

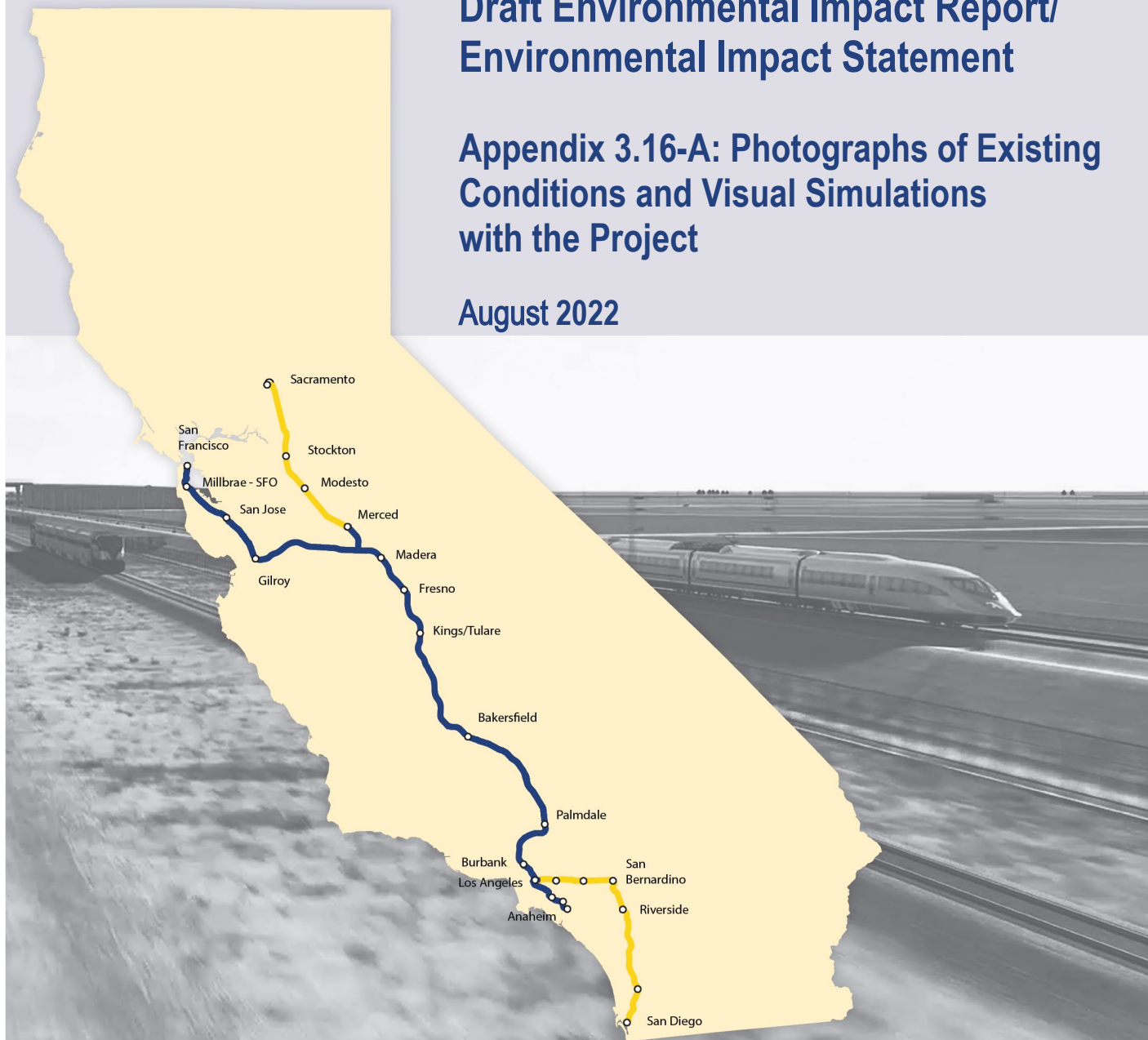
California High-Speed Rail Authority

Palmdale to Burbank Project Section

Draft Environmental Impact Report/
Environmental Impact Statement

Appendix 3.16-A: Photographs of Existing
Conditions and Visual Simulations
with the Project

August 2022



CALIFORNIA
High-Speed Rail Authority

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being or have been carried out by the State of California pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated July 23, 2019, and executed by the Federal Railroad Administration and the State of California.

