# 3.16 Aesthetics and Visual Quality

## 3.16.1 Introduction

This section describes the existing visual environment of the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section of the California High-Speed Rail (HSR) System, including scenic resources, and analyzes the impacts on aesthetics and visual quality that would result from each of the six Build Alternatives. This section also describes the regulatory setting, affected environment, impacts, and mitigation measures for aesthetics and visual quality.

The following resource section in this Palmdale to Burbank Project Section Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) provides additional information related to aesthetics and visual resources:

*Aesthetics and Visual Quality*

The California High-Speed Rail System is expected to be a major investment for local and regional communities statewide. Through the public involvement process, visual impacts have been identified as a key resource of concern. The presence of new infrastructure like overhead catenary, communications towers, high-speed rail vehicles, viaducts, tunnels, and stations are examples of facilities with the potential to create visual impacts. This section discusses these visual changes.

- Section 3.13 Station Planning, Land Use, and Development provides information on issues
- related to land use compatibility.

In addition, the following technical appendices and technical reports provide more detailed information:

- The *Palmdale to Burbank Project Section: Aesthetics and Visual Quality Technical Report* (Authority 2019) provides additional detail on this aesthetics and visual quality analysis.
- Appendix 2-E, Impact Avoidance and Minimization Features (IAMF), lists IAMFs included as applicable in each of the six Build Alternatives for purposes of the environmental impact analysis.
- Appendix 2-H, Regional and Local Policy Consistency Analysis, provides a Regional and Local Policy Consistency Table, listing the aesthetics and visual quality goals and policies applicable to the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section and noting the six Build Alternatives' consistency or inconsistency with each.
- Appendix 3.1-B, United States Forest Service (USFS) Policy Consistency Analysis, assesses the consistency of the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section with applicable laws, regulations, plans, and policies governing proposed uses and activities within the Angeles National Forest (ANF) and San Gabriel Mountains National Monument (SGMNM).
- Appendix 3.16-A, Photographs of Existing Conditions and Visual Simulations with the Project, contains photographic figures of existing conditions and simulated views at key locations along the alignments of the six Build Alternatives. The figures in this appendix are identified in the analysis below.

Aesthetic and visual resources are components of the natural, cultural, and project environments that people see. Aesthetic and visual resource impacts are generally the extent to which the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section's physical elements and potential visibility would change the visual character and perceived visual quality of the viewed landscape. The *Final Program EIR/EIS for the Proposed California High-Speed Train System* (2005 Statewide Program EIR/EIS) (Authority and FRA 2005) concluded that the California HSR System would have high-contrast visual impacts on the scenic Sierra Highway and mountain passes and open space landscapes through the ANF, including the SGMNM. The six Build Alternatives incorporate, to the extent possible, design solutions for project facilities that integrate into the landscape context; such as by minimizing view obstructions, substantial contrasts with settings, and light and shadow effects. Where possible, the design of the six Build Alternatives is at grade or in a tunnel, which

would reduce large-scale structures that would create visual barriers and would follow existing transportation corridors, thereby minimizing changes in visual character.

## 3.16.2 Laws, Regulations, and Orders

### *3.16.2.1 Federal*

**United States Department of Transportation Act (Section 4(f)) (49 United States Code [U.S.C.] 303)**

Compliance with Section 4(f) is required for transportation projects undertaken by an operating administration of the United States Department of Transportation or that may receive federal funding and any discretionary approvals. Section 4(f) protects the natural beauty of publicly owned land of parks, recreational areas, and wildlife refuges, as well as historic sites of national, state, or local significance located on public or private land. Pursuant to U.S.C. Title 23 Section 237, under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Assignment Memorandum of Understanding between the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the State of California, effective July 23, 2019, the California HSR Authority (Authority) is the federal lead agency and is responsible for compliance with NEPA and other federal environmental laws, including Section 4(f) (49 U.S.C. 303) and related U.S. Department of Transportation orders and guidance. 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 Section 4(f) property consistent with the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 303(d).

**Federal Railroad Administration (64 Federal Register 28545)**

FRA's *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 United States Department of Transportation Order 5610.4."

**National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)**

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) establishes the federal government policy on historic preservation. Section 106 of the NHPA requires federal agencies to consider the effects of their undertakings on historic properties. Potential adverse effects include changes 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 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.

**American Antiquities Act (54 U.S.C. 320301–320303)**

The American Antiquities Act prohibits appropriation, excavation, injury, or destruction of "any historic or prehistoric ruin or monument, or any object of antiquity" located on lands owned or controlled by the federal government. The act also establishes penalties for such actions and sets forth a permit requirement for collection of antiquities on federally owned lands.

**United States Forest Service Authorities**

Affects to visual resources and visual quality of the ANF, including the SGMNM, are regulated by several federal laws and their implementing regulations, as well as policies, plans, and orders. The primary laws governing aesthetics and visual quality are the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, National Forest Management Act, and Antiquities Act of 1906. Appendix 3.1-B, USFS Policy Consistency Analysis, provides an analysis of the consistency of the six Build Alternatives with these laws, regulations, policies, plans, and orders.

### *3.16.2.2 State*

**State Scenic Highways (Streets and Highway Code Section 260 to 263)**

The State Scenic Highways Program (Streets and Highway Code Section 260 to 263) lists highways that are either eligible for designation as a scenic highway or already are designated as a scenic highway. A highway may be designated as scenic on the basis of the amount of natural landscape that 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 (Caltrans 2017). The Streets and Highways Code establishes state responsibility for protecting, preserving, and enhancing California's natural scenic beauty of scenic routes and areas that require special scenic conservation and treatment.

### *3.16.2.3 Regional and Local*

All city, county, and regional aesthetic and visual quality plans, as well as land use plans and municipal codes with jurisdictions within the resource study areas (RSA) were consulted for this analysis. Table 3.16-1 provides an overview of the applicable regional and local general plans, including goals, objectives, and policies relevant to the aesthetics and visual quality of the project.

**Table 3.16-1 Summary of Regional and Local Plans, Policies, and Regulations**

| Policy Title | Policy Summary |
|---|---|
| **Los Angeles County** | |
| Los Angeles County General Plan 2035 (2015) | The Los Angeles County *General Plan 2035* is designed to guide the long-term physical development and conservation of Los Angeles County's land and environment through a framework of goals, policies, and implementation programs. This plan considers scenic resources to be scenic highways and routes, hillsides, and ridgelines, and thus implements both scenic resource protection and hillside management policies to protect the scenic resources within the county. Scenic resources protection policies include Policies C/NR 13.1 to C/NR 13.10, all of which protect scenic resources through land use regulations aimed to ensure that new developments do not degrade the visual quality of the surrounding resources. |
| Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Plan (2004) | The *Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Plan* established provisions for safety; noise insulation; and the regulation of building, highway, railroad, public roadway, interstate highway, private road, and waterway heights within areas adjacent to each of the public airports in Los Angeles County. The plan is intended to complement the planning responsibilities of the cities, county, and other affected agencies, and has the responsibility to set uniform policies and standards to prohibit the development of incompatible uses. |
| Los Angeles County Zoning Code (2019) | Title 22 of the Los Angeles County Zoning Code regulates the design of fencing, signage, lighting, and architecture within the Los Angeles County limits. The County Zoning Code establishes the numerous different zoning areas of the county and ensures that development projects adhere to the regulations established for each zone. |

| Policy Title | Policy Summary |
|---|---|
| Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan Update – One Valley, One Vision (2012) | The *Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan – One Valley, One Vision* was adopted in October 2012. This plan is a component of the Los Angeles County *General Plan 2035* and is intended to provide focused goals and policies guiding future development and growth in the unincorporated areas of Santa Clarita Valley. The Land Use, Conservation Space, and Open Space elements of the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan mimic those contained in the Land Use, Conservation Space, and Open Space elements of the *City of Santa Clarita General Plan*. This coordinated effort is part of the "One Valley, One Vision" planning and policy guidance. |
| Antelope Valley Area Plan (2015) | The *Antelope Valley Area Plan* sets forth policies for the Antelope Valley. The policies include the protection of the existing rural communities, resource conservation, community design and revitalization, industrial growth, and circulation policies that encourage the development of improved access throughout the Antelope Valley. Policies COS 5.1 through COS 5.7 recommend that Los Angeles County identify natural landforms and vistas and recognize such areas as Scenic Resource Areas, thereby offering these resources regulatory protection from incompatible development. These policies also identify hillside areas as vulnerable resources, which may be subject to excessive grading to facilitate development. The policies require standards be adopted to limit grading operations and development in hillside areas. The policies also require limiting development on buttes and ridgeline areas by adopting buffer zones to such resources. |
| **City of Palmdale** | |
| Palmdale General Plan (1993) | Land Use Element:<br>▪ Policy L1.4.3 establishes standards that are intended to protect visually prominent hillsides and ridgelines from inappropriate development and grading that would detract from the scenic character of these resources.<br>▪ Objective L3.6, which states intentions to maintain the integrity, safety, and attractiveness of existing residential neighborhoods.<br>Environmental Resources Element:<br>▪ Goal ER1 aims to preserve significant natural and human-made open space areas that give Palmdale its distinct form and identity.<br>▪ Objective ER1.2 and Policy ER1.2.1 discourage new development with the potential to substantially negatively alter the scenic viewsheds of the San Gabriel, Sierra Pelona, Ritter, and Portal ridges.<br>Community Design Element:<br>▪ Policies CD1.1.1 through CD10.9.2 discuss specific guidelines related to building character and design, materials, colors, placement, and architectural style in relation to surrounding buildings, as well as the appearance of walls, fences, and lighting proposed through the development process to improve the functional and aesthetic quality of the built environment. |
| Palmdale Transit Village Specific Plan (2007) | The *Palmdale Transit Village Specific Plan* is a mixed-use, transit-oriented development plan for the area near the Palmdale Transportation Center, which is adjacent to downtown Palmdale. The Palmdale Transportation Center is a regional transportation hub that provides connections between the Antelope Valley Transit Authority local and commuter bus service, Metrolink, Santa Clarita Transit, and Greyhound and Amtrak bus service. This plan incorporates urban design/transit-oriented development principles unique to the city of Palmdale that encourage the creation of pedestrian-friendly and bicycle-friendly streets and provide increased open space through the extension of an existing greenway into the plan area. |

| Policy Title | Policy Summary |
|---|---|
| Palmdale Trade and Commerce Specific Plan (2014) | The *Palmdale Trade and Commerce Specific Plan* was adopted in 1990 and amended in 2006. This plan establishes public policies, a land use plan, design standards, and guidelines to encourage investment and development near the Palmdale Transportation Center. This plan's policies and goals include establishing an attractive, mixed-use activity center to complement the city of Palmdale's residential development and encourage the use of intermodal transportation within the plan area. |
| Palmdale Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 8, General Standards of Development (2019) | The purpose of the City of Palmdale Zoning Ordinance is to promote the public health, safety, general welfare, and quality of life within Palmdale by establishing regulations to confirm that an appropriate mix of land uses is developed in an orderly manner. The following policies relate to portion of the HSR corridor located within Palmdale:<br>▪ Allow for the infill and redevelopment of areas at similar scale and character;<br>▪ Maintain and enhance significant environmental and visual resources; and<br>▪ Establish the city of Palmdale as a distinctive community with a high quality of life and a visually pleasing, secure environment for city residents and businesses. |
| Palmdale Native Desert Vegetation Ordinance (City of Palmdale Municipal Code, Chapter 14.04) | The Palmdale Native Desert Vegetation Ordinance prohibits removal of Joshua trees and other desert vegetation that add to community identity from any public or private property in the city except as provided by the ordinance. It requires desert vegetation preservation plans for development proposals on sites containing native desert vegetation. |
| **City of Santa Clarita** | |
| City of Santa Clarita General Plan (2019) | The *City of Santa Clarita General Plan* planning area includes several distinct communities within the city limits and in the surrounding unincorporated areas. The communities within the city limits include Newhall, Valencia, Saugus, and Canyon Country (including the sub-communities of Sand Canyon and Placerita Canyon). Communities outside the city limits include Stevenson Ranch, Castaic, Val Verde, Agua Dulce, Westridge, and Newhall Ranch. The Land Use Element designates land for housing, business, industry, and open space, as well as other uses. The Conservation and Open Space Element identifies goals and policies for managing, protecting, and maintaining open space and natural resources.<br>▪ Land Use Element Policies LU1.1.1, LU1.1.4, LU1.2.10, LU1.3.2, LU1.3.3, LU2.2.1, LU6.1.1, LU6.1.3, and LU6.5.1 have been established to support the preservation of local aesthetic and visual resources within the planning area of Santa Clarita. Policies are designed to preserve community character and retain the natural aesthetics and integrity of significant ridgelines and prominent landforms such as Vasquez Rocks in the community of Agua Dulce.<br>▪ Conservation and Open Space Element Policies 2.2.1, 2.2.3, 2.2.6, 6.1.2, 6.1.3, 6.4.1, 6.4.2, and 6.5.1 aim to preserve natural features, such as significant ridgelines, scenic canyons, scenic habitat areas, unique geologic features, and other scenic views in the Santa Clarita planning area to maintain its distinct and unique character. |
| Santa Clarita Community Character and Design Guidelines (2009) | The purpose of the *Santa Clarita Community Character and Design Guidelines* is to provide direction for urban design and community form as Santa Clarita experiences growth and development. The document is intended to provide policy guidance in implementing Santa Clarita's Unified Development Code. The guidelines are also intended to work with the City of Santa Clarita *Beautification Master Plan* (City of Santa Clarita, 2001), which focuses on landscaping, fencing, monument, and signage design both at the community and regional scale. Together these documents are intended to influence the aesthetic character in Santa Clarita. |

