-MM#4, the HSR Build Alternative would be visually compatible with the existing cultural environment. Viewer awareness of residents or visitors would be moderate, and their exposure would be high; therefore, overall viewer sensitivity would be moderate-high. Although viewer sensitivity would be moderate-high, the modifications to the Metrolink bridge would not be out of character with the existing cultural order, and the overall visual quality effect would be neutral.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. Although the exact location and height of sound barriers is currently uncertain, there is a potential for a sound barrier to be visible from KVP 14. AVQ-MM#7 requires that, prior to any ground-disturbing activity, the contractor shall design a range of sound barrier treatments for visually sensitive areas, such as those areas where residential views of open landscaped areas would change or in urban areas where sound barriers would adversely affect the existing character and setting. However, the impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 14 would be significant because residential groups nearby would experience a high level of exposure to the proposed project. In order to reduce potential impacts to adjacent residential uses, the contractor would plant trees (minimum 24-inch box and 8 feet in height) along the edges of the HSR right-of-way in locations adjacent to residential areas to visually screen the residential area. AVQ-MM#4 requires that the contractor prepare a technical memorandum within 90 days of completing any construction section or segment documenting the species of trees that were incorporated into the edges of the HSR right-of-way adjacent to residential uses. With implementation of AVQ-MM#7 and AVQ-MM#4, the HSR Build Alternative would be visually compatible with the existing cultural environment. KVP 14 would be less than significant under CEQA.



Existing view from Casitas Avenue in the city of Los Angeles, looking northeast.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative from Casitas Avenue in the city of Los Angeles, looking northeast.

Figure 3.16-17 Key Viewpoint 14

Key Viewpoint 15: View from Casitas Avenue, Looking Northeast

KVP 15 represents views for residents or pedestrians using Casitas Avenue (Figure 3.16-18). Even with the introduction of overhead catenary lines into the viewshed, the HSR Build Alternative would not interrupt existing views for residents or pedestrians using Casitas Avenue and would introduce a moderate-low visual change in the area. The scale of the HSR Build Alternative would be visually compatible with the surrounding two-story commercial uses that make up the cultural environment. The addition of the proposed project would be visually compatible with the existing rail corridor and project environment. Viewer groups represented by KVP 15 would experience a high level of exposure to the proposed project. However, viewer awareness of residents or visitors would be moderate due to the lack of visual elements in KVP 15. Given an exposure ranking of high and an awareness ranking of moderate, overall viewer sensitivity would be moderate-high. Although viewer sensitivity would be moderate-high, the addition of the HSR Build Alternative would not be out of character with the existing cultural order, and the overall visual quality effect would be neutral.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. The impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 15 would be less than significant under CEQA. The HSR Build Alternative would be visually compatible with the surrounding cultural environment and the existing rail corridor and project environment. The project would not be out of character with the existing cultural order, resulting in a neutral effect on visual quality or character. Therefore, CEQA does not require mitigation.



Existing view from Casitas Avenue in the city of Los Angeles, looking northeast.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative from Casitas Avenue in the city of Los Angeles, looking northeast.

Figure 3.16-18 Key Viewpoint 15

Key Viewpoint 16: View from Rio de Los Angeles State Park, Looking Southwest

KVP 16 represents views for visitors to Rio de Los Angeles State Park (Figure 3.16-19). The visual simulation for KVP 16 shows the view of the existing Metrolink rail corridor and the Taylor Yard Parcel/G2 Site and Elysian Park. The HSR Build Alternative and the relocated non-electrified tracks within the existing rail corridor would introduce a moderate visual change in the area. However, this moderate visual change would be visually compatible with the existing rail corridor. Due to the proximity of the walking trail to the proposed HSR Build Alternative, it is anticipated that recreational visitors to Rio de Los Angeles State Park would experience a high level of exposure to the moderate visual changes. Many recreational visitors would experience a low level of awareness of visual changes as a result of the HSR Build Alternative because the walking path is already proximate to an existing rail corridor. Although viewer exposure would be high, given the low viewer awareness and the fact that KVP 16 is adjacent to existing Metrolink tracks, viewer sensitivity in the area would be moderate. The addition of the HSR Build Alternative would not be out of character with the existing cultural order, and the overall visual quality effect would be neutral.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. The impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 16 would be less than significant under CEQA. The HSR Build Alternative would introduce a moderate visual change in the area, but it would be visually compatible with the adjacent rail corridor, resulting in a neutral effect on visual quality or character. Therefore, CEQA does not require mitigation.