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a. Existing View: View to the west along East Avenue S. Transportation infrastructure, vacant lots, and a mix of residential and commercial developments are located along the flat, grey roadway. The view offers moderately low visual quality to nearby travelers, residents, and workers.



b. Simulated View: The project would elevate East Avenue S over the rail alignment, partially screening the disorderly development for roadway travelers. Project components would not alter the existing visual character of the setting for travelers on East Avenue S. The overall degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

Figure 3.16-A-1
Key Viewpoint 1.1: East Avenue S



a. Existing View: View to the southeast towards Una Lake from Sierra Highway. Una Lake is the central feature, encircled by shrub vegetation. A metal chain-link fence and Sierra Highway comprise non-natural features in the view. Existing visual quality is moderate for the travelers on the highway.



b. Simulated View (Refined SR14, E1, and E2 Build Alternatives): The project would replace Una Lake and its surrounding vegetation with at-grade tracks. Project features would substantially diminish the natural harmony of the existing visual character and have an overall adverse degree of change to visual quality.



c. Simulated View (SR14A, E1A, and E2A Build Alternatives): Visible project components would include passing HSR trains in the distant background. The project would not introduce a significant change to the existing visual character. The overall degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

Figure 3.16-A-2
Key Viewpoint 1.2: Sierra Highway



a. Existing View: View looking south along Sierra Highway, just north of where the California Aqueduct (Soledad Siphon) crosses under the roadway. Sparse development can be seen along both sides of the highway, with undeveloped land and the San Gabriel Mountains forming the backdrop.



b. Simulated View: The project alignment would cross over Sierra Highway on an elevated viaduct, introducing an element of the project environment that would be out of scale with existing visual character, reducing project coherence. The viaduct would be highly visible to motorists and nearby residents, reducing the natural harmony by blocking distant views including those of the San Gabriel Mountains. The overall degree of change to visual quality would be adverse.

Figure 3.16-A-3
Key Viewpoint 1.3: Soledad Siphon



a. Existing View: View looking north toward the City of Palmdale (not visible), located along Sierra Highway south of the California Aqueduct. Undeveloped land and sparse shrubbery can be seen along both sides of the highway along with sparse development. No prominent features exist within the view.



b. Simulated View: The project alignment would cross over Sierra Highway on viaduct. The viaduct would introduce an element of the project environment that would be out of scale with existing visual character, reducing project coherence. The viaduct would be highly visible to motorists and nearby residents blocking distant views and reducing the existing natural harmony. The overall degree of change to visual quality would be adverse.

Figure 3.16-A-4
Key Viewpoint 1.4: Soledad Siphon



a. Existing View: View to the northeast toward Lake Palmdale from the Lamont Odett Vista Point along SR-14. Soothing blue shades of Lake Palmdale and the California Aqueduct are visible with intermittent residential structures and utility and transportation infrastructure. The view offers moderately high visual quality to the motorists and tourists along SR-14.



b. Simulated View: Visible project components would include passing HSR trains in the distant background. Project features would not introduce substantial new structures to the view and would be compatible with the existing visual character. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

Figure 3.16-A-5
Key Viewpoint 1.5: Lamont Odett Vista Point 1



a. Existing View: View to the east toward the California Aqueduct from the Lamont Odett Vista Point along SR-14. The linear, blue aqueduct divides the large expanses of flat brown terrain scattered with low-lying green vegetation, and small, rectangular, box-like houses. The view offers moderately high visual quality to the travelers along SR-14.



b. Simulated View: Visible project components would include passing HSR trains in the distant background. The project would not introduce a noticeable change to the visual setting. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

Figure 3.16-A-6
Key Viewpoint 1.6: Lamont Odett Vista Point 2



a. Existing View: View to the northeast on Crown Valley Road. Mountainous ridgelines provide a backdrop to an open space with low-lying rugged vegetation. The view offers moderately high visual quality to residents, visitors to library, workers, and travelers along Crown Valley Road.



b. Simulated View: The project alignment would be primarily below grade in a cut-and-cover tunnel and would not be visible. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

Figure 3.16-A-7
Key Viewpoint 1.7: Acton Agua Dulce Library



a. Existing View: View to the south toward SR-14 on Red Rover Mine Road. The pronounced ridgelines of the San Gabriel Mountains provide the backdrop. The curvilinear, flat, grey roadway is lined with commercial/industrial uses and other infrastructure elements. The view offers moderate visual quality to the travelers along the roadway.



b. Simulated View: The project alignment would cross over Red Rover Mine Road, introducing a structure that would be out of scale with the existing visual character (reducing project coherence) and obstructing the view of the mountains (reducing natural harmony). The overall degree of change to visual quality would be adverse change.