| Policy Title | Policy Summary |
|---|---|
| Santa Clarita Municipal Code, Chapter 16.07, Design Standards, and Chapter 17.51, Property Development Standards (2019) | The purpose of the City of Santa Clarita Municipal Code is to establish standards and guidelines to promote and protect the public health, safety, and general welfare of the residents of Santa Clarita. The portions of the code relevant to the design of the alignment, fencing, signage, lighting, and architecture of the portions of the six Build Alternatives located within the Santa Clarita city limits can be found in Chapter 16.07, Design Standards, and Chapter 17.51, Property Development Standards. Additionally, portions of the code relevant to oak tree preservation may be found in Chapter 17.51.040. |
| **City of Burbank** | |
| City of Burbank 2035 General Plan (2013) | The *City of Burbank General Plan* area contains a mix of land use planned for residential, commercial, industrial, open space, institutional, airport, and right-of-way purposes. This plan contains seven elements, including a Land Use Element and an Open Space and Conservation Element, with special provisions for hillside development. Specific policies related to aesthetics and visual resources include Land Use policies 3.2 through 3.8, 3.10 and 3.11, which provide design guidelines for new development. The Open Space policies 7.1 and 7.2 aim to preserve visually prominent ridgelines and limit hillside development as much as possible in accordance with the Conservation Element. |
| **City of Los Angeles** | |
| City of Los Angeles General Plan (2010) | The *City of Los Angeles General Plan* consists of 11 elements that apply citywide, and a land use plan for each of the 35 community plan areas (CPA) in the city. The Arleta-Pacoima Community Plan, Sun Valley-La Tuna Canyon Community Plan, Sylmar Community Plan, Sunland-Tujunga-Lake View Terrace-Shadow Hills-East La Tuna Canyon Community Plan, and San Gabriel/Verdugo Mountains Scenic Preservation Specific Plan are within the visual resource study area. Many community plan areas emphasize the preservation and protection of various scenic corridors, highways, prominent ridgelines, and other visual resources. |
| Arleta-Pacoima Community Plan (1996) | The Arleta-Pacoima CPA is approximately 23 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles. The *Arleta-Pacoima Community Plan* includes design standards that establish the minimum level of design for multiple residential, commercial, and industrial projects within the plan area. |
| Sun Valley-La Tuna Canyon Community Plan (1999) | The Sun Valley-La Tuna Canyon CPA covers 17 square miles of land. The *Sun Valley-La Tuna Canyon Community Plan* includes design standards that establish the minimum level of design for multiple residential, commercial, and industrial projects within the entire Sun Valley-La Tuna Canyon CPA. |
| Sylmar Community Plan (1997) | The *Sylmar Community Plan* emphasizes preservation and protection of two scenic corridors. |
| Sunland-Tujunga-Lake View Terrace-Shadow Hills-East La Tuna Canyon Community Plan (1997) | The intent of this plan is to promote an arrangement of land uses, streets, and services which would encourage and contribute to the economic, social and physical health, safety, welfare and convenience of the people who live and work in the community. The plan designates scenic highways which merit special controls for protection and enhancement of scenic resources. |
| San Gabriel/Verdugo Mountains Scenic Preservation Specific Plan (2003) | This plan is intended to implement the Sunland-Tujunga-Lake View Terrace-Shadow Hills-East La Tuna Canyon and Sun Valley-La Tuna Canyon Community Plans described above. The plan includes measures to preserve views of prominent ridgelines and views along scenic highway corridors. |

| Policy Title | Policy Summary |
|---|---|
| Los Angeles Municipal Code (2019) | City of Los Angeles Municipal Code Ordinance #177404 assures the protection of and regulates the removal of protected trees. Protected trees measure 4 inches or more in cumulative diameter, 4½ feet above the ground level at the base of the tree, and include any of the following species:<br>▪ Oak tree, including Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*) and California Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), or any other tree of the oak genus indigenous to California, but excluding the Scrub Oak (*Quercus dumosa*)<br>▪ Southern California Black Walnut (*Juglans californica* var. *californica*)<br>▪ Western Sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*)<br>▪ California Bay (*Umbellularia californica*)<br>In addition, Los Angeles Municipal Code (2012) Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, and 9 are relevant to the aesthetics and visual quality analysis for the six Build Alternatives. In general, they regulate the maximum height of structures, the setbacks for structures, the minimum lot area, and minimum lot width requirements for agricultural, residential, commercial, manufacturing, parking, and open space land uses. |

*Sources: City of Santa Clarita, 2009, 2019; City of Burbank, 2013; Los Angeles County, 2004, 2012, 2015a, 2015b; City of Los Angeles, 1996, 1997a, 1997b, 1999, 2003, 2010*
CPA = community plan area
HSR = high-speed rail

### 3.16.3 Consistency with Plans and Laws

As indicated in Section 3.1.4.3, Consistency with Plans and Laws, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations require a discussion of inconsistencies or conflicts between a proposed undertaking and federal, state, regional, or local plans and laws. As such, this Draft EIR/EIS evaluates inconsistencies between the six Build Alternatives and federal, state, regional, and local plans, and laws to provide planning context.

The Authority, as the lead state and federal agency proposing to construct and operate the California 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 on the selected Build Alternative. Therefore, there would be no inconsistencies between the six Build Alternatives 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 consistent with land use and zoning regulations. For example, the proposed Build Alternatives would incorporate IAMFs that require the contractor to ensure that the Authority's aesthetic review process, which will include input from local jurisdictions, has been followed to guide the development of non-station area structures. The Authority has also adopted statewide policies that seek to reduce aesthetics and visual quality impacts associated with the visible physical elements of the project.

Appendix 2-H provides a Regional and Local Policy Consistency Table, which lists the aesthetics and visual quality goals and policies applicable to the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section and notes the consistency or inconsistency of each Build Alternative. A total of 16 plans, including 42 policies, were reviewed. Each of the six Build Alternatives is consistent with 37 of 42 policies. The Palmdale to Burbank Project Section Build Alternatives are inconsistent with the five policies discussed below.

- **Policy COS 5.4 (Antelope Valley Area Plan)**—Requires appropriate development standards in Hillside Management Areas that minimize grading and alteration of the land's natural contours, ensures that development pads mimic natural contours, and ensures that individual structures are appropriately designed to minimize visual impacts.

  - Inconsistent for all six Build Alternatives. The Palmdale to Burbank Project Section would require major grading in designated Hillside Management Areas to accommodate tunnel portals.

- **Policy COS 5.6 (Antelope Valley Area Plan)**—Restricts development on buttes and designated significant ridgelines by requiring appropriate buffer zones.
  - Inconsistent for the Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives, as portions of these Build Alternative alignments would be above ground within designated significant ridgeline areas. Most of the Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternative alignments would be underground along a tunnel through designated significant ridgeline areas. Where visible, the Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives would follow the existing State Route (SR) 14 transportation corridor. When visible, HSR infrastructure would not substantially block views. The E1, E1A, E2, and E2A Build Alternatives are consistent with this policy as these alternatives would be underground in a tunnel through designated significant ridgeline areas and would, therefore, not be visible.
- **Policy COS 5.7 (Antelope Valley Area Plan)**—Ensures that incompatible development is discouraged in designated Scenic Drives by developing and implementing development standards and guidelines for development within identified viewsheds of these routes (Map 4.2: Antelope Valley Scenic Drives of the *Antelope Valley Area Plan* [Los Angeles County 2015a]).
  - Inconsistent for the Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives. The Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives would be visible from portions of SR 14 designated as a scenic drive; the SR14A Build Alternative alignment would have less at-grade and elevated trackway visible from SR 14 than the Refined SR14 Build Alternative. The E1, E1A, E2, and E2A Build Alternatives are consistent with this policy as these alternatives would be underground in a tunnel through this area and would, therefore, not be visible within the viewshed of the SR 14 designated scenic drive.
- **Policy C/NR 13.2 (Los Angeles County General Plan)**—Protects ridgelines from incompatible development that diminishes their scenic value.
  - Inconsistent for the Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives**.** The Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives would partially obstruct views of scenic ridgelines in some areas. The E1, E1A, E2, and E2A Build Alternatives are consistent with this policy as these alternatives would be underground in tunnels in areas with views of scenic ridgelines.
- **Policy C/NR 13.8 (Los Angeles County General Plan)**—Manage development in Hillside Management Areas to protect their natural and scenic character and minimize risks from natural hazards, such as fire, flood, erosion, and landslides.
  - Inconsistent for the Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives. The Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives would partially obstruct scenic ridgelines in some areas. The E1, E1A, E2, and E2A Build Alternatives are consistent with this policy, as these alternatives would be underground in tunnels in areas with scenic ridgelines.

Despite the inconsistencies, the project is consistent with the majority of regional and local policies and plans. Although it may not be possible to meet all local aesthetics and visual policies as outlined in Table 3.16-1, IAMFs and mitigation measures will generally minimize aesthetics and visual impacts and would ultimately meet the overall objectives of the local policies.

## 3.16.4 Methods for Evaluating Impacts

The evaluation of impacts on aesthetics and visual quality resources is a requirement of NEPA and CEQA. The following sections summarize the visual RSAs, and the methods used to analyze aesthetics and visual quality impacts. The methodology used to evaluate aesthetics and visual quality impacts is based on the visual impact assessment methodology described in the

Authority's environmental methodology guidance (Authority 2017), which is based on the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) *Guidelines for the Visual Impact Assessment of Highway Projects* (FHWA 2015). The visual impact assessment methodology is carried out in four phases: Establishment (Sections 3.16.2 through 3.16.4), Inventory (Section 3.16.5), Analysis (Section 3.16.6), and Mitigation (Section 3.16.7). The Establishment phase defines the project's visual character and the Area of Visual Effect. The Inventory phase describes the affected environment, population/viewers, and existing visual quality. The Analysis phase assesses impacts on visual quality as neutral, adverse, or beneficial. Where adverse impacts are identified, mitigation measures are developed and summarized. Appendix 3.16-A, Aesthetics and Visual Quality, supports the Inventory and Analysis phases with photographs of existing conditions and visual simulations of the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section.

### *3.16.4.1 Definition of Resource Study Area*

As defined in Section 3.1, Introduction, RSAs are the geographic boundaries in which the environmental investigations specific to each resource topic were conducted. The aesthetics and visual quality RSA is the area in which all environmental investigations were conducted to determine the visual character and impacts on visual quality of each of the six Build Alternatives. The boundaries of the RSA for aesthetics and visual quality are the limits of ground disturbance of the Build Alternatives plus 0.25 mile (urban environments) or 0.50 mile (rural environments). The RSA also depends on the visibility of the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section components and takes into account the area's landform (topography), land cover (vegetation and structures), and atmospheric conditions (dust, fog, precipitation). The area within the RSA (0.25- or 0.50-mile distance from the ground disturbance of the Build Alternatives) includes area within the foreground of the view (area of highest visual concern) from the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section. A distance of up to 3 miles from the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section is the area within the middle ground of the view, which is typically the viewing distance that is considered the farthest from which probable visual quality impacts from the project would occur. The assessment of aesthetics and visual quality also includes consideration of scenic views beyond the middle ground (such as of mountains in the distance), which may be affected.

**Landscape Units**

For the analysis, the RSA is divided into landscape units, which are defined areas within the RSA that have a similar visual character and that may comprise a single viewshed. Landscape units are the geographic unit on which impacts on visual quality are assessed. Landscape units are used to establish a frame of reference for comparing the visual effects of the six Build Alternatives and to determine the significance of those effects. A landscape unit include similarity in landform/topography, land cover, and degree or intensity of humanmade development. Examples of types of landscape units may include public lands, agricultural areas, industrial areas, or residential areas.

For the purpose of assessing visual quality of the landscape unit, key viewpoints (KVPs) are identified that provide representative views and include any notable or scenic views. The assessment of KVPs enables the evaluation of the degree of impact the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section would have on the existing visual quality of each landscape unit.

A following two landscape units were identified for each of the six Build Alternatives:

***Landscape Unit 1: Central Subsection***

Landscape Unit 1 generally extends from Spruce Court in Palmdale to north of the Burbank Airport Station. In this landscape unit, the Build Alternatives primarily travel along different alignments with different existing visual character; therefore, Landscape Unit 1 has been subdivided into four units for analysis purposes:

- Landscape Unit 1a: Acton Area (all six Build Alternatives)
- Landscape Unit 1b: Central State Route 14 Corridor (Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives only)

- Landscape Unit 1c: ANF including SGMNM (E1, E1A, E2, and E2A Build Alternatives only)
- Landscape Unit 1d: Northeast San Fernando Valley (all six Build Alternatives)

There are a total of 29 KVPs in Landscape Unit 1.

***Landscape Unit 2: Burbank Subsection***

Landscape Unit 2 extends from Lockheed Drive to Winona Avenue in Burbank and includes the Burbank Airport Station. Burbank is characterized as an urban collection of residential, commercial, and industrial neighborhoods set against the backdrop of mountainous natural open space areas. One KVP was analyzed in Landscape Unit 2.

### *3.16.4.2 Impact Avoidance and Minimization Features*

IAMFs are project features the Authority has incorporated into each of the six Build Alternatives for purposes of the environmental impact analysis. The full text of the IAMFs that are applicable to the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section is provided in Volume 2, Appendix 2-E, Impact Avoidance and Minimization Features.

The following is a list of the IAMFs that were incorporated into the aesthetics and visual analysis:

- **AVQ-IAMF#1**: Aesthetic Options—This IAMF describes the Authority's commitment to minimize visual impacts from HSR structures. Prior to construction, the contractor shall document, through issuance of a technical memorandum, how the Authority's aesthetic guidelines have been employed to minimize visual impacts.
- **AVQ-IAMF#2:** Aesthetic Review Process—This IAMF describes the Authority's commitment to minimize visual impacts from HSR structures. Prior to construction, the contractor shall document that the Authority's aesthetic review process has been followed to guide the development of non-station area structures.

This environmental impact analysis considers these IAMFs as part of the project design. Within Section 3.16.6, Environmental Consequences, each impact narrative describes how these project features are applicable and, where appropriate, effective at avoiding or minimizing impacts.

### *3.16.4.3 Methods for NEPA and CEQA Impact Analysis*

**Overview of Impact Analysis**

This section describes the sources and methods the Authority used to analyze project impacts of each of the six Build Alternatives on aesthetics and visual quality. These methods apply to both NEPA and CEQA analyses unless otherwise indicated. Refer to Section 3.1.4.4, Methods for Evaluating Impacts, for a description of the general framework for evaluating impacts under NEPA and CEQA.