Existing view from Rio de Los Angeles State Park in the city of Los Angeles, looking southwest.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative from Rio de Los Angeles State Park in the city of Los Angeles, looking southwest.

Figure 3.16-19 Key Viewpoint 16

Key Viewpoint 17: View from the Los Angeles River Bike Path, Looking Southeast

KVP 17 represents views for pedestrians and bicyclists using the Los Angeles River Bike Path (Figure 3.16-20). The HSR Build Alternative would be located along the west side of the Central Maintenance Facility, which is the Southern California Regional Rail Authority's major daily servicing location and maintenance facility in the region. The visual simulation for KVP 17 shows the addition of the overhead catenary lines for the HSR Build Alternative, which are barely visible through the existing vegetation. Although the exact location and height of sound barriers is currently uncertain, there is a potential for a sound barrier to be visible from this KVP. AVQ-MM#7 requires that, prior to any ground-disturbing activity, the contractor shall design a range of sound barrier treatments for visually sensitive areas, such as those areas where residential views of open landscaped areas would change or in urban areas where sound barriers would adversely affect the existing character and setting. The visual simulation for KVP 17 captures the view of the Los Angeles River and illustrates that the HSR Build Alternative would not change the existing natural harmony of the Los Angeles River as viewed by pedestrians and bicyclists using the Los Angeles River Bike Path. Because the HSR Build Alternative would not interrupt existing views of the visual resources visible from KVP 17, it would be visually compatible with the natural and cultural environments. Given an overall exposure ranking of low and an average awareness ranking of moderate, overall viewer sensitivity would be moderate.

With implementation of AVQ-MM#7 and because the proposed project would not interrupt existing views of the Los Angeles River for pedestrians and bicyclists using the Los Angeles River Bike Path and given the moderate viewer sensitivity in the area, the overall visual quality effect would be neutral.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. Although the exact location and height of sound barriers is currently uncertain, there is a potential for a sound barrier to be visible from KVP 17. AVQ-MM#7 requires that prior to any ground-disturbing activity, the contractor shall design a range of sound barrier treatments for visually sensitive areas, such as those areas where residential views of open landscaped areas would change or in urban areas where sound barriers would adversely affect the existing character and setting. The HSR Build Alternative would be visually compatible with the natural and cultural environments and would not change the existing natural harmony of the Los Angeles River for those using the Los Angeles River Bike Path, resulting in a neutral effect on visual quality or character. With implementation of AVQ-#7, the impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 17 would be less than significant under CEQA.



Existing view from the Los Angeles River Bike Path in the city of Los Angeles, looking southeast.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative from the Los Angeles River Bike Path in the city of Los Angeles, looking southeast.

Figure 3.16-20 Key Viewpoint 17

Key Viewpoint 18: View from Elysian Park, Looking Southeast

KVP 18 represents views for visitors to Elysian Park (Figure 3.16-21). The HSR Build Alternative would parallel the Los Angeles River, with HSR trains on the west bank of the river and non-electrified trains on the east bank. KVP 18 illustrates that the HSR Build Alternative would not interrupt existing views of the Los Angeles River for visitors to Elysian Park. It would be visually compatible with the natural and cultural environments and would introduce a low visual change in the area because of the existing rail corridor. Exposure for visitors would be low due to the distance between the hiking trail and the proposed project. Viewer awareness would depend on how routine the view is. If walking along the hiking trail is a routine, then viewer awareness would be low; if it is a new venture, viewer awareness would be high. Given an exposure ranking of low and an average awareness ranking of moderate, overall viewer sensitivity would be moderate-low. Because the HSR Build Alternative would not interrupt existing views of the Los Angeles River for visitors to Elysian Park, and given the moderate-low viewer sensitivity in the area, the overall visual quality effect would be neutral.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. The impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 18 would be less than significant under CEQA. The HSR Build Alternative would not interrupt existing views of the Los Angeles River for visitors to Elysian Park and would be visually compatible with the natural and cultural environments within the existing rail corridor. This would result in a neutral effect on visual quality or character. Therefore, CEQA does not require mitigation.



Existing view from Elysian Park in the city of Los Angeles, looking southeast.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative from Elysian Park in the city of Los Angeles, looking southeast.

Figure 3.16-21 Key Viewpoint 18

Key Viewpoint 19: View from Los Angeles State Historic Park, Looking Northeast

KVP 19 represents views for visitors to Los Angeles State Historic Park (Figure 3.16-22).