Figure 3.16-A-8
Key Viewpoint 1.8: Red Rover Mine Road



a. Existing View: Views looking south/southeast along SR 14 towards the community of Acton. The view is rural with shrub vegetation and sparse residential development in the distance and the San Gabriel Mountains forming the background.



b. Simulated View: Visible project components would only include an intermediate window for access and tunnel ventilation, appearing as a small industrial-style building in the distance. The project would not change the existing natural harmony or cultural order of the view. The overall degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

Figure 3.16-A-9
Key Viewpoint 1.9: SR14A Acton Intermediate Widow



a. Existing View: View to the southeast between Ward Road and Red Rover Mine Road on the SR-14. Transportation infrastructure dominates the view with asymmetrical ridgelines of the Sierra Pelona and San Gabriel Mountains contributing to a picturesque background. Together they offer moderate visual quality to the travelers along SR-14.



b. Simulated View: The project alignment would travel on an overcrossing over SR-14, partially obstructing the view to the mountains. While the overcrossing would be out of scale with the existing transportation infrastructure it would be visually compatible with the visual character existing transportation infrastructure. However, at this location the structure would block mountain views of motorists and reduce the existing natural harmony, having an overall adverse degree of change to visual quality.

Figure 3.16-A-10
Key Viewpoint 1.10: State Route 14 East



a. Existing View: View to the southeast from Escondido Canyon Road. The flat, paved, grey road lined with vegetation, infrastructure elements, and the picturesque backdrop together offer a moderate visual quality to travelers along the roadway.



b. Simulated View: The project would introduce a large overcrossing and associated vertical support columns spanning Escondido Canyon Road, that would be out of scale with the existing transportation infrastructure in the setting, reducing the project coherence. The project components would partially obstruct the view of the mountains in the background, reducing the natural harmony at this location; however, this would only be for a short duration for travelers along the road. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be adverse.

Figure 3.16-A-11
Key Viewpoint 1.11: Escondido Canyon Road



a. Existing View: View to the east along Foreston Drive. The viewpoint is from a dirt road within an isolated neighborhood. Electrical towers and lines associated with the Vincent Substation are visible, creating a distinctly industrial feature in the otherwise rural setting. The view offers moderate visual quality to residents and travelers.



b. Simulated View: The project would transform Foreston Drive from a dirt road to a paved roadway overcrossing. The project features would be consistent with the existing industrial elements in the view (such as the electrical transmission line in the background) but would contrast with the existing rural visual character, such as the white wood fencing, reducing the existing cultural order. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be adverse.

Figure 3.16-A-12
Key Viewpoint 1.12: Foreston Drive



a. Existing View: View to the north from Aliso Canyon Road toward Blum Ranch. Aliso Canyon Road winds through a relatively undeveloped landscape and some scattered development in the background surrounded by hills, offering moderate visual quality to travelers.



b. Simulated View: The project's introduction of an elevated guideway to carry train tracks over the Aliso Creek would introduce a visual element that is out of scale of existing features and would dominate the view. As the viewpoint is located along a transportation corridor, introduction of project components would not substantially alter the visual character of the scene, despite their large scale. Further, the elevated guideway would not block background views of the mountains and would not change the existing natural harmony. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

Figure 3.16-A-13
Key Viewpoint 1.13: Aliso Canyon Road



a. Existing View: View to the west from the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) south of SR-14. Green rounded mountains covered with vegetation paint a vivid view for hikers on the PCT. Cars traveling on SR-14 are visible in the distance (see inset). The angular rock outcroppings associated with Vasquez Rocks offer a moderately high visual quality.



b. Simulated View: The project would introduce a dominant rectangular structure with vertical support columns over the PCT, that would be out of scale with existing features and would block views of the mountains substantially changing the visual character of the setting and reducing the natural harmony. The overall degree of change to visual quality would be adverse.