**Inventory of Visual Resources**

Visual resources are components of the natural, cultural, or project environments that are capable of being seen. Examples of each type of visual resources include:

- Natural Visual Resources—the land, water, vegetation, and animals that compose the natural environment
- Cultural Visual Resources—the buildings, structures, and artifacts that compose the cultural environment
- Project Visual Resources—the geometrics, structures, and fixtures that compose the project environment

Visual resources within the RSA were identified. For purposes of this analysis, a visual resource is a site, object, or landscape feature that contributes to the visual character of the surrounding area or is important because of its visual characteristics or scenic qualities. Visual resources also include state-designated scenic highways and views towards and within natural areas, parks, and

urban areas identified as having historical or cultural significance (or that include buildings of similar significance or notable landmark status). Additionally, visual resources can be a historic or prehistoric ruin or monument, or any object of antiquity located on lands owned or controlled by the federal government. Policy documents, cultural resource reports, and field observations of apparent local popularity were used to identify scenic resources in the RSA.

### Visual Character and Compatibility

Visual character is an impartial description of the visible attributes of a scene or object such as form (dominance and scale), line, color, and texture. Visual-character–defining resources and features include elements of the natural, cultural, and project environments. If the visual character of the project is in keeping with the existing environment, then the visual compatibility of the project would be high. If the visual character of the project contrasts strongly with the existing visual character, then visual compatibility would be low.

*Definitions*

**Visual character** is a description of the visible attributes of a scene or object such as form, line, color, and texture. These attributes may include landforms, water, vegetation, animals, land uses, buildings, infrastructure, artifacts and art, historic structures or districts, high geometrics, grading, etc.

**Visual quality** is an assessment of what viewers like and dislike about visual resources that compose the visual character of a particular scene. Visual quality serves as the baseline for determining the degree of visual effect.

### Visual Quality

Visual quality is an assessment of what viewers like and dislike about visual resources that compose the visual character of a particular scene. Different viewers may evaluate specific visual resources differently based on their interests. Visual quality serves as the baseline for determining the degree of visual effect: adverse, beneficial, or neutral.

Elements of visual quality include:

- Natural Harmony—what a viewer likes and dislikes about the natural environment. The viewer interprets the visual resources of the natural environment as being either harmonious or inharmonious.
- Cultural Order—what a viewer likes and dislikes about the cultural environment. The viewer interprets the visual resources of the cultural environment as being orderly or disorderly.
- Project Coherence—what the viewer likes and dislikes about the project environment. The viewer interprets the visual resources of the project environment as being either coherent or incoherent.

### Key Viewpoints

Visual assessments are conducted through the use of KVPs. KVPs represent specific locations within a landscape unit from which a proposed project would be visible to viewers and are used to provide representative examples of existing views seen by viewers within each landscape unit. These representative views are selected to depict the range of visual character and visual quality found within a landscape unit and establish baseline conditions to illustrate whether the project would be compatible or incompatible with those views and to assess the visual impacts of the project. KVP locations are typically selected to either represent typical views from common types of viewing areas, such as certain highways or residential areas with exposure to the project, or specific high-sensitivity areas such as parks, scenic viewpoints, and historic districts that may be affected by a proposed project. The visual quality impact determination for an individual KVP may not be the same as the visual quality impact determination for the entire landscape unit in which the KVP is located. This is because when determining effects on landscape units, the entire landscape unit is considered, not just one specific location. Photographs of each KVP are provided in Appendix 3.16-A.

### Photo Simulation Methodology

Photo simulations for each KVP are used to assess the potential change in visual character that would result from the six Build Alternatives. Appendix 3.16-A, Photographs of Existing Conditions

and Visual Simulations with the Project, contains images comparing existing and simulated views that correspond to the discussion of each KVP. Images of the existing conditions were photographed using a greater than 10-megapixel digital single lens reflex camera equipped with a 50-millimeter equivalent focal length lens. This configuration is the de facto standard that approximates the proportion seen by the human eye. The camera positioning was determined with a sub-meter differentially corrected global positioning system (GPS).

The photographs of the existing conditions provide a "before" image of the KVP and the visual simulations provide an "after" image of the location, scale, and visual appearance of the features affected by and associated with the proposed project and its six Build Alternatives. The photographs of the views, which represent existing conditions when the KVPs were selected in July 2016, were not simulated or altered. The simulations were developed through an objective analytical and computer modeling process and are accurate within the constraints of the available site and alternative data (a 3-dimensional computer model was created using a combination of AutoCAD files and exported to Autodesk's 3-dimensional Studio Max for production). The 3-dimensional site analysis was done using engineering surveys and light detection and ranging (LiDAR) data. Design data—engineering drawings, elevations, and cross sections; site and topographical contour plans; concept diagrams; and reference pictures—were used as a platform from which digital models were created. In cases where detailed design data were unavailable, more general descriptions about alternative facilities and their locations were used to prepare the simulations (e.g., station areas).

**Viewers**

Viewers are described as neighbors or travelers who can see or would use the proposed project. *Neighbors* are individuals occupying residential, recreational, institutional, civic, retail, commercial, industrial, and agricultural land uses. *Travelers* can be commuting, touring, shipping, walking, bicycling, and motoring. These viewer groups represent situations and perspectives of individuals. When evaluating the visual quality impacts at a KVP, the viewer group, and their perspective, at that KVP is part of the assessment.

**Viewer Sensitivity**

Viewer sensitivity is an assessment of the concern viewer groups may have to changes in the visual character based on two factors: viewer exposure and viewer awareness. For example, viewer sensitivity in established downtown areas can be high due to their exposure (close proximity for a longer duration) and their awareness of a cultural order associated with an identifiable urban core. In these areas viewers would have a greater sensitivity to the cultural order if the project does not fit in scale or mass with existing development. Workers in the workplace are generally considered to have moderate or low sensitivity because visual quality is not typically a focus or expectation associated with their activity; however, their exposure to the view is high.

The movement of the viewer affects exposure and, therefore, viewer sensitivity. Movement creates dynamic views affecting the sensitivity of travelers including viewer awareness and exposure, especially of drivers who concentrate on watching the road ahead. The faster a person moves, the smaller the area on which they can focus their attention. At 25 miles per hour (mph), a driver can see a view approximately 100 degrees wide; at 45 mph, the view drops to 65 degrees; and at 65 mph, it drops to a narrow 40 degrees, substantially reducing what is seen.

**Degree of Visual Impact**

The degree of visual impact is defined as either a beneficial, adverse, or neutral change to visual quality. A proposed project may benefit visual quality either by enhancing visual resources or by creating better views of those resources and improving the viewer's experience. Similarly, it may adversely affect visual quality by degrading visual resources or obstructing or altering desired views.

A determination of whether an adverse impact on visual quality would occur considered the following changes in visual character:

- Introduction of elements that would conflict with the visual character of an historic district or federally or state-listed or eligible historic property
- Substantial effects on a park or recreational destination identified as an important visual resource
- Introduction or alteration of features that substantially contrast with the inherent or established character of a view or landscape
- Blocking or changing a regionally or locally important visual resource or view

The degree of visual quality impact is a combination of the change in visual character from the proposed project and viewer sensitivity to that change and how that combination would change the existing visual quality category (ranging from high to low). The overall impact conclusion for a landscape unit may differ from impact conclusions at specific KVPs (e.g., a particular KVP may have an adverse change to visual quality when the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section, taken as a whole throughout the landscape unit, may have a neutral change or even a beneficial change).

### *3.16.4.4 Method for Evaluating Impacts under NEPA*

CEQ NEPA regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [C.F.R.] Parts 1500–1508) provide the basis for evaluating project effects (Section 3.1.5.4). As described in Section 1508.27 of these regulations, the criteria of context and intensity are considered together when determining the severity of the change introduced by the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section.[1] "Context" is defined as the affected environment in which a proposed project occurs. "Intensity" refers to the severity of the effect, which is examined in terms of the type, quality, and sensitivity of the resource involved, location and extent of the effect, duration of the effect (short- or long-term), and other considerations of context. Beneficial effects are also considered. When no measurable effect exists, no impact is found to occur. For the purposes of NEPA compliance, the same methods used to identify and evaluate impacts under CEQA are applied here.

### *3.16.4.5 Method for Determining Significance under CEQA*

The Authority is using the following thresholds to determine if a significant impact on aesthetics and visual quality would occur as a result of the project. A significant impact is one that would:

- Have a substantial adverse impact on a scenic vista
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historical 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, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area

[1] The CEQ issued new regulations, effective September 14, 2020, updating the NEPA implementing procedures at 40 C.F.R. 1500-1508. However, because this project initiated the NEPA process before September 14, 2020, it is not subject to the new regulations. The Authority is relying on the regulations as they existed prior to September 14, 2020. Therefore, all citations to CEQ 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.

In applying the criteria listed above, the term "substantial" is defined as a decrease of visual quality by two or more levels (e.g., from high to moderate or moderate to low) in a landscape unit viewed by viewers with moderate or high sensitivity; or by one level (e.g., from high to moderately high or moderately low to low) in a landscape unit viewed by viewers with high sensitivity.[2]

A significant impact would also occur if the project were to introduce elements that would conflict with the visual character of a historic district or federally, state-listed, or eligible historic property, or substantially affect a park, recreational destination, or other feature or area identified as an important visual resource in a local plan, policy, or regulation.

In contrast, the project would be considered to result in a beneficial visual impact if it would eliminate a dominant feature in the landscape that currently detracts from scenic qualities or blocks scenic vistas.

## 3.16.5 Affected Environment

This section describes the existing visual character and quality of the area surrounding the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section and makes a qualitative assessment of these attributes. While a visual experience can have many preferential and subjective components, there is also clear public agreement that the visual resources within some landscapes possess unique or valuable visual quality. The following subsections provide an inventory of the existing visual environment, both highly scenic and common viewscapes, in the RSA.

### *3.16.5.1 Regional Overview and Scenic Resources*

Encompassing more than 4,000 square miles, Los Angeles County is one of the larger counties in the country. The main land feature in northern Los Angeles County is high desert, with diverse vegetative communities and geologic forms, such as Vasquez Rocks. The area is punctuated with small rural communities as well as larger suburban areas. Unincorporated areas account for approximately 65 percent of the total land area of Los Angeles County. The unincorporated areas in the northern part of the county feature large amounts of sparsely populated land. These areas include substantial portions of the ANF, including the SGMNM, Los Padres National Forest, and Mojave Desert. Within this area, examples of regionally significant landscapes include the Santa Clara River, Soledad Canyon, and Magic Mountain Wilderness area. The forest areas are characterized by the steep upgrade and urban-wildland interface with the ANF and San Gabriel Mountains. The unincorporated areas in the southern portion of Los Angeles County consist of many noncontiguous developments, which are often referred to as the county's unincorporated urban islands.

Central Los Angeles County contains a mix of large mountainous areas associated with the ANF, Verdugo, and San Gabriel Mountains, sensitive environmental areas such as the Tujunga Wash, and suburban and urban development. Topography is characterized by rolling terrain, canyons, creeks, and the Santa Clara River. The Santa Clara River flows from east to west for almost 100 miles from its headwaters near Acton to the Pacific Ocean, through a valley formed between the Santa Susana Mountains. The urban and suburban areas are composed of single- and multifamily neighborhoods, commercial corridors, industrial areas, city parks, and multistory office buildings.

The Los Angeles County *General Plan 2035* (Los Angeles County 2015b) recognizes scenic highways and corridors (or routes), and hillsides and ridgelines as valuable scenic resources. The plan provides a broad definition of a scenic viewshed as including scenic vistas from a given location, such as a highway, park, hiking trail, river/waterway, or even a particular neighborhood. Additionally, scenic viewsheds vary by location and community and can include ridgelines, unique rock outcroppings, waterfalls, ocean views, or various other unusual or scenic landforms (Los Angeles County 2015b).

[2] This methodology is consistent with the FHWA Guidelines for Visual Impact Assessment.

Several significant ridgelines and Hillside Management Areas are in the vicinity of the RSA (Los Angeles County 2015b). The San Gabriel Mountains are identified as a scenic hillside in the Los Angeles County General Plan 2035. While there are no state-designated scenic highways in the RSA (though Interstate [I-] 210 is eligible), the Antelope Valley Area Plan has identified the following roadways in the vicinity of the RSA as "Town and Country Scenic Drives" (Los Angeles County 2015a):

- State Route 14
- Soledad Canyon Road
- Aliso Canyon Road
- Barrel Springs Road
- Sierra Highway
- Little Tujunga Canyon Road

The *San Gabriel/Verdugo Mountains Scenic Preservation Specific Plan* (City of Los Angeles 2003) identifies the following highways within the city of Los Angeles as scenic highways:

- Big Tujunga Canyon Road (Oro Vista Avenue to City Limits)
- Foothill Boulevard (Wentworth Street to Osborne Street)
- Foothill Freeway (I-210; Osborne Street to City Limits)
- La Tuna Canyon Road (Sunland Boulevard to City Limits)
- Wentworth Street (Foothill Boulevard to Sheldon Street)

### *3.16.5.2 Landscape Units, Key Viewpoints, and Existing Visual Quality Categories*

Two landscape units were identified in the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section (see Section 3.16.4.1). Figure 3.16-1 shows the RSA's landscape units. Figure 3.16-2 through Figure 3.16-6 show close-up aerial views of each landscape unit as well as each KVP location. The description of the visual character of the landscape units and KVPs focuses on the natural and cultural environments. Because the Build Alternatives would be built on new right-of-way, there is no existing project environment.