The proposed HSR Build Alternative includes overhead catenary lines. The visual simulation for KVP 19 illustrates that the HSR Build Alternative would not interrupt existing views of the Los Angeles River for visitors to Los Angeles State Historic Park because the existing rail corridor already blocks any potential views. Therefore, the HSR Build Alternative would be compatible with the existing project environment. It is anticipated that recreational visitors to Los Angeles State Historic Park would experience a low level of exposure to visual changes, given the proximity of the park to the proposed HSR Build Alternative. Many visitors to Los Angeles State Historic Park would congregate in the middle of the park and would not typically be focused on the adjacent rail corridor. Therefore, many visitors would experience a low level of awareness of visual changes. The HSR Build Alternative would parallel the Metrolink tracks and would be visually compatible with the existing cultural environment. Viewer exposure and awareness would be low, and given the fact that KVP 19 is adjacent to the existing Metrolink tracks, viewer sensitivity in the area would also be low.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. The impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 19 would be less than significant under CEQA. The HSR Build Alternative would not interrupt existing views of the Los Angeles River for visitors to Los Angeles State Historic Park and would be consistent with the existing visual character and quality of the adjacent rail corridor, resulting in a neutral effect. Therefore, CEQA does not require mitigation.



Existing view from Los Angeles State Historic Park in the city of Los Angeles, looking northeast.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative from Los Angeles State Historic Park in the city of Los Angeles, looking northeast.

Figure 3.16-22 Key Viewpoint 19

Key Viewpoint 20: View from Albion Street, Looking South

The project proposes to grade-separate Main Street as an early action project (more details provided in Chapter 2) to maintain functionality of the HSR Build Alternative and to reduce conflicts. KVP 20 represents views for motorists using Albion Street. Figure 3.16-23 illustrates the proposed grade separation where a new Main Street bridge would be built to span the tracks on the west bank, the Los Angeles River, and the tracks on the east bank. The new Main Street bridge would be 86 feet wide and 75 feet high at its highest point over the Los Angeles River, and would place three columns within the river channel. Main Street would be raised in elevation starting just east of Sotello Street on the west side of the Los Angeles River; the new bridge would come down to grade to the west of Clover Street on the east side of the Los Angeles River. Several roadways on the east side of the Los Angeles River would be reconfigured, including Albion Street, Gibbon Street, and Lamar Street. The existing Main Street bridge would not be modified, but it would be closed to public access. The visual simulation for KVP 20 illustrates that by introducing a new vertical feature in the viewshed (road overcrossing), the HSR Build Alternative would introduce a high visual change in the area. The new vertical feature would introduce a new raised structure in the cultural environment. However, the proposed grade separation would not be incompatible with the surrounding industrial land uses.

It is anticipated that motorists using Albion Street would experience a high level of exposure to visual changes given the proximity to the proposed Main Street bridge. However, KVP 20 is adjacent to existing industrial buildings and tracks, and viewer sensitivity in the area would be low.

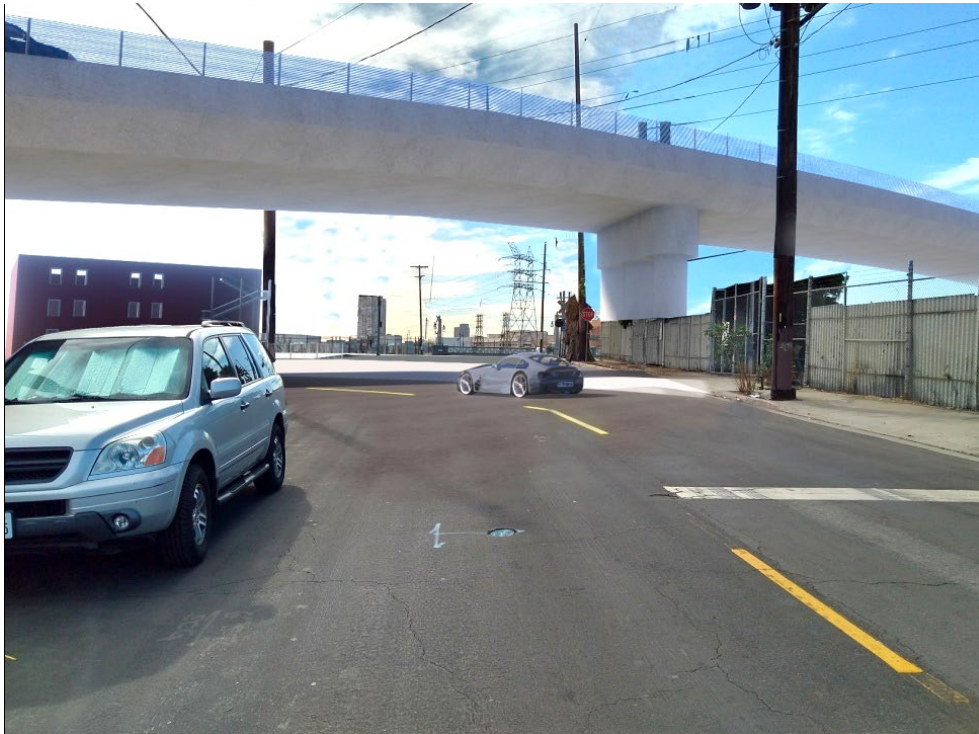
Although the proposed grade separation would introduce a high visual change in the area, overall viewer sensitivity would be low and the grade separation would not be out of character with the existing cultural order. In addition, with implementation of AVQ-IAMF#1, the grade separation would be designed to reduce intrusiveness to primary viewer groups.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. With implementation of AVQ-IAMF#1, the grade separation would be designed to reduce intrusiveness to primary viewer groups. The impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 20 would be less than significant under CEQA. The HSR Build Alternative would introduce a new vertical feature in the viewshed, but the proposed grade separation would not be incompatible with the surrounding industrial land uses. This would result in a neutral effect on visual quality or character. Therefore, CEQA does not require mitigation.