Figure 3.16-A-14
Key Viewpoint 1.114: Pacific Crest Trail



a. Existing View: View to southeast towards SR-14 from the Vasquez Rocks Natural Area Park. The fluctuating topography and ridgelines of the San Gabriel Mountains, together with the angular rock outcroppings of Vasquez Rocks offer a moderately high visual quality to recreationists.



b. Simulated View: The only visible project component would be the passing train in the distant background. The project elements, therefore, would not introduce visible new structures or change the existing visual character of the setting. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

Figure 3.16-A-15
Key Viewpoint 1.15: Vasquez Rocks



a. Existing View: View to south on Agua Dulce Canyon Road. Hillsides and ridgelines covered with low-lying vegetation form a scenic backdrop to the paved roadway. The combination of natural and infrastructure elements offers a moderate visual quality to travelers on the roadway.



b. Simulated View: The project would introduce vertical support columns and a horizontal overcrossing spanning Agua Dulce Canyon Road, introducing an element of the project environment that would be out of scale with the existing visual character, reducing project coherence. The partial obstruction of mountain views for travelers on the roadway would partially obstruct views of the mountains in the background, reducing the existing natural harmony. The overall degree of change to visual quality would be adverse.

Figure 3.16-A-16
Key Viewpoint 1.16: Agua Dulce Canyon Road



a. Existing View: View to the east on SR-14 between Agua Dulce Canyon Road and Soledad Canyon Road. The alternating ridgelines and canyons of the San Gabriel Mountains and minimal human interference offer moderately high visual quality to the travelers along SR-14.



b. Simulated View: An at-grade rail bed would be constructed on an embankment, elevating the height of the at-grade profile relative to existing conditions. Project features would blend in the existing setting and would not diminish the existing natural harmony. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

Figure 3.16-A-17
Key Viewpoint 1.17: SR-14



a. Existing View: View to south toward the Santa Clara River basin on Soledad Canyon Road. An arrangement of sharp ridgelines and rounded mountains make up the backdrop. The presence of heavy machinery associated with mining diminishes the natural harmony of the mountains. Overall visual quality for the travelers along the roadway is moderately low.



b. Simulated View: The project would add a bridge with intermediate piers, tunnel portals, and box like structures, that would be out of scale with the existing setting; however, the project scale would not interfere with the views of the mountainous backdrop and would not reduce the existing natural harmony. The overall degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

Figure 3.16-A-18
Key Viewpoint 1.18: Soledad Canyon Road 1



a. Existing View: View to southeast on Soledad Canyon Road near Lang Station Road. The view is dominated by the abandoned Nike Missile site. A sequence of canyons and ridgelines are visible in the backdrop. Together they offer low visual quality to the travelers on the roadway.



b. Simulated View: The project would introduce an elevated bridge, box-like structures, and tunnel portals in the background. If the project were to remove some of the existing heavy machinery and restore the landscape as shown in the above simulation it would increase the existing cultural order and natural harmony. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

Figure 3.16-A-19
Key Viewpoint 1.19: Soledad Canyon Road 2



a. Existing View: View to the south from Sequoia Road between Yellowstone Lane and Gas Line Road. The picturesque backdrop of the San Gabriel Mountains is marred by the abandoned Nike Missile and the noticeable infrastructure features. The view offers moderately low visual quality to the nearby residents and travelers along the roadway.



b. Simulated View: The project would add a horizontal bridge with intermediate vertical piers, tunnel portals, and rectangular structures that would augment the existing infrastructure, reducing the existing natural harmony,. The overall degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

Figure 3.16-A-20
Key Viewpoint 1.20: Sequoia Road



a. Existing View: View to the southeast from the end of the publicly accessible portion of Arrastre Canyon Road, looking toward the San Gabriel Mountains. A dirt road and a building are visible in the distance. An intermittent wash that feeds into the Santa Clara River is visible. The natural setting offers high visual quality to travelers along Arrastre Canyon Road.

The E1 and E2 alignments would be underground in this location and, therefore, not visible, so no simulation was prepared.

Figure 3.16-A-21
Key Viewpoint 1.21: Arrastre Canyon Road



a. Existing View: View to the northeast at the intersection of Kurt Street and Nadina Street. The view features an open, grassy field surrounded by scenic hills, interrupted by transmission towers and lines. The view offers moderately high visual quality to the residents and travelers on roadway.



b. Simulated View: Project features, including a tunnel box and portals, neutral-colored rectangular structures and at-grade tracks would traverse the grassy field, reducing the existing natural harmony. The overall degree of change to visual quality would be adverse.