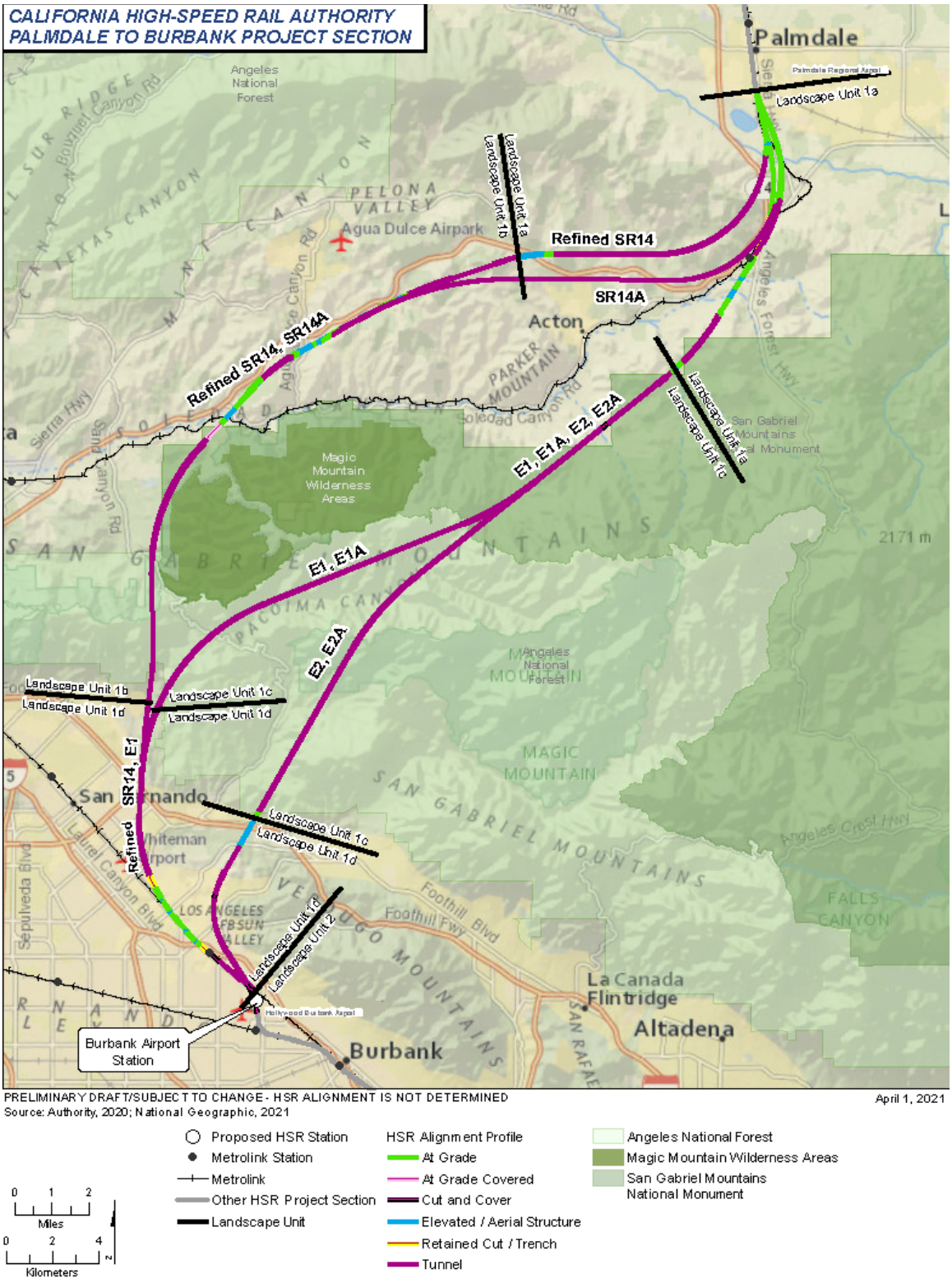


**Figure 3.16-1 Landscape Units in the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section**

### *3.16.5.3 Landscape Unit 1: Central Subsection*

Landscape Unit 1 extends from Spruce Court in Palmdale to north of the Burbank Airport Station. In this landscape unit the project alternatives primarily travel along different alignments with different existing visual character; therefore, Landscape Unit 1 has been subdivided into four units as follows:

- Landscape Unit 1a: Acton Area (applicable to all six Build Alternatives; Build Alternative alignments may differ)
- Landscape Unit 1b: Central State Route 14 Corridor (applicable to the Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives only; Build Alternative alignments differ)
- Landscape Unit 1c: ANF including SGMNM (applicable to the E1, E1A, E2 and E2A Build Alternatives only; Build Alternative alignments may differ)
- Landscape Unit 1d: Northeast San Fernando Valley (applicable to all six Build Alternatives; Build Alternative alignments may differ)

**Landscape Unit 1a: Acton Area**

***Refined SR14 Build Alternative***

Landscape Unit 1a for the Refined SR14 Build Alternative extends from Spruce Court to the intersection of Escondido Canyon Road and Ward Road. Landscape Unit 1a is characterized by sporadic suburban/rural development, open space areas, surrounding canyons and mountains, and roadway/highway infrastructure, such as SR 14. Landscape Unit 1a is strongly influenced by the prominent San Gabriel Mountains to the south and east, and the Sierra Pelona Mountains to the north. These mountains form a complex backdrop in comparison to the simple flat topography in the foreground and middle ground of views in this area.

The natural environment includes open space areas with shrubland vegetation (KVPs 1.6 and 1.7) and riparian habitats near water features such as Una Lake (KVP 1.2). Scenic resources visible in Landscape Unit 1a include the San Gabriel and Sierra Pelona Mountains (KVPs 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.10, and 1.11), Una Lake (KVP 1.2), and views from the Lamont Odett Vista Point (KVPs 1.5 and 1.6). Natural harmony in Landscape Unit 1a is high due to the prominent mountain views and relatively low level of human development.

The cultural environment immediately adjacent to the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section includes clustered residential neighborhoods, artificial water features including the California Aqueduct and Lake Palmdale, and transportation infrastructure such as SR 14 and Sierra Highway. Transportation infrastructure is a principal feature of the cultural environment, as shown in KVPs 1.1, 1.2, 1.8, and 1.10. Development through this landscape unit is sparse and relatively non-unified. Thus, cultural order is moderately low.

Within Landscape Unit 1a, the traveler viewers are primarily motorists and bicyclists on East Avenue S and motorists on Sierra Highway, SR 14, and surrounding roadways. Neighbor viewer groups primarily include residents.

Figure 3.16-2 shows Landscape Unit 1a and associated KVPs. Photos of KVPs are provided in Appendix 3.16-A (Figures 3.16-A-1 through 3.16-A-30). Table 3.16-2 outlines the KVPs associated with Landscape Unit 1a for the Refined SR14 Build Alternative.

**Table 3.16-2 Existing Visual Quality for Landscape Unit 1a, Refined SR14 Build Alternative**

| Key Viewpoint | Natural Environment | Cultural Environment | Viewer Groups Present | Visual Quality Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| KVP 1.1: East Avenue S | Mountainous | Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists and bicyclists | Low |
| KVP 1.2: Sierra Highway | Mountainous; Water feature | Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists | Low |
| KVP 1.5: Lamont Odett Vista Point 1 | Scenic lookout | Transportation Infrastructure; Residential structures | Travelers – Motorists<br>Neighbors – Visitors | Moderate |
| KVP 1.6: Lamont Odett Vista Point 2 | Shrubland vegetation; Scenic lookout | Transportation Infrastructure; Residential Structures | Travelers – Motorists<br>Neighbors – Visitors | Moderate |
| KVP 1.7: Acton Agua Dulce Library | Mountainous; Shrubland vegetation | Open space | Neighbors – Residents, visitors to library, workers<br>Travelers - Motorists | Moderate |
| KVP 1.8: Red Rover Mine Road | Mountainous | Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists<br>Neighbors – Residents | Moderate |
| KVP 1.10: SR 14 East | Mountainous | Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists | Low |
| KVP 1.11: Escondido Canyon Road | Mountainous | Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists | Low |

*Source: Authority, 2019*

The overall existing visual quality in Landscape Unit 1a is moderate. This rating is based on the positive scenic influences of the visually prominent San Gabriel Mountains. Conflicting with views of the San Gabriel Mountains are roadway infrastructure and other human development.

***SR14A Build Alternative***

Landscape Unit 1a for the SR14A Build Alternative extends from Spruce Court through to approximately 1.5 miles south of the intersection of Escondido Canyon Road and Ward Road.

The character, natural and cultural environment, viewer groups, and visual quality rating are the same as described above for Landscape Unit 1a for the Refined SR14 Build Alternative.

Table 3.16-3 outlines the KVPs associated with Landscape Unit 1a for the SR14A Build Alternative. In Landscape Unit 1a, the SR14A Build Alternative includes three new KVPs not evaluated in the Refined SR14 Build Alternative (KVP 1.3, KVP 1.4, and KVP 1.9) because of differences between alignments, and because the SR14A Build Alternative would avoid three KVPs encountered by the Refined SR14 Build Alternative (KVP 1.7, KVP 1.8, and KVP 1.10) since the SR14A Build Alternative alignment would be in a tunnel at these locations.

**Table 3.16-3 Existing Visual Quality for Landscape Unit 1a, SR14A Build Alternative**

| Key Viewpoint | Natural Environment | Cultural Environment | Viewer Groups Present | Visual Quality Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| KVP 1.1: East Avenue S | Mountainous | Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists and bicyclists | Low |
| KVP 1.2: Sierra Highway | Mountainous; Water feature | Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists | Low |
| KVP 1.3: Soledad Siphon | Mountainous | Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists<br>Neighbors – Residents and workers | Moderate |
| KVP 1.4: Soledad Siphon | Mountainous | Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists<br>Neighbors – Residents and workers | Low |
| KVP 1.5: Lamont Odett Vista Point 1 | Scenic lookout | Transportation Infrastructure; Residential structures | Travelers – Motorists<br>Neighbors – Visitors | Moderate |
| KVP 1.6: Lamont Odett Vista Point 2 | Shrubland vegetation; Scenic lookout | Transportation Infrastructure; Residential Structures | Travelers – Motorists<br>Neighbors – Visitors | Moderate |
| KVP 1.9: SR14A Acton Intermediate Window | Mountainous; shrubland vegetation | Transportation Infrastructure; Sparse residential structures | Travelers – Motorists<br>Neighbors – Residents | Moderately High |

*Source: Authority, 2019*

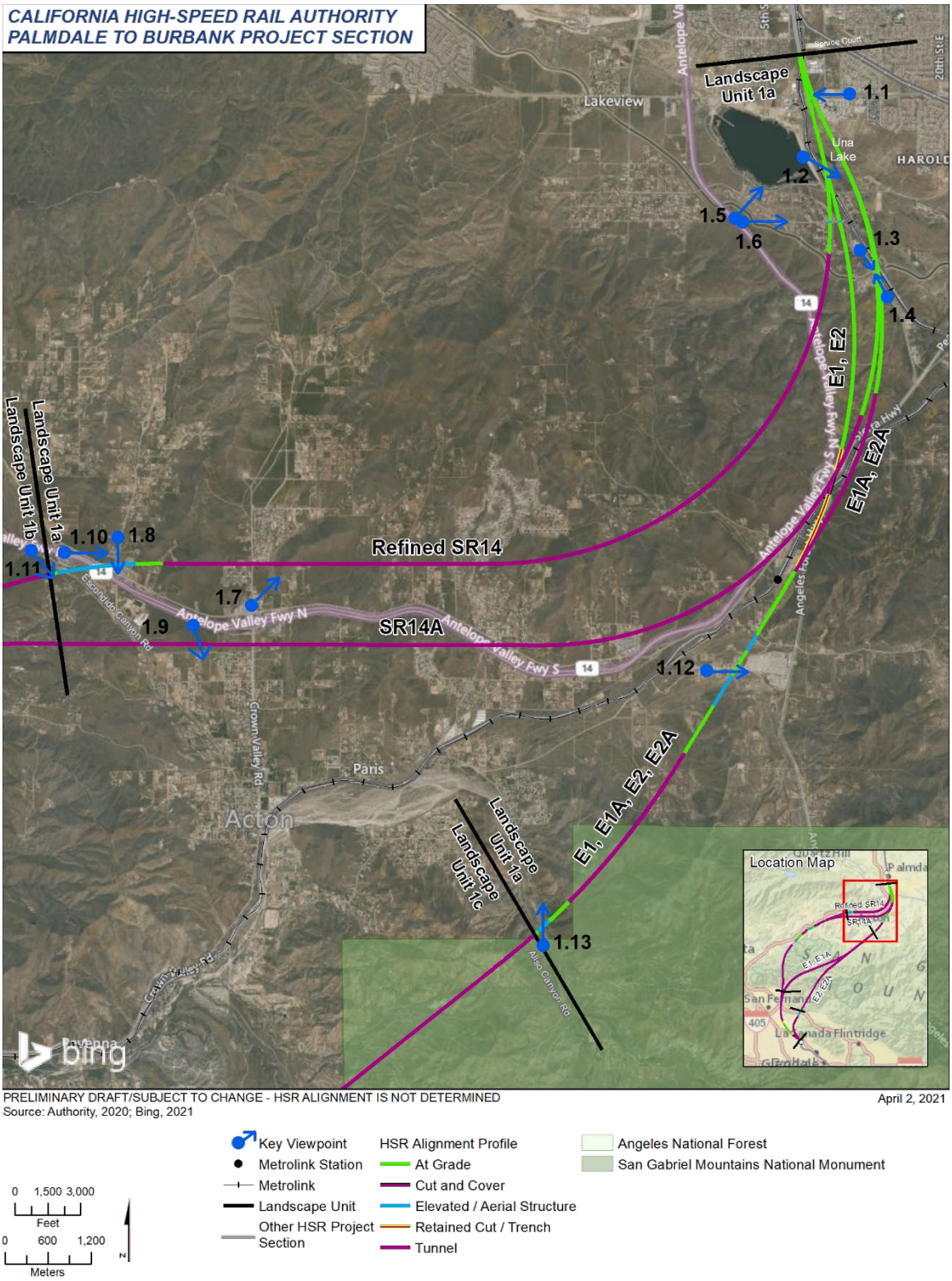


**Figure 3.16-2 Landscape Unit 1a: Acton Area**

### *E1 Build Alternative*

Landscape Unit 1a for the E1 Build Alternative extends from Spruce Court to immediately west of Aliso Canyon Road. This includes Una Lake, the San Andreas Fault Zone Plate Boundary, California Aqueduct, Santa Clara River tributary, and Aliso Canyon Road. Landscape Unit 1a is characterized by sporadic rural development, open space areas, surrounding canyons and mountains, and roadway/highway infrastructure, such as SR 14 and Metrolink Commuter Rail. Landscape Unit 1a is strongly influenced by views of the prominent San Gabriel Mountains.

The natural environment includes open space areas with shrubland vegetation (KVPs 1.6 and 1.7) and riparian habitats near water features such as Una Lake (KVP 1.2). Scenic resources visible in Landscape Unit 1a include the San Gabriel and Sierra Pelona Mountains (KVPs 1.1 and 1.2), Una Lake (KVP 1.2), and views from the Lamont Odett Vista Point (KVPs 1.5 and 1.6). Natural harmony in Landscape Unit 1a is high due to the prominent mountain views and relatively low level of human development.