Existing view from Albion Street in the city of Los Angeles, looking south.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative from Albion Street in the city of Los Angeles, looking south.

Figure 3.16-23 Key Viewpoint 20

Key Viewpoint 21: View from N Main Street, Looking East

KVP 21 represents views for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists using N Main Street (Figure 3.16-24). The project proposes to construct an early action road overcrossing (more details provided in Chapter 2) to carry Main Street over the HSR Build Alternative. The visual simulation for KVP 21 illustrates that by introducing a new vertical feature in the viewshed (road overcrossing), the HSR Build Alternative would introduce a high visual change in the area. AVQ-IAMF#1 would reduce the aesthetic and visual effects of the HSR Build Alternative by applying design approaches to integrate structures within the community and to reduce the intrusiveness of large structures.

Overall viewer exposure to visual changes for motorists would be low due to the dynamic view and short viewing durations. Overall viewer exposure to visual changes for cyclists and pedestrians would be high due to the wider view and longer viewing durations. There are no apprehending details in the foreground or background of KVP 21.

Given that motorists typically travel faster than other primary viewer groups, which decreases the viewshed, overall awareness for motorists would be low. On the other hand, cyclists and pedestrians may linger for longer periods of time, which could increase focus on the proposed grade separation. Therefore, the overall awareness of visual change for cyclists and pedestrians would be moderate-high. It is important to note that cyclists and pedestrians have a slight preference for cultural order and tend to either consciously or unconsciously evaluate the composition of the viewscape and determine whether it is orderly or disorderly. Although cyclists and pedestrians would have higher exposure to and greater awareness of a visual change than motorists, their sensitivity to change is also influenced by how the visual change fits into the existing cultural order. Given the average exposure ranking of moderate (low for motorists and high for cyclists and pedestrians) and average awareness ranking of moderate-low (low for motorists and moderate-low for cyclists and pedestrians), overall viewer sensitivity to the proposed project features in KVP 21 would be moderate. Given the presence of the existing Metrolink tracks, the commercial and light industrial uses adjacent to N Main Street, and the moderate viewer sensitivity in the area, the proposed project components in KVP 21 would be visually compatible with the existing cultural order. In addition, with implementation of AVQ-IAMF#1, the grade separation would be designed to reduce intrusiveness to primary viewer groups.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. With implementation of AVQ-IAMF#1, the grade separation would be designed to reduce intrusiveness to primary viewer groups. The impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 21 would be less than significant under CEQA. The HSR Build Alternative would introduce a new vertical feature in the viewshed, but would result in a low visual change considering the project's compatibility with the existing adjacent Metrolink tracks and commercial/industrial land uses. This would result in a neutral effect on visual quality or character. Therefore, CEQA does not require mitigation.



Existing view from N Main Street in the city of Los Angeles, looking east.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative from N Main Street in the city of Los Angeles, looking east.