Figure 3.16-A-22
Key Viewpoint 1.22: Lake View Terrace



a. Existing View: View to the northwest towards foothills at the intersection of Foothill Boulevard and Wheatland Avenue. The view is dominated by a flat, paved intersection surrounded by a mix of commercial, residential, and undeveloped parcels. Trees and utility poles line along the road, creating a moderate visual quality for the residents, workers and travelers.



b. Simulated View: The large horizontal scale of the elevated guideway, added by the project, would mirror that of the paved roadway and would also be consistent with the visual character of the nearby overcrossing; it would not change the existing project coherence or cultural order. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

Figure 3.16-A-23
Key Viewpoint 1.23: Lake View Terrace 2



a. Existing View: View to the southwest from Wheatland Avenue. The view consists of undeveloped land and Big Tujunga Wash, interrupted by electrical towers and transmission lines, offering a moderately high visual quality to the residents, workers and travelers.



b. Simulated View: Project features including the elevated viaduct, support columns, and tunnel portals would reduce the natural harmony of the view with large scale transportation infrastructure. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be adverse.

Figure 3.16-A-24
Key Viewpoint 1.24: Big Tujunga Wash



a. Existing View: View to the east from I-210. The flat, grey, road extends into the distance and dominates the view. Vertical streetlights, rectangular signs, electric towers and transmission lines, and green mature trees are scattered throughout in an irregular pattern. Mountain views are visible in the distance, offering a moderately low visual quality to the travelers along the roadway.



b. Simulated View: The project would add a visually dominant horizontal structure with large, wide arches spanning the view and vertical columns bunched on either side of the roadway. While the structure would be out of scale with the existing transportation features, and would block motorists views of the hills in the background, as shown in the above simulation it would add an element of visual interest for passing motorists on SR-14 and nearby workers. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

Figure 3.16-A-25
Key Viewpoint 1.25: Interstate 210



a. Existing View: View to the north from the intersection of Gladstone Street and Fillmore Street looking toward the Lopez Canyon Landfill. A dark grey fence and rectangular residential structure dominate the foreground and contribute to the low visual quality of this setting.

SR14 and E1 would be underground in tunnels, so no visual change resulting from the project would be visible; therefore, no simulation was prepared.

Figure 3.16-A-26
Key Viewpoint 1.26: Gladstone Street



a. Existing View: View to the southwest from Glenoaks Boulevard. The view is dominated by the Hansen Spreading Grounds with its slanting striated cement surface, water and a mix of dirt and rock and a mix of irregular buildings, vegetation, and utility poles in the background. The view offers low visual quality to roadway travelers and nearby workers.



b. Simulated View: The project would add at-grade tracks in the distance. Project features would generally not be visible and would not change the existing visual character. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

Figure 3.16-A-27
Key Viewpoint 1.27: Hansen Spreading Grounds



a. Existing View: View to the northeast from Sheldon Street near El Dorado Avenue. An inconsistent mix of residential and commercial uses, with indistinctive architectural style offer low visual quality to the roadway travelers, and nearby residents and workers.



b. Simulated View: Added project features would be the elevated tracks spanning Sheldon Street and associated support columns. While the project features would partially screen the view to the mountains, they would somewhat enhance the cultural order in the foreground. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

Figure 3.16-A-28
Key Viewpoint 1.28: Sheldon Street



a. Existing View: View to the east from Cantara Street at the northeast corner of Sun Valley Park. Disorderly development pattern and lack of any unifying characteristics visible in the viewshed and offers low visual quality to the travelers and nearby workers.

Refined SR14 and E1 would be underground in tunnels, so no visual change resulting from the project would be visible; therefore, no simulation was prepared.

Figure 3.16-A-29
Key Viewpoint 1.29: Sun Valley Park



a. Existing View: View to the northwest on North Hollywood Way. Distant views of the Santa Susana Mountains provide an aesthetically pleasing backdrop to a wide expanse of pavement, parallel linear lines associated with the roadway infrastructure, a line of unified ornamental trees, and distant rectangular, neutral-colored buildings. This view offers moderate visual quality to the nearby residents, workers and travelers along North Hollywood Way.



b. Simulated View: The project would add a parking lot and transit center along North Hollywood Way, as well as enhanced landscaping throughout, which would increase cultural order and natural harmony. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be beneficial.

Figure 3.16-A-30
Key Viewpoint 2.1: San Fernando Road

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