The cultural environment immediately adjacent to the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section includes isolated residences, ranching facilities (KVP 1.13), irrigation water infrastructure and a man-made lake, and transportation infrastructure such as SR 14 and Sierra Highway. Transportation infrastructure is a principal feature of the cultural environment, as shown in KVPs 1.1 and 1.2. The Southern California Edison (SCE) Vincent Substation is visible in Landscape Unit 1a, adding an industrial feature to the otherwise rural setting (KVP 1.12). Another industrial feature punctuating the relatively rural setting is the Metrolink tracks, which intersect the E1 Build Alternative near Sierra Highway. Development through Landscape Unit 1a is sparse and relatively non-unified. Thus, cultural order is moderately low.

Viewer groups in this landscape unit include travelers—motorists and bicyclists on East Avenue S, and motorists on Sierra Highway, SR 14, Soledad Canyon and Aliso Canyon Roads, and surrounding roadways. Neighbor viewer groups primarily include residents in the area.

Table 3.16-4 outlines the KVPs associated with Landscape Unit 1a for the E1 Build Alternative:

**Table 3.16-4 Existing Visual Quality for Landscape Unit 1a, E1 Build Alternative**

| Key Viewpoint | Natural Environment | Cultural Environment | Viewer Groups Present | Visual Quality Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| KVP 1.1: East Avenue S | Mountainous | Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists and bicyclists | Low |
| KVP 1.2: Sierra Highway | Mountainous; Water feature | Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists | Low |
| KVP 1.5: Lamont Odett Vista Point 1 | Scenic lookout | Transportation Infrastructure; Residential structures | Travelers – Motorists<br>Neighbors – Visitors | Moderate |
| KVP 1.6: Lamont Odett Vista Point 2 | Shrubland vegetation; Scenic lookout | Transportation Infrastructure; Residential Structures | Travelers – Motorists<br>Neighbors – Visitors | Moderate |
| KVP 1.12: Foreston Drive | Rural; Background views of mountains | Residential Structures; Industrial Structures | Neighbors –- Residents | Moderate |
| KVP 1.13: Aliso Canyon Road | Mountainous, Shrubland vegetation | Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists | Moderate |

*Source: Authority, 2019*

The overall existing visual quality in Landscape Unit 1a is moderate. This rating is based on the positive scenic influences of the visually prominent San Gabriel Mountains. Conflicting with views of the San Gabriel Mountains are roadway infrastructure and other human development.

### *E1A Build Alternative*

In Landscape Unit 1a, the E1A Build Alternative includes two new KVPs not evaluated in the E1 Build Alternative (KVP 1.3 and KVP 1.4) because of differences between the Build Alternative alignments. The character, natural and cultural environment, viewer groups and visual quality rating are the same as described above for Landscape Unit 1a for the E1 Build Alternative.

Table 3.16-5 outlines the KVPs associated with Landscape Unit 1a for the E1A Build Alternative:

**Table 3.16-5 Existing Visual Quality for Landscape Unit 1a, E1A Build Alternative**

| Key Viewpoint | Natural Environment | Cultural Environment | Viewer Groups Present | Visual Quality Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| KVP 1.1: East Avenue S | Mountainous | Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists and bicyclists | Low |
| KVP 1.2: Sierra Highway | Mountainous; Water feature | Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists | Low |
| KVP 1.3: Soledad Siphon | Mountainous | Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists<br>Neighbors – Residents and workers | Moderate |
| KVP 1.4: Soledad Siphon | Mountainous | Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists<br>Neighbors – Residents and workers | Low |
| KVP 1.5: Lamont Odett Vista Point 1 | Scenic lookout | Transportation Infrastructure; Residential structures | Travelers – Motorists<br>Neighbors – Visitors | Moderate |
| KVP 1.6: Lamont Odett Vista Point 2 | Shrubland vegetation; Scenic lookout | Transportation Infrastructure; Residential Structures | Travelers – Motorists<br>Neighbors – Visitors | Moderate |
| KVP 1.12: Foreston Drive | Rural; Background views of mountains | Residential Structures; Industrial Structures | Neighbors – Residents | Moderate |
| KVP 1.13: Aliso Canyon Road | Mountainous, Shrubland vegetation | Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists | Moderate |

*Source: Authority, 2019*

### *E2/E2A Build Alternatives*

The affected environment for the E2 and E2A Build Alternatives in Landscape Unit 1a is the same as described above for the E1 and E1A Build Alternatives, respectively.

### Landscape Unit 1b: Central State Route 14 Corridor and Key Viewpoints

#### *Refined SR14 Build Alternative*

Landscape Unit 1b extends from the intersection of Escondido Canyon Road and Ward Road to the intersection of Pacoima Canyon Road and Gavina Avenue in San Fernando.

This landscape unit is characterized by large swaths of open space and mountainous areas and is split between unincorporated Los Angeles County and the ANF including SGMNM.

The natural environment of Landscape Unit 1b encompasses dramatic mountain views (KVPs 1.14 through 1.20), undeveloped lands with drought-adapted shrub vegetation (KVPs 1.17 and 1.18), and recreational parkland (KVPs 1.14 and 1.15). Landscape Unit 1b contains several scenic resources, including the Vasquez Rocks Natural Area Park (Vasquez Rocks)—identified as a highly scenic resource in the city of Santa Clarita and Los Angeles County General Plans—Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (commonly referred to simply as the Pacific Crest Trail or PCT), ANF including SGMNM, and Magic Mountain Wilderness. Other scenic resources include the Santa Clara River Sensitive Environmental Area, Robinson Ranch Golf Course, Soledad Canyon Road, and various nature trails. The mixture of canyons; steep, vertical, dominant hillsides; prominent ridgelines; visually complex rock formations; and striated textures of these landforms contribute to a unique, diverse, and memorable landscape. However, many of these same features also preclude long-distance and wide-open views, resulting in individually unique and enclosed viewsheds from particular locations inside Landscape Unit 1b. Overall, natural harmony is moderately high given the dramatic, visually dominant views of the San Gabriel Mountains, ANF, Vasquez Rocks, and limited human development.

The cultural environment in Landscape Unit 1b is characterized by low-density residential development, transportation infrastructure (KVPs 1.15 and 1.16), and mining activities (KVPs 1.18 through 1.20). Developed areas are sparse and patchily distributed within Landscape Unit 1b. Some of the few visible buildings are those associated with mining activities near Lang Station at the Vulcan Mine (see Appendix 3.16-A, Figure 3.16-A-19a and Figure 3.16-A-20a). The Vulcan Mine contains evidence of intense disturbance from mining activities. Topography is characterized by excavated hillsides and a deep depression with steep slopes on all sides (mining pit). Natural disturbance to the site includes erosion on the steep perimeter slopes and loose, gravelly soils. Heavy machinery and equipment are scattered on the site, creating an industrial character. Linear and curvilinear roadway infrastructure, such as SR 14, is also visible throughout this landscape unit. Within the transportation corridor, views include the smooth pavement, and hillside grading associated with SR 14, and other isolated signs of infrastructure such as fencing. As unified development is lacking, cultural order is low.

Typical viewer groups include commuting/touring motorist travelers, recreationists, industrial workers, and residents.

Figure 3.16-3 shows Landscape Unit 1b and associated KVPs. Photos of KVPs are provided in Appendix 3.16-A (Figures 3.16-A-1 through 3.16-A-30). Table 3.16-6 outlines the KVPs associated with Landscape Unit 1b for the Refined SR14 Build Alternative.

**Table 3.16-6 Existing Visual Quality for Landscape Unit 1b, Refined SR14 Build Alternative**

| Key Viewpoint | Natural Environment | Cultural Environment | Viewer Groups Present | Visual Quality Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| KVP 1.14: Pacific Crest Trail | Mountainous; Shrubland vegetation | Transportation infrastructure in the distance | Neighbors – Recreationists | High |
| KVP 1.15: Vasquez Rocks | Mountainous; Shrubland vegetation | Recreational park | Neighbors - Recreationists | Moderately high |
| KVP 1.16: Agua Dulce Canyon Road | Mountainous | Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists | Moderate |
| KVP 1.17: State Route 14 | Mountainous; Shrubland vegetation | Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists | Moderately high |
| KVP 1.18: Soledad Canyon Road 1 | Mountainous; Shrubland vegetation | Mostly undeveloped; Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists | Moderately low |
| KVP 1.19: Soledad Canyon Road 2 | Mountainous; Shrubland vegetation | Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists | Moderately low |
| KVP 1.20 Sequoia Road | Mountainous; Shrubland vegetation | Transportation Infrastructure | Neighbors – Residents<br>Travelers – Motorists | Moderately low |

*Source: Authority, 2019*

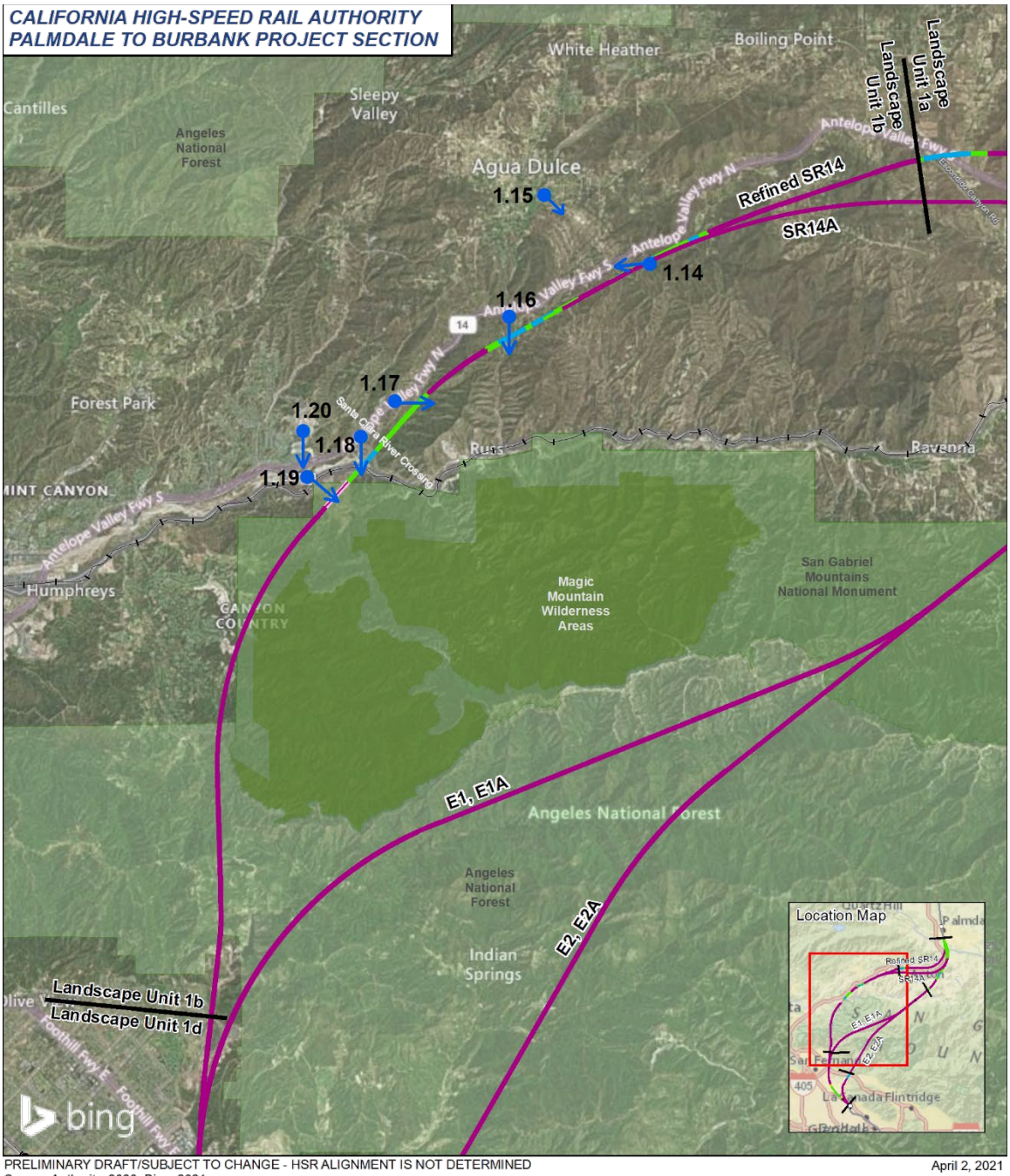


**Figure 3.16-3 Landscape Unit 1b: Central State Route 14 Corridor (Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternative Only)**

The overall existing visual quality in Landscape Unit 1b is moderate. This rating is based on the combination of positive scenic influences (i.e., the San Gabriel Mountains, ANF, and Vasquez Rocks), and fragmented human development. The appearance of the natural environment is mostly intact; however, transportation and some industrial infrastructure degrades portions of the open space and mountain views.

***SR14A Build Alternative***

Landscape Unit 1b extends from 1.5 miles south of the intersection of Escondido Canyon Road and Ward Road in Acton to the intersection of Pacoima Canyon Road and Gavina Avenue in the San Fernando Valley. Table 3.16-7 outlines the KVPs associated with Landscape Unit 1b for the SR14A Build Alternative. In Landscape Unit 1b, the SR14A Build Alternative would avoid two KVPs encountered by the Refined SR14 Build Alternative (KVP 1.14 and KVP 1.15) since the SR14A Build Alternative alignment would be along a tunnel at these locations.

**Table 3.16-7 Existing Visual Quality for Landscape Unit 1b, SR14A Build Alternative**

| Key Viewpoint | Natural Environment | Cultural Environment | Viewer Groups Present | Visual Quality Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| KVP 1.16: Agua Dulce Canyon Road | Mountainous | Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists | Moderate |
| KVP 1.17: State Route 14 | Mountainous; Shrubland vegetation | Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists | Moderately high |
| KVP 1.18: Soledad Canyon Road 1 | Mountainous; Shrubland vegetation | Mostly undeveloped; Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists | Moderately low |
| KVP 1.19: Soledad Canyon Road 2 | Mountainous; Shrubland vegetation | Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists | Moderately low |
| KVP 1.20 Sequoia Road | Mountainous; Shrubland vegetation | Transportation Infrastructure | Neighbors – Residents<br>Travelers – Motorists | Moderately low |

*Source: Authority, 2019*

The character, natural and cultural environment, viewer groups and visual quality ratings are the same as described above for Landscape Unit 1b for the Refined SR14 Build Alternative.