Figure 3.16-24 Key Viewpoint 21

Key Viewpoint 22: View from Leroy Street, Looking Southeast

KVP 22 represents views for residents and pedestrians using Leroy Street (Figure 3.16-25). The non-electrified tracks on the east bank of the river would cross the river on the existing Mission Tower Bridge, which would require a second track but would not require changes to the existing bridge structure. The visual simulation for KVP 22 illustrates that the HSR Build Alternative would not interrupt existing views for visitors to, or residents of, the William Meade Homes, located on Leroy Street. The HSR Build Alternative would introduce a low visual change in the area. Therefore, the HSR Build Alternative would be visually compatible with the natural and cultural environments. Viewer groups represented by KVP 22 would experience a high level of exposure to the proposed project. However, viewer awareness of residents or visitors would be moderate given the lack of visual elements in KVP 22. Given an exposure ranking of high and an awareness ranking of moderate, overall viewer sensitivity would be moderate-high. The proposed project would introduce a low visual change in the area, and the overall viewer sensitivity would be moderate-high. The addition of the HSR Build Alternative would not be out of character with the existing cultural order.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed above in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. The impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 22 would be less than significant under CEQA. The HSR Build Alternative would introduce a low visual change in the area, but would not interrupt existing views of sensitive viewers and would be visually compatible with the natural and cultural environments. This would result in a neutral effect on visual quality or character. Therefore, CEQA does not require mitigation.



Existing view from Leroy Street in the city of Los Angeles, looking southeast.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative from Leroy Street in the city of Los Angeles, looking southeast.

Figure 3.16-25 Key Viewpoint 22

Key Viewpoint 23: View from Bauchet Street, Looking Southwest

KVP 23 represents views for pedestrians and motorists using Bauchet Street (Figure 3.16-26). The visual simulation for KVP 23 shows the proposed project (including the elevated tracks and fencing) and illustrates the low visual change in the area. The visual simulation for KVP 23 illustrates that the HSR Build Alternative would not interrupt existing views for pedestrians or motorists using Bauchet Street. The HSR Build Alternative would parallel the existing Metrolink tracks and would be visually compatible with the existing cultural environment. Overall viewer exposure would be low due to the dynamic view and short viewing durations caused by the visual interruption of surrounding buildings. Viewer awareness of commuting motorists or pedestrians would be low because the view would be routine. On the other hand, viewer awareness of visiting motorists or pedestrians would be high because the scene would be more unique to tourists. Given an overall exposure ranking of low and an average awareness ranking of moderate, overall viewer sensitivity would be moderate-low. The addition of the HSR Build Alternative would not be out of character with the existing land uses and cultural order.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. The impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 23 would be less than significant under CEQA. The HSR Build Alternative would introduce elevated tracks parallel to existing Metrolink tracks. This would be a low visual change in the area and compatible with the existing cultural order, resulting in a neutral effect on visual quality and character. Therefore, CEQA does not require mitigation.



Existing view from Bauchet Street in the city of Los Angeles, looking southwest.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative from Bauchet Street in the city of Los Angeles, looking southwest.

Figure 3.16-26 Key Viewpoint 23

Key Viewpoint 24: View from E Cesar E. Chavez Avenue, Looking Southeast

KVP 24 represents views for motorists or pedestrians using E Cesar E. Chavez Avenue where the HSR Build Alternative would cross (Figure 3.16-27). The existing Metrolink bridge over E Cesar E. Chavez Avenue could be modified by the Link Union Station (Link US) Project in the future (more details provided in Section 2.3.2 in this report). Any potential visual effects as a result of Metro's Link US Project would be analyzed in a separate environmental document. The visual simulation for KVP 24 shows the addition of fencing and overhead catenary lines for the HSR Build Alternative. The visual simulation for KVP 24 illustrates that the HSR Build Alternative would not interrupt existing views for pedestrians or motorists using E Cesar E. Chavez Avenue and would introduce a low visual change in the area.

Overall viewer exposure would be high due to the proximity of the existing Metrolink bridge to motorists or pedestrians using E Cesar E. Chavez Avenue and the high number of commuters who use E Cesar E. Chavez Avenue. However, viewer awareness of commuting motorists or pedestrians would be low due to the lack of specific visual elements in KVP 24. Given an exposure ranking of high and an awareness ranking of low, overall viewer sensitivity to the proposed project features in KVP 24 would be moderate. The additions would be visually compatible with the existing cultural and natural environments, and viewer sensitivity would be moderate.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. The impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 24 would be less than significant under CEQA. The HSR Build Alternative would introduce low visual change in the area, with only the addition of fencing and overhead catenary lines on the existing Metrolink bridge. The project would be visually compatible with the existing cultural and natural environments, and existing views would not be interrupted, resulting in a neutral effect on visual quality or character. Therefore, CEQA does not require mitigation.