***E1/E1A/E2/E2A Build Alternatives***

Landscape Unit 1b is not applicable to the E1, E1A, E2, or E2A Build Alternatives.

**Landscape Unit 1c: San Gabriel Mountains/Angeles National Forest and Key Viewpoints**

***Refined SR14/SR14A Build Alternative***

Landscape Unit 1c is not applicable to the Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives.

***E1 Build Alternative***

Landscape Unit 1c extends from immediately west of Aliso Canyon Road to Via Santa Barbara for the E1 Build Alternative.

This landscape unit is characterized by large swaths of open space and mountainous areas, with little evidence of human interference beyond existing roadways. The natural environment is

characterized by a mountainous landscape. Scenic resources and aesthetically sensitive amenities include the ANF including SGMNM. Overall, natural harmony is moderately high given the views of the San Gabriel Mountains, ANF, and lack of major human interference (KVP 1.21).

The cultural environment consists of sporadic development, limited to either end of Landscape Unit 1c. Visible buildings are those associated with isolated residential communities. Transportation infrastructure is also visible throughout this landscape unit. Given the lack of unified development, cultural order is low.

Typical viewer groups include touring, motorist travelers and neighbors that are recreationists, residents, and workers in the scattered communities near both ends of Landscape Unit 1c.

Figure 3.16-4 shows Landscape Unit 1c and associated KVPs. Photos of KVPs are provided in Appendix 3.16-A (Figures 3.16-A-1 through 3.16-A-30). KVP 1.21: Arrastre Canyon Road (Figure 3.16-A-2) is the only KVP associated with Landscape Unit 1c for the E1 Build Alternative, as described in Table 3.16-8.

**Table 3.16-8 Existing Visual Quality for Landscape Unit 1c, E1 Build Alternative**

| Key Viewpoint | Natural Environment | Cultural Environment | Viewer Groups Present | Visual Quality Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| KVP 1.21: Arrastre Canyon Road | Mountainous; Shrubland vegetation; intermittent stream | Dirt road; Infrastructure in the distance | Neighbors – Residents, recreationists, and workers<br>Travelers – Motorists | High |

*Source: Authority, 2019*

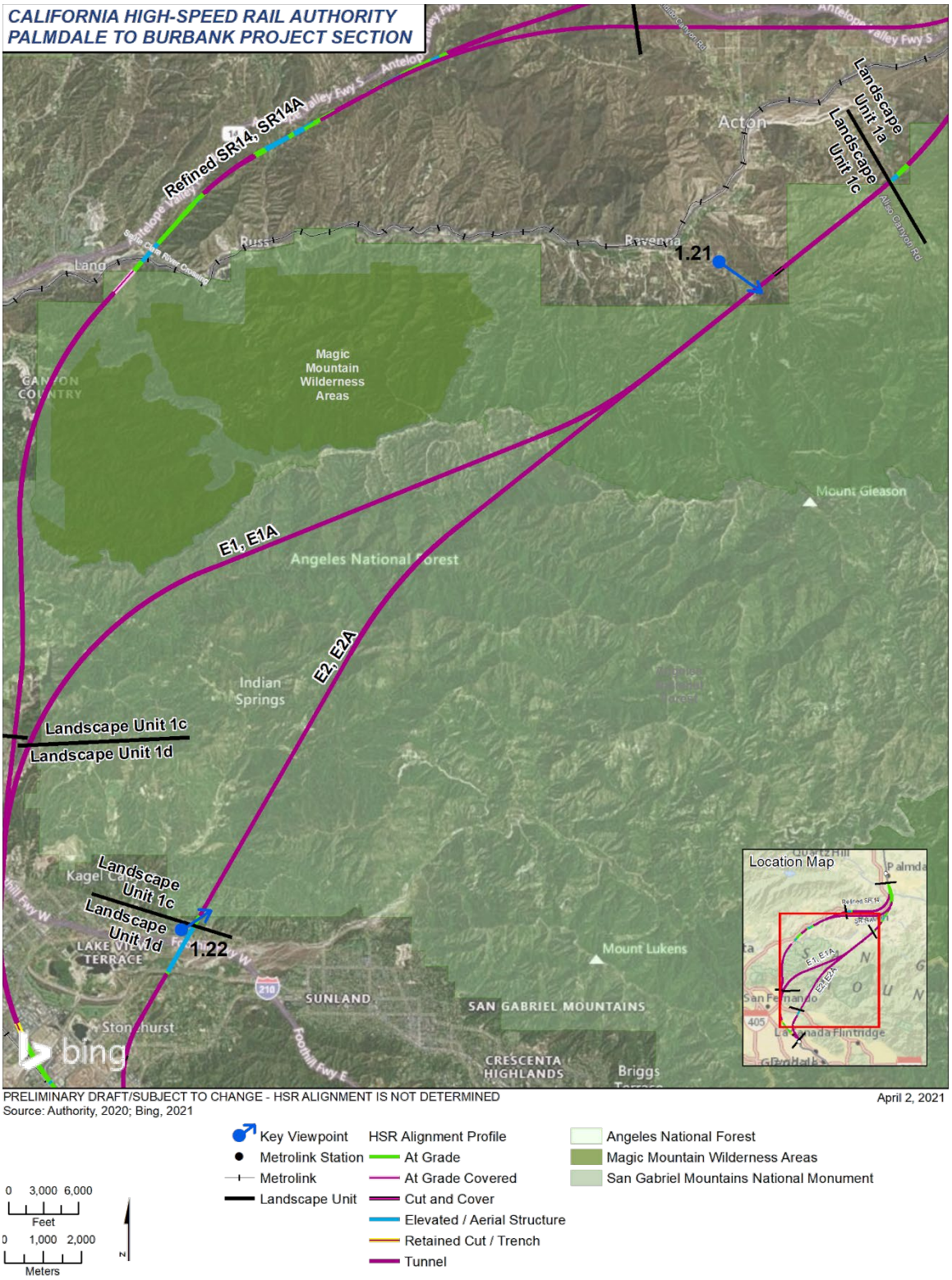


**Figure 3.16-4 Landscape Unit 1c: San Gabriel Mountains/Angeles National Forest (E1 and E2 Build Alternatives Only)**

The overall existing visual quality in Landscape Unit 1c is moderate. This rating is based on positive scenic influences, including the San Gabriel Mountains and ANF, juxtaposed with transportation infrastructure and scattered residential communities.

### *E1A Build Alternative*

The affected environment for the E1A Build Alternative in Landscape Unit 1c is the same as described above for the E1 Build Alternative.

### *E2 Build Alternative*

Landscape Unit 1c for the E2 Build Alternative extends from immediately west of Aliso Canyon Road to northeast of Kurt Street in the Lake View Terrace neighborhood of the city of Los Angeles.

This landscape unit is characterized by large swaths of open space and mountainous areas, recreational parks, and infrequent ranching facilities and commercial developments. Landscape Unit 1c encompasses portions of the ANF including SGMNM and unincorporated Los Angeles County.

The natural environment is characterized by a mountainous landscape. Scenic resources and aesthetically sensitive amenities include the ANF including SGMNM. Overall, natural harmony is moderately high given the views of the San Gabriel Mountains, ANF, and lack of major human interference (KVP 1.21).

The cultural environment consists of sporadic development, limited to either end of Landscape Unit 1c. At the southern end of the landscape unit, the cultural environment becomes more orderly as it transitions into a suburban Los Angeles community. Electrical transmission towers and lines reveal the interface of wildlands and development (KVP 1.22). Transportation infrastructure is also visible throughout this landscape unit. Cultural order is moderately low.

Typical viewer groups include touring, motorist travelers, and neighbors that are recreationists, residents, and workers in the scattered communities near both ends of Landscape Unit 1c.

Table 3.16-9 outlines the KVPs associated with Landscape Unit 1c for the E2 Build Alternative.

**Table 3.16-9 Existing Visual Quality for Landscape Unit 1c, E2 Build Alternative**

| Key Viewpoint | Natural Environment | Cultural Environment | Viewer Groups Present | Visual Quality Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| KVP 1.21: Arrastre Canyon Road | Mountainous; Shrubland vegetation; intermittent stream | Dirt road; Infrastructure in the distance | Travelers – Motorists | High |
| KVP 1.22: Lake View Terrace | Mountainous; open grassy field | Transmission towers | Neighbors – Residents, recreationists, and workers<br>Travelers – Motorists | Moderately High |

*Source: Authority, 2019*

The overall existing visual quality in Landscape Unit 1c is moderate. This rating is based on positive scenic influences, including the San Gabriel Mountains and ANF, juxtaposed with transportation infrastructure and scattered residential communities.

### *E2A Build Alternative*

The affected environment for the E2A Build Alternative in Landscape Unit 1c is the same as described above for the E2 Build Alternative.

### Landscape Unit 1d: Northeast San Fernando Valley

### *Refined SR14 Build Alternative*

Landscape Unit 1d extends from the intersection of Pacoima Canyon Road and Gavina Avenue in San Fernando to Winona Avenue in Burbank.

Landscape Unit 1d is an urban environment characterized by industrial, commercial, and medium- to high-density residential land uses. Development frequently obstructs distant mountain views. There is a strong geometric quality to individual views because of the highly developed and urban character. The San Gabriel Mountains add a dramatic backdrop to views to the north and east. Boulevard Mine is located amid a developed area within Landscape Unit 1d. Views of Boulevard Mine are partially obscured by intervening development (e.g., buildings, fencing) and landscaping. A berm planted with a row of trees shields the mine from viewers on San Fernando Road. Similarly, the edge of the mine site along Laurel Canyon Road is lined with densely planted trees and fencing, which shield the mine from view. The mine is also separated from Branford Street by chain-link fencing and some landscaping, though the landscaping is more dispersed and views toward the edge of the mine pit are relatively unobstructed. Because the mine pit is below grade, it is not visible to surrounding viewers who are at street level. Boulevard Mine has a characteristic deep depression surrounded by steep, eroding slopes. The high level of disturbance and mining equipment appear industrial in character.

As shown in KVPs 1.26 through 1.29, the natural environment is limited to distant views of the San Gabriel Mountains, where they are not obscured by urban development. As such, the appearance of the natural environment is interrupted and, in many cases, non-existent. Overall, natural harmony is low.

The cultural environment is highly urbanized; utility poles and power lines detract from the continuity of structural development and buildings lack ornamental or distinguishing design features (see KVPs 1.28 and 1.29). Overall, the built environment is not highly unified; therefore, cultural order is moderately low.

Typical viewer groups include travelers motorists and neighbors that are recreationists, industrial/commercial workers, and residents.

Figure 3.16-5 shows Landscape Unit 1d and associated KVPs. Photos of KVPs are provided in Appendix 3.16-A (Figure 3.16-A-1 through 3.16-A-30). Figure 3.16-5 shows the Build Alternative alignments near Landscape Unit 1d. Table 3.16-10 outlines the KVPs associated with Landscape Unit 1d for the SR14 Build Alternative.

**Table 3.16-10 Existing Visual Quality for Landscape Unit 1d, Refined SR14A Build Alternative**

| Key Viewpoint | Natural Environment | Cultural Environment | Viewer Groups Present | Visual Quality Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| KVP 1.26: Gladstone Street | Mountainous | Residential structures | Neighbors – Residents<br>Travelers - Motorists | Low |
| KVP 1.27: Hansen Spreading Grounds | Spreading grounds, sparse vegetation | Various structures in the distance; Utility structures | Travelers – Motorists<br>Neighbors – Workers | Low |

| Key Viewpoint | Natural Environment | Cultural Environment | Viewer Groups Present | Visual Quality Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| KVP 1.28: Sheldon Street | Mountains in the distance | Transportation Infrastructure; Residential and commercial structures | Neighbors – Residents and workers<br>Travelers – Motorists | Low |
| KVP 1.29: Sun Valley Park | Mountains in the distance | Transportation Infrastructure; residential and commercial structures | Travelers – Motorists<br>Neighbors – Workers | Low |

*Source: Authority, 2019*

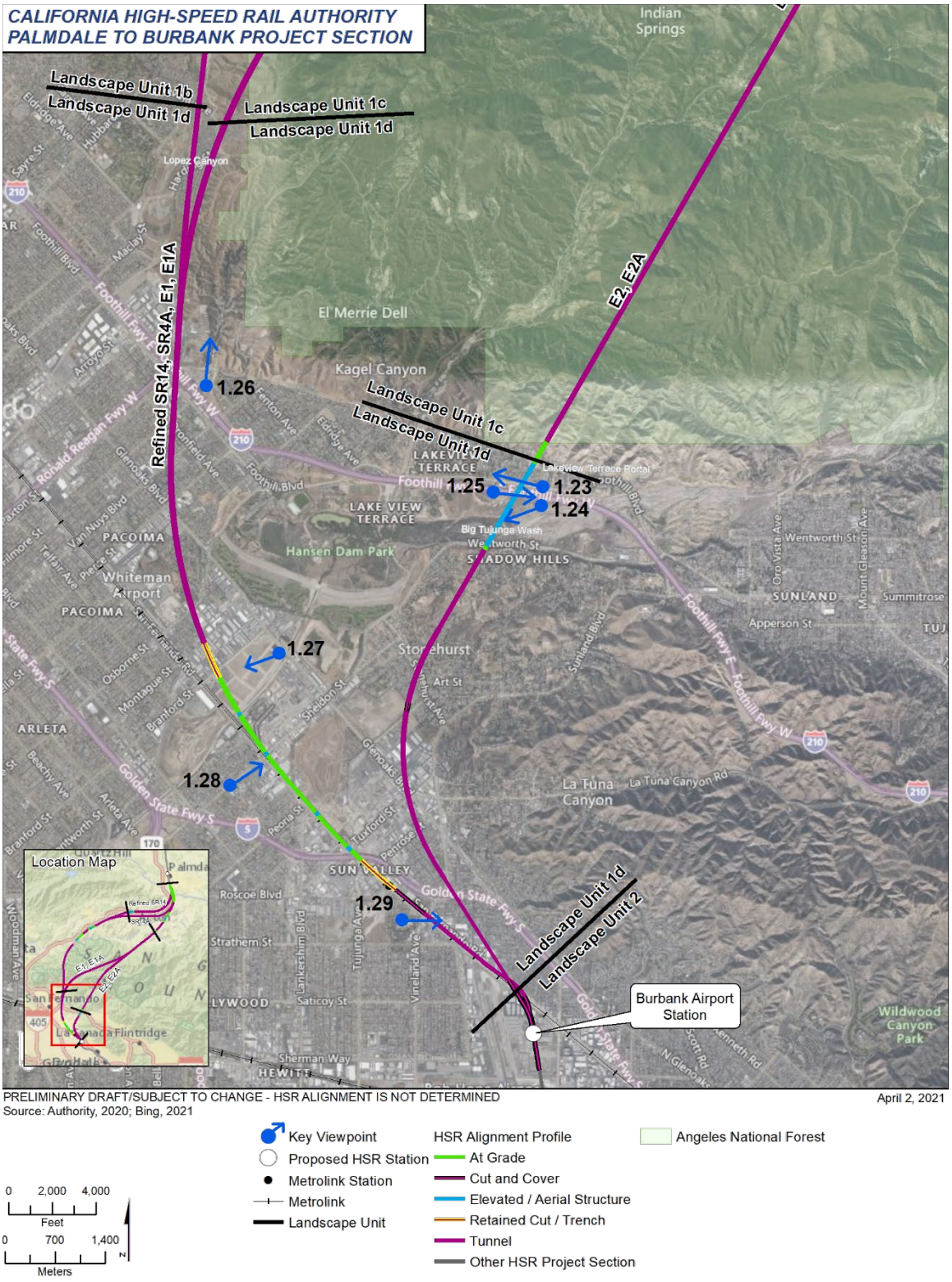


**Figure 3.16-5 Landscape Unit 1d: Northeast San Fernando Valley**

The overall existing visual quality in Landscape Unit 1d is moderately low, owing to sprawling development with some distant mountain views.

***SR14A/E1/E1A Build Alternatives***

The affected environment for the SR14A, E1 and E1A Build Alternatives in Landscape Unit 1d is the same as described above for the Refined SR14 Build Alternative.

***E2 Build Alternative***

Landscape Unit 1d extends from northeast of Kurt Street in Lake View Terrace to Lockheed Drive.

Landscape Unit 1d is characterized by industrial, commercial, and low- to medium-density residential land uses as well as open space and recreational parkland. Development frequently obstructs distant mountain views (KVP 1.23). There is a strong geometric quality to individual views because of the highly developed and urban character of Landscape Unit 1d. The San Gabriel Mountains add a dramatic backdrop to Landscape Unit 1d for views to the north and east.

As shown in KVP 1.25, the natural environment consists of views of the San Gabriel Mountains, where they are not obscured by urban development. Streets are landscaped with tall trees (KVP 1.23). Scenic resources include the Hansen Dam Recreation Center, Big Tujunga Wash, Hansen Dam Golf Course, and Hansen Dam Bike Path. Open space in this landscape unit, such as the Big Tujunga Wash, is often interrupted by features such as utility poles and power lines that somewhat degrade existing views. As such, natural harmony is moderately high.

The cultural environment is highly urbanized; however, utility poles and power lines detract from the continuity of structural development and buildings lack ornamental or distinguishing design features (KVPs 1.28and 1.29). This landscape unit is urbanized, but several utility poles and power lines detract from the continuity of structural development. Buildings lack ornamental or distinguishing design features. The CalMat Mine is located amid a developed area within Landscape Unit 1d. Public views of the CalMat Mine are limited, as the perimeter is surrounded by a tall berm, often planted with dense trees, and fencing. The CalMat Mine is characterized by a deep depression surrounded by steep, eroding slopes and the site is highly disturbed. Overall, the built environment is not highly unified, therefore, cultural order is moderately low.

Viewer groups include travelers that are both motorists and pedestrians along Foothill Boulevard and residential, commercial, and industrial neighbors.

Table 3.16-11 outlines the KVPs associated with Landscape Unit 1d for the E2 Build Alternative.

**Table 3.16-11 Existing Visual Quality for Landscape Unit 1d, E2 Build Alternative**

| Key Viewpoint | Natural Environment | Cultural Environment | Viewer Groups Present | Visual Quality Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| KVP 1.23: Lake View Terrace 2 | Flat; some undeveloped parcels | Mostly developed; Transportation infrastructure, Commercial and residential structures | Travelers – Motorists and pedestrians<br>Neighbors – Residents and workers | Moderate |
| KVP 1.24: Big Tujunga Wash | Shrubland vegetation; | Utility Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists and pedestrians<br>Neighbors – Residents and workers | Moderately high |

| Key Viewpoint | Natural Environment | Cultural Environment | Viewer Groups Present | Visual Quality Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| KVP 1.25 I-210 | Scattered trees; Mountains in the distance | Transportation Infrastructure | Travelers – Motorists and pedestrians | Moderately low |

*Source: Authority, 2019*

The overall existing visual quality in Landscape Unit 1d is moderately low, owing to sprawling development with distant mountain views and other scenic elements.

***E2A Build Alternative***

The affected environment for the E2A Build Alternative in Landscape Unit 1d is the same as described above for the E2 Build Alternative.

### *3.16.5.4 Landscape Unit 2: Burbank Subsection*

***All Six Build Alternatives***

Landscape Unit 2, which extends from Lockheed Drive to Winona Avenue in Burbank, includes the Burbank Airport Station.

Burbank's visual character includes an urban collection of residential, commercial, and industrial neighborhoods set against the backdrop of mountainous natural open space areas.

The natural environment comprises scenic views of the Verdugo Mountains to the northeast, Santa Susana Mountains to the northwest, and Santa Monica Mountains to the south. Scenic resources within Burbank include public parks and open space, such as Robert Gross Park and McCambridge Recreation Center. Landscape Unit 2 is highly urbanized and little of the natural environment remains intact. Ornamental landscaping and views of the surrounding mountainous areas provide some natural elements to this landscape unit. However, urban development often obscures views of the nearby mountains, and much of the ornamental landscaping visible is irregularly placed and often overgrown. Thus, natural harmony is moderately low.

The cultural environment is highly urbanized and composed of buildings and infrastructure. A mix of commercial, light industrial, airport, railroad, and residential land uses add a strong geometric quality to individual views. The architecture of historic structures are also scenic resources that represent aspects of the city's history. Burbank's residential, commercial, and industrial neighborhoods contain numerous examples of historic architectural styles including Craftsman, Colonial, Mediterranean, Prairie, Googie, Art Deco, and Mission Revival. The continuity of Landscape Unit 2 is disjointed due to the irregular, nonpatterned mixture of development. Several utility poles and power lines are visible throughout the landscape unit and appear disorderly, obscuring views. The built environment in other portions of this landscape unit does appear orderly. Given the mix of disorderly and orderly patterns of development, cultural order is moderate.

Typical viewer groups include residents, industrial and commercial neighbors, and travelers that are motorists, Metrolink passengers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Figure 3.16-6 shows Landscape Unit 2 and the associated KVP. Photos of KVPs are provided in Appendix 3.16-A (Figures 3.16-A-1 through 3.16-A-30). KVP 2.1: San Fernando Road (Figure 3.16-A-30) is the only KVP associated with Landscape Unit 2 for the six Build Alternatives and is described in Table 3.16-12.

**Table 3.16-12 Existing Visual Quality for Landscape Unit 2, All Six Build Alternatives**

| Key Viewpoint | Natural Environment | Cultural Environment | Viewer Groups Present | Visual Quality Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| KVP 2.1: San Fernando Road | Ornamental trees | Transportation Infrastructure; | Travelers – Motorists, Metrolink passengers, bicyclists, pedestrians<br>Neighbors – Residents and workers | Moderate |

*Source: Authority, 2019*

The overall existing visual quality in Landscape Unit 2 is moderate. This rating is based on positive scenic influences, such as ornamental landscaping, views of the surrounding mountains, and portions of orderly and consistent development. Conflicting with these interesting attributes is the fact that the overall landscape unit lacks continuity and coherence due to the lack of consistent character and architectural styling.


**Figure 3.16-6 Landscape Unit 2: Burbank Subsection**

## 3.16.6 Environmental Consequences

### *3.16.6.1 Overview*

This section evaluates how the No Project Alternative and six Build Alternatives would affect aesthetics and visual quality. The impacts of the six Build Alternatives are described and organized in Sections 3.16.6.3 through 3.16.6.5 and address temporary construction impacts and permanent construction/operations impacts separately for the Refined SR14, SR14A, E1, E1A, E2, and E2A Build Alternatives within each landscape unit. Since construction of the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section Build Alternatives would introduce infrastructure that would result in permanent changes to visual quality, permanent construction impacts are evaluated along with operations impacts.

- **Temporary Construction Impacts**
  - Impact AVQ#1: Temporary Construction Impacts on Existing Visual Quality.
  - Impact AVQ#2: Temporary Construction Impacts from Light and Glare.
  - Impact AVQ#3: Temporary Construction Impacts on Scenic Vistas and Drives.
- **Permanent Construction and Operations Impacts**
  - Impact AVQ#4: Permanent Construction Impacts on Visual Quality.
  - Impact AVQ#5: Permanent Impacts from Operations.

### *3.16.6.2 No Project Alternative*

The No Project Alternative assumes that the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section would not be built. The No Project Alternative is based on a review of all city and county general plans, regional transportation plans for all modes of transportation, and agency-provided lists of pending and approved projects within Los Angeles County. In assessing future conditions, it was assumed that all currently known, programmed, and funded improvements to the intercity transportation system (highway, rail, and transit) and reasonably foreseeable local development projects (with funding sources already identified) would be developed as planned by 2040. Appendix 3.19-A provides a full cumulative projects list.

Planned growth in Los Angeles County would add residential and commercial developments and associated infrastructure to the viewed landscape. The No Project Alternative would include future development projects and policies in city and county general plans applicable to the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section region. These include instances of suburban expansion and development in existing urban areas, which would influence the future visual character of the RSA. Visual measures, such as landscaping, would be incorporated into new development and into roadway and infrastructure projects to minimize visual impacts. The county as well as cities in the region would evaluate the aesthetic effects of projects in the course of environmental review and would require that projects incorporate measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse visual changes.

Due to land use restrictions in the ANF including SGMNM, the No Project Alternative would not result in development and would avoid visual impacts within the ANF including SGMNM. Local and regional growth management and land use plans encourage infill and higher-density development in urban areas and concentration of future land uses such as residential and commercial around transit corridors, which would help reduce the conversion of undeveloped lands in general.

### *3.16.6.3 Build Alternatives*

The following sections discuss construction activities with potential for temporary impacts on aesthetics and visual quality; construction impacts resulting from permanent, physical changes of the landscape by project facilities; and permanent operations impacts resulting from ongoing activities of the California HSR System.

The following analysis relies on visual simulations to demonstrate changes in visual quality and existing visual character resulting from the six Build Alternatives within each landscape unit for each Build Alternative. The analysis is arranged by Build Alternative, presenting all impact discussions and CEQA conclusions for a given Build Alternative before discussing the next Build Alternative. Table 3.16-13 summarizes the characteristics of the typical HSR components and their potential to affect the aesthetic environment (refer to Section 2.3 in Chapter 2, Alternatives, for further discussion on individual components of the California HSR System). The Authority would coordinate and collaborate with local jurisdictions, residents, and stakeholders to determine the applicable local design guidelines for mitigation and the measures that are most context appropriate. Mitigation measures (see Section 3.16.7) would be part of the final design process and specified to the HSR design-builder for construction.

**Table 3.16-13 Characteristics of Typical High-Speed Rail Components**

| Project Component | Characteristics |
|---|---|
| At-Grade Guideways | At-grade guideways involve building HSR track and associated facilities on the existing ground surface. At-grade tracks may also involve rail construction on fill (slightly elevated) or in cut (slightly below existing ground). At-grade guideways would be visible from surrounding areas. |
| Elevated Guideways and Associated Structures (piers/columns, straddle bents) | Elevated guideways involve building HSR track and associated facilities on bridges and viaduct that would be above or over the existing ground surface. As such, elevated guideways would be visible from surrounding areas. Specific elements of elevated guideways include piers, which are columns holding up the guideway, and straddle bents, which are supports made of two columns that support a beam on which the guideway sits. These often would be the most visible project components. The aboveground height of the elevated guideways would range between approximately 30 and 80 feet above the existing ground level. The final design process would include coordination with local jurisdictions and take into consideration all applicable design guidelines as part of a collaborative process related to construction of the HSR stations. Associated structures would be designed to be attractive architectural elements or features that would add visual interest to the streetscapes near them. |
| Overhead Catenary System (OCS) | The OCS would consist of electrical wires and supporting poles above the rail which provide power to the trainsets. When associated with at-grade and elevated guideways, the OCS would be visible from surrounding areas but would be the typical height for at-grade track alignments. |
| Street Modifications | Street-widening relocations would involve the removal of buildings, trees, and other vegetation. In some locations and situations, trees and other vegetation would be replanted with similar plants to restore visual quality. |
| New Road Overcrossings (Retained Fill Guideways) and Undercrossings | New overcrossings of local roads, including embankments and/or retaining walls, and bridge structures, would be needed to provide connectivity over (or under) the HSR right-of-way. These would occur in both urban and rural contexts. These structures can introduce a prominent urban element into rural settings, and a prominent, utilitarian concrete feature into urban streetscapes that may require aesthetic design treatment to minimize visual impacts. Depending on the height and location of the retained fill, views could be blocked. The walls of retained fill also could be targets for graffiti. Retaining walls could incorporate textured surfaces and artistic patterns that discourage graffiti and add visual interest to the landscape. The final design process would include coordination with local jurisdictions and take into consideration all applicable design guidelines as part of a collaborative process. |