Existing view from E Cesar E. Chavez Avenue in the city of Los Angeles, looking southeast.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative from E Cesar E. Chavez Avenue in the city of Los Angeles, looking southeast.

Figure 3.16-27 Key Viewpoint 24

Key Viewpoint 25: View from the Mosaic at Union Station Apartments, Looking Southeast

KVP 25 represents views for residents or pedestrians traveling to or from the Mosaic at Union Station Apartments (Figure 3.16-28⁴). The proposed HSR station at LAUS would be a surface station with up to four HSR tracks and two 800-foot platforms. The modified tracks shown in the visual simulation in Figure 3.16-28 would be completed as part of Metro’s Link US Project (more details are provided in Chapter 2). Potential visual effects as a result of Metro’s Link US Project would be analyzed in a separate environmental document. The proposed HSR Build Alternative would introduce only slight track modifications and the installation of an overhead contact system. The visual simulation for KVP 25 illustrates that the HSR Build Alternative would not interrupt existing views for visitors to, or residents of, the Mosaic at Union Station Apartments, and would introduce a moderate visual change in the area. In addition, the addition of tracks and platforms to LAUS would not cause any visual quality issues related to the historic part of LAUS. Viewer groups represented by KVP 25 would experience a high level of exposure to the proposed project. However, viewer awareness of residents or visitors would be low. Given an exposure ranking of high and an awareness ranking of low, overall viewer sensitivity would be moderate.

The proposed project features would introduce a moderate visual change to the area, and overall viewer sensitivity would be moderate. However, the introduction of HSR at LAUS would not alter the existing visual character of LAUS, and it would be compatible with the cultural and project environments.

CEQA Conclusion

As previously discussed in Section 3.16.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the HSR Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. The impacts of the HSR Build Alternative at KVP 25 would be less than significant under CEQA. The HSR Build Alternative would introduce slight platform modifications and installation of an overhead contract system, which would be a moderate visual change in the area that would be compatible with the existing visual character of LAUS. The overall visual quality effect would be neutral. Therefore, CEQA does not require mitigation.

⁴ The simulated view of KVP 25 shows existing conditions and does not show the cumulative change that would occur based on the preferred alternative for the Link US Project that Metro will identify in the future.



Existing view from the Mosaic at Union Station Apartments in the city of Los Angeles, looking southeast.



Simulated view of the High-Speed Rail Build Alternative from the Mosaic at Union Station Apartments in the city of Los Angeles, looking southeast.

Figure 3.16-28 Key Viewpoint 25

3.16.7 Mitigation Measures

The Authority has identified the following mitigation measures for impacts under NEPA and significant impacts under CEQA that cannot be avoided or minimized adequately by IAMFs. The first section describes the visual and aesthetic quality mitigation measures and the impacts of those mitigation measures; the second section describes the specific mitigation measures required for the early action projects.

3.16.7.1 High-Speed Rail Build Alternative

AVQ-MM#1: Minimize Visual Disruption from Construction Activities

Prior to construction (any ground-disturbing activity), the contractor shall prepare a technical memorandum identifying how the project will minimize construction-related visual/aesthetic disruption and include the following activities:

- Minimize pre-construction clearing to that necessary for construction.
- Limit the removal of buildings to those that would conflict with project components.
- When possible, preserve existing vegetation, particularly vegetation along the edge of construction areas that may help screen views.
- After construction, regrade areas disturbed by construction, staging, and storage to original contours and revegetate with plant material similar in numbers and types to that that was removed, based upon local jurisdictional requirements. If no local jurisdictional requirements exist, replace removed vegetation at a 1:1 replacement ratio for shrubs and small trees, and a 2:1 replacement ratio for mature trees. For example, if the contractor removes 10 mature trees in an area, replant 20 younger trees that within 5 to 15 years (depending upon the growth rates of the trees) would be of a height and spread to provide visual screening similar to the visual screening provided by the trees that were removed for construction. Replaced shrubs shall be a minimum 5 gallons and replaced trees shall be a minimum 24-inch box and minimum 8 feet in height.
- To the extent feasible, do not locate construction staging sites within the immediate foreground distance (0 to 500 feet) of existing residential neighborhoods, recreational areas, or other land uses that include highly sensitivity viewers. Where such siting is unavoidable, screen staging sites from viewers using appropriate solid screening materials such as temporary fencing and walls. Paint over or remove any graffiti or visual defacement of temporary fencing and walls within 5 business days of it occurring.