| Project Component | Characteristics |
|---|---|
| HSR Stations | Depending on their size, bulk, and whether they would be below ground surface, at grade, or elevated, HSR stations could block views, cast shadows, or add built features to the landscape. Elevated HSR stations would generally be more visible than at-grade stations. HSR stations would be designed to be aesthetically and architecturally compatible with their surrounding areas and would incorporate the Authority's Urban Design Guidelines (Authority 2011). The final design process would include coordination with local jurisdictions and take into consideration all applicable design guidelines as part of a collaborative process so that, during design, the HSR stations would undergo appropriate design review to incorporate local design elements. |
| Intermediate Windows and Adits | Adits are deep access points for construction and tunnel ventilation segmentation purposes, built either as an inclined access tunnel or with a vertical shaft, which provide access, water, power, ventilation, and other support during construction. Intermediate windows are relatively shallow (<100 feet deep) vertical construction access points; after construction is complete, a small structure for permanent access, and possibly ventilation equipment, would remain at the surface. |
| Tunnel Portals | Tunnel portals may require 6.5 to 7 acres of usable site area. Access roads to portals would be needed for construction access and for tunnel maintenance and emergency access during operations. Tunnel portal access roads would follow existing drainage courses or existing roads to the extent possible. Portals would be furnished with a series of infrastructure elements related to tunnel ventilation, noise mitigation, traction power, emergency and rescue facilities, firefighting, communications, and rock fall and debris containment, among others. |
| Lighting | Train lighting from HSR train headlights would be temporary and directed along the guideway, which should not cause glare that would affect nighttime views. If not properly designed and shielded, project-related lighting could create glare, increase the ambient light levels in nearby areas, and increase skyglow, which can adversely affect nighttime star viewing. This would be true during construction and operations of the California HSR System. Design-related measures, such as shielding and directing lights, would be used where appropriate to reduce glare while providing adequate lighting for safety and security. |
| Building Removal | Removal of existing buildings can improve or detract from visual settings depending on building condition, style, scale, and color. Areas where buildings would be removed would be limited to areas that contain project components or would be revegetated to blend in with nearby areas. |
| Vegetation Removal | Removal of vegetation can open up new scenic views or, conversely, expose unattractive views, such as additional hard surfaces. When possible, the existing vegetation would be preserved, vegetation replanted, trees replaced, and, where appropriate, temporary vegetative screens used to minimize effects of vegetation removal prior to revegetation. |
| Retaining Walls | A retaining wall can be used to stabilize a steep cut in a hillside or in pairs to hold earth and rock between them (retained fill) or as bridge abutments. Retaining walls are generally concrete and may include surface design treatments, such as patterns, texture, or coloring. |
| Sound Walls | Trains and relocated roadway traffic would increase noise levels, which in turn would warrant the construction of noise walls. While the noise wall placements, both at grade and elevated, are not finally determined yet, the walls would block views, could create places for unwanted graffiti, and could become unattractive. Noise walls can be made from transparent materials or include surface design enhancements to blend with the area's visual context. Design considerations would be made during final design stages. |

| Project Component | Characteristics |
|---|---|
| Traction Power Substations (TPSS) | The TPSSs would be installed at approximately 30-mile intervals. The TPSSs would be approximately 0.73 acre in area. Where appropriate, TPSSs would be screened from public view by landscaping and a wall or fence. |
| Switching Stations | Switching stations would be required at approximately 15-mile intervals, midway between the TPSSs. These stations would be approximately 0.22 acre in area. Where appropriate, switching stations would be screened from public view by landscaping and a wall or fence. |
| Paralleling Stations | Paralleling stations would be installed at approximately 5-mile intervals. These stations would be approximately 0.18 acre in area. Where appropriate, switching stations would be screened from public view by landscaping and a wall or fence. |
| Communication Towers | Communication towers could be co-located with TPSSs and would be approximately 100 feet in height and 6 feet in diameter. Their height would make them visually prominent. |

*Source: Authority, 2019*
HSR = high-speed train
OCS = overhead catenary system
TPSS = traction power substation
< = less than

The evaluation considers the intensity of particular project effects in the context of the landscape units. The Palmdale to Burbank Project Section's effects on a landscape unit are the result of introducing permanent infrastructure, particularly the portions with elevated structures, which (because of their size) would be seen from many view corridors, thus affecting the local context. At the Burbank Airport Station, all six Build Alternatives would have the ability to improve visual quality in the Burbank urban center and could influence the design character of future development in the area.

### *3.16.6.4 Temporary Construction Impacts*

#### Landscape Unit 1: Central Subsection

##### *Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives*

The Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives in Landscape Unit 1 would be constructed as a series of tunnels (twin-bored), viaducts (elevated tracks), and at-grade sections. Construction activities would result in substantial visual disturbance in all three Landscape Units (1a, 1b, 1d). The construction schedule would require several simultaneous activities. Pre- and early construction activities would include preparation and clearing of the right-of-way; demolition of existing structures on acquired right-of-way; site preparation; materials and equipment deliveries; and potentially establishing one or more concrete batch plants that would require partial or total road and lane closures, detours (vehicular and pedestrian), and partial or limited vehicle access on nearby roads, all of which would result in visual clutter that would appear disorderly. Major construction activities like utility relocation, demolition, site and staging area preparation, drilling of piles, aerial structures, tunneling (including tunnel portals), and construction of tracks would be highly visually intrusive.

During construction, spoils would be transported to both the Vulcan Mine and Boulevard Mine via conveyor belt systems installed along and within the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section alignment. The conveyor belt systems would appear highly industrial in nature; however, they would be visually compatible with the other industrial features in the area. Short-term aesthetic impacts would occur during construction as tunnel spoils would at times be visible traveling along the conveyor belt to the Vulcan and Boulevard Mines.

##### *E1 and E1A Build Alternatives*

Construction activities along the E1 and E1A Build Alternatives would follow conventional construction methods in Landscape Units 1a and 1d. In Landscape Unit 1, the E1 Build

Alternative would pass through a series of tunnels (twin-bored), viaducts (elevated tracks), and at-grade sections. Construction activities would cause substantial visual disturbance in Landscape Unit 1 along the E1 Build Alternative. These activities would be highly visible to the residents, workers, recreationists and motorists in Landscape Unit 1a and Landscape Unit 1d. Construction activities in Landscape Unit 1b would involve drilling of the tunnel, which would affect recreationists visiting the area. However, these impacts would be temporary and disturbed areas would be remediated after completion of construction. The construction schedule would require several simultaneous activities. Pre- and early construction activities would include preparation and clearing of right-of-way; demolition of existing structures on acquired right-of-way; site preparation; materials and equipment deliveries; and the potential establishment of one or more concrete batch plants requiring partial or total road and lane closures, detours (vehicular and pedestrian) and partial/limited vehicle access on nearby roads resulting in visual clutter that would appear disorderly. Major construction activities such as utility relocation, demolition, site and staging area preparation, drilling of piles, construction of aerial structures, tunneling (including tunnel portals), and construction of tracks would be highly visually intrusive.

During construction, spoils would be transported to Boulevard Mine via a conveyor belt system installed along the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section alignment (in Landscape Unit 1d). The conveyor belt system would appear highly industrial in nature but would be visually compatible with the existing conveyor belt infrastructure already in place. Short-term aesthetic impacts would occur during construction because tunnel spoils would at times be visible traveling along the conveyor belt to Boulevard Mine.

#### *E2 and E2A Build Alternatives*

The E2 and E2A Build Alternatives in Landscape Unit 1 would cross through a series of tunnels (twin-bored), viaducts (elevated tracks), cut-and-cover tunnel, and at-grade sections. The construction schedule would require several simultaneous activities that would disrupt the existing visual character. Pre- and early construction activities would include preparation and clearing of the right-of-way; demolition of built conditions on acquired right-of-way; site preparation; materials and equipment deliveries; and the potential establishment of one or more concrete batch plants requiring partial or total road and lane closures, detours (vehicular and pedestrian), and partial/limited vehicle access on nearby roads, all of which would contribute to visual disruption. Major construction activities such as utility relocation, demolition, site and staging area preparation, drilling of piles, aerial structure, tunneling (including tunnel portals), and construction of tracks would be highly visually intrusive.

Construction activities would result in substantial visual disturbance in Landscape Units 1a and 1d; however, because construction of the E2 Build Alternative in Landscape Unit 1c would be largely below ground, visual disturbance would be limited. Staging areas for tunnel drilling underneath the ANF in Landscape Unit 1c would temporarily deplete the visual surrounding. However, these impacts would be minimal and disturbed areas would be remediated after completion of construction. Construction disturbances would be more noticeable in Landscape Unit 1d, where typical viewers include residents and workers, along with the motorists. Disordered aggregations of stored material and equipment in the staging areas would introduce major visual changes to their immediate surroundings. The construction would displace land uses, relocate utilities, and increase traffic due to trucks hauling the spoils from the site, consequently negatively affecting the visual character of the setting. Lighting for nighttime construction would substantially disturb nearby residents and motorists.

### Landscape Unit 2

#### *All Six Build Alternatives*

Each of the six Build Alternatives in Landscape Unit 2 would cross through a series of tunnels (twin-bored), cut-and-cover, and at-grade sections. Construction activities would result in substantial visual disturbance in Landscape Unit 2. The construction schedule would require several simultaneous activities. Pre- and early construction activities would include preparation and clearing of the right-of-way, demolition of built conditions on acquired right-of-way, site

preparation, materials and equipment deliveries, and the potential establishment of one or more concrete batch plants requiring partial or total road and lane closures, detours (vehicular and pedestrian), and partial/limited vehicle access on nearby roads, all of which would contribute to visual disruption. Major construction activities like utility relocation, demolition, site and staging area preparation, drilling of piles, aerial structure, tunneling (including tunnel portals), and construction of tracks would be highly visually intrusive.

These disturbances would be highly noticeable to viewers throughout Landscape Unit 2. The typical viewers would include residents and workers, as well as motorists. The most significant visual impacts would be observed around the Burbank Airport Station, which would primarily be located below ground, with surface parking areas comprising the only aboveground station component. Construction activities would cause substantial visual disturbance in Landscape Unit 3, including earth preparation, railbed construction, associated truck hauling, and other major material and equipment storage and movement. These activities would be highly visible. However, these impacts would be temporary and disturbed areas would be remediated after completion of construction.

Staging areas would introduce major visual changes to their immediate surroundings, with unsightly, visually disordered aggregations of stored material and equipment. In addition, concrete batch plants for production of concrete used in construction would be introduced within the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section right-of-way for the duration of construction. Because of their lengthy period of use, these impacts would be substantial if located near high-sensitivity viewers, such as residents. Lighting for nighttime construction would substantially disturb nearby residents and motorists. Together, construction activities would have a temporary adverse impact on visual quality.

**Impact AVQ#1: Temporary Construction Impacts on Existing Visual Quality.**

***Landscape Unit 1***

**Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives**

The construction disturbances would be more noticeable in Landscape Unit 1d for the Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives as viewers include residents and workers, along with motorists. While motorists with a short exposure and low viewer awareness would be less sensitive to the construction around them, residents as well as recreational neighbors with a high viewer exposure and awareness would be highly sensitive to the construction activities. Industrial and commercial neighbors located throughout this landscape unit, particularly near San Fernando Road, would have moderately low viewer sensitivity and viewer awareness because their primary focus is work. The most pronounced changes to natural visual resources would also be observed around Una Lake, Red Rover Mine Road, ANF, the PCT area, Vasquez Rocks area, and Santa Clara River. Natural resources in Landscape Unit 1b would be affected by the tunnel drilling in areas where tunnel portals would be constructed to transition from above- and below-ground sections of the alignment. Construction of viaducts to carry the alignment above ground would also be highly visually intrusive. Impacts from construction disturbance would be temporary and disturbed areas would be remediated after completion of construction, though construction of large-scale structures (e.g., tunnel portals and overcrossings) would remain as permanent construction impacts on the landscape.

Clearing, earthmoving, and erection of project facilities would introduce new lines, forms, and colors that would typically contrast with the existing landscape forms and patterns in urban and rural areas, causing a decrease in the visual quality of most existing views. This would be noticeable in rural areas of Landscape Unit 1, where largely pastoral and/or natural scenes would be disturbed by intensive construction activities, causing a reduction of visual quality by one to two levels depending on the setting. Most construction activities would cease within 1 to 2 years at a given location. The exception to this would be concrete batch plants at tunnel portals used to fabricate project components and some construction laydown areas that would be used for 5 or more years.

Adits (i.e., tunnel access shafts) would be used during construction to facilitate access by construction equipment. Temporary construction staging areas (CSA) associated with the adits would introduce major visual changes to their immediate surroundings, with unsightly, visually disordered aggregations of stored material and equipment. The Refined SR14 Build Alternative has three adit options. The first option would be located within the ANF along little Tujunga Canyon Road (Refined SR14-A1). The second and third options would be located just south of the Pacoima Dam, just outside the ANF in developed residential areas (Refined SR14-A2 and Refined SR14-A3). Refined SR14-A1 would contrast with the high natural harmony of its proposed location, which would be visible to both motorists along Little Tujunga Canyon Road with lower viewer sensitivity and recreational viewers with high viewer sensitivity, thereby causing an adverse change in visual quality. The Refined SR14-A2 and Refined SR14-A3 would result in a neutral change in visual quality, owing to their proximity to developed areas.

Intermediate window options Refined SR14-W1 and Refined SR14-W2 would be located north and south, respectively, of the I-210 and SR 118 intersection, in an area dominated by existing transportation infrastructure, with typical viewers including nearby residents, commercial and industrial workers, pedestrians, and motorists. However, the industrial visual character of intermediate windows would not contrast with the existing setting and would not be noticeable to nearby viewers, thus, the change in visual quality would be neutral.

Together, construction activities would have a temporary adverse impact on visual quality in Landscape Unit 1 for the Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives

**E1 and E1A Build Alternatives**

For the E1 and E1A Build Alternatives, impacts to visual quality in Landscape Unit 1 would vary. Similar to the Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives, construction disturbances would be more noticeable in Landscape Unit 1d for the E1 and E1A Build Alternatives. Typical viewers would also include residents, recreational viewers, workers, and motorists. Residents as well as recreational neighbors with a high viewer exposure and awareness would be highly sensitive to construction activities, whereas industrial and commercial neighbors located throughout the landscape unit would have moderately low viewer sensitivity and viewer awareness because their primary focus is work. Motorists would be less sensitive to construction activities due to having short exposure and low viewer awareness. While project features would be in contrast to the natural resources around some KVPs in