The technical memorandum will be submitted to the Authority for review and approval.

AVQ-MM#2: Minimize Light Disturbance during Construction

Prior to construction (any ground-disturbing activity requiring nighttime construction), the Contractor shall prepare a technical memorandum verifying how they will shield nighttime construction lighting and direct it downward in such a manner to minimize the light that falls outside the construction site boundaries.

The technical memorandum shall be submitted to the Authority for review and approval.

AVQ-MM#3: Incorporate Design Aesthetic Preferences into Final Design and Construction of Non-Station Structures

Prior to construction (any ground disturbing activity), the Contractor shall work with the Authority and local jurisdictions to incorporate the Authority-approved aesthetic preferences for non-station structures into final design and construction. A technical memorandum will be submitted to the Authority to document compliance.

AVQ-MM#4: Provide Vegetation Screening along At-Grade and Elevated Guideways Adjacent to Residential Areas

Prior to operation and maintenance of HSR, the Contractor will plant trees (minimum 24-inch box and 8 feet in height) along the edges of the HSR rights-of-way in locations adjacent to residential areas to visually screen the elevated guideway and the residential area. The species of trees to be installed will be selected based on their mature size and shape, growth rate, hardiness, and drought tolerance. No species on the Invasive Species Council of California's list will be planted. Upon maturity, the crowns of trees used will be tall enough to partially, or fully, to screen views of the elevated guideway from adjacent at-grade areas. Upon maturity, trees will allow ground-level views under the crowns (with pruning if necessary) and will not interfere with the 15-foot clearance requirement for the guideway. The trees will be maintained. Irrigation systems will be installed within the tree planting areas.

The Contractor shall prepare a technical memorandum within 90 days of completing any construction section or segment documenting the species of trees that were incorporated into the edges of the HSR right-of-way adjacent to residential uses. The technical memorandum will be submitted to the Authority to document compliance.

AVQ-MM#7: Provide Sound Barrier Treatments

Prior to Construction (any ground-disturbing activity), the Contractor shall design a range of sound barrier treatments for visually sensitive areas, such as those areas where residential views of open landscaped areas would change or in urban areas where sound barriers would adversely affect the existing character and setting. The Contractor shall develop the treatments during the final design process and integrate them into the final project design. The treatments shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Sound barriers along elevated guideways that may incorporate transparent materials where sensitive views would be adversely affected by opaque sound barriers.
- Sound barriers made with nonreflective materials and of a neutral color.
- Surface design enhancements and vegetation appropriate to the visual context of the area shall be installed with the sound barriers. Vegetation shall be installed consistent with the provisions of project mitigation measure AVQ-MM#5. Surface enhancements shall be consistent with the design features developed for project mitigation measure AVQ-MM#3 and shall include architectural elements (e.g., stamped patterns, surface articulation, decorative texture treatment), as determined acceptable to the local jurisdiction. Surface coatings shall be used on wood and concrete sound barriers to facilitate cleaning and the removal of graffiti.

The Contractor shall prepare a technical memorandum documenting implementation and submit it to the Authority to demonstrate compliance.

Impacts of Mitigation

No additional impacts would result from the mitigation measures described above. These mitigation measures are typical of aesthetic treatments applied on linear transportation facilities; they have been defined to be specific in range and implementable according to context. The proposed mitigation measures (for both construction and operation) would enhance visual quality where possible, and alleviate impacts associated with visual changes introduced by the HSR Build Alternative. Implementation of these measures (such as minimizing visual disruptions from construction activities, minimizing light disturbance during construction, replanting/providing vegetated screening, screening ancillary facilities, and incorporating the aesthetic design and review process) is not expected to result in additional visual impacts because the measures would serve to create a long-term, net aesthetic benefit.

3.16.7.2 Early Action Projects

As described in Chapter 2, Section 2.5.2.9, early action projects would be completed in collaboration with local and regional agencies. They include grade separations and improvements

at regional passenger rail stations. These early action projects are analyzed in further detail to allow the agencies to adopt the findings and mitigation measures needed to construct the projects. The following aesthetic and visual quality mitigation measures listed in Table 3.16-8 would be required for the early action projects.

Table 3.16-8 Mitigation Measures Required for Early Action Projects

Early Action Project	Impact	Mitigation Measure
Sonora Avenue Grade Separation	Impact AVQ #1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Construction would disturb area visual quality for sensitive viewers 	AVQ-MM#1
	Impact AVQ #2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nighttime construction lighting would fall outside of the construction site boundaries 	AVQ-MM#1 AVQ-MM#2
	Impact AVQ #3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Construction would introduce a prominent element in the cultural environment that is out of scale with surrounding commercial uses and would interrupt views of the Santa Monica Mountains/Hollywood Hills, decreasing visual quality in the natural environment 	AVQ-MM#3
Grandview Avenue Grade Separation	Impact AVQ #1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Construction would disturb area visual quality for nearby residences near Pelanconi Park 	AVQ-MM#1
	Impact AVQ #2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nighttime construction lighting would fall outside of the construction site boundaries 	AVQ-MM#2
	Impact AVQ #3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Construction would introduce a prominent element in the cultural environment, although it would be compatible with surrounding commercial land uses; construction would also interrupt views of the Santa Monica Mountains/Hollywood Hills, changing visual harmony 	AVQ-MM#3
Flower Street Grade Separation	Impact AVQ #1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Construction would disturb area visual quality for nearby residences near Pelanconi Avenue/Flower Street 	AVQ-MM#1
	Impact AVQ #2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nighttime construction lighting would fall outside of the construction site boundaries 	AVQ-MM#2
	Impact AVQ #3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Construction would introduce a prominent element in the cultural environment out of scale with existing residential land uses and would obstruct existing views of the Santa Monica Mountains/Hollywood Hills, decreasing natural harmony 	AVQ-MM#3

3.16.8 NEPA Impact Summary

This section summarizes the impacts of the HSR Build Alternative and compares them to the anticipated impacts of the No Project Alternative.

3.16.8.1 No Project Alternative

Construction and operation effects associated with future infrastructure and development projects are not known at this time and would be subject to separate environmental analyses performed in the future.

Under the No Project Alternative, recent development trends within the Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section are anticipated to continue, leading to ongoing viewer, visual resources, and visual quality impacts. Planned residential, industrial, commercial, and transportation projects would construct new developments in the RSA and result in associated direct and indirect impacts on viewers, visual character, and visual quality. These projects would also increase sources of evening light and glare, which could degrade nighttime views. Redevelopment activities may result in the alteration of historical structures that add visual interest and contribute a unique character to the urban fabric.

Cities and counties in the region would evaluate the aesthetic impacts of planned developments in the course of environmental review and require that projects incorporate visual measures to mitigate for potential impacts. Developmental change under the No Project Alternative could result in indirect impacts on viewers, visual character, and visual quality.

3.16.8.2 High-Speed Rail Build Alternative

Under the HSR Build Alternative, direct effects to aesthetics and visual quality have been identified under NEPA for the construction period of the HSR Build Alternative.

The permanent construction of the Sonora Avenue grade separation, the Grandview Avenue grade separation, and the Flower Street grade separation would introduce prominent visual elements to the existing cultural environment, which would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality within the visual RSA. To reduce impacts to the existing natural and cultural environments, the contractor shall work with the Authority and local jurisdictions to incorporate the Authority-approved aesthetic preferences for nonstation structures into final design and construction. AVQ-MM#3 requires the contractor to submit a technical memorandum to the Authority to document compliance. However, even with implementation of AVQ-MM#3, the proposed grade separations would be out of scale with the surrounding commercial uses and the project scale would contrast with the existing cultural environment. Therefore, the project's overall visual character would be incompatible with the visual character of the existing cultural environment. Visual quality impacts would occur under NEPA.

3.16.9 CEQA Significance Conclusions

Table 3.16-9 provides a summary of the CEQA determination of significance for all construction and operations impacts discussed in Section 3.16.6.3, High-Speed Rail Build Alternative.

Table 3.16-9 Summary of CEQA Significance Conclusions and Mitigation Measures for Aesthetics and Visual Quality

Impact	Level of Significance before Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Level of Significance after Mitigation
Construction			
Impact AVQ #1: Visual Disturbance during Construction	Significant (three historic bridges)	AVQ-MM#1 AVQ-MM#3 CUL-MM#12	Significant and Unavoidable (three historic bridges)
Impact AVQ #2: Nighttime Lighting during Construction	Significant	AVQ-MM#1 AVQ-MM#2	Less than Significant
Operations			
Impact AVQ #3: Visual Quality in the Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section	Significant (KVPs 5, 6, 7, and 14)	AVQ-MM#3 AVQ-MM#4 AVQ-MM#7	Significant and Unavoidable (KVPs 5, 6, and 7)

KVP = key viewpoint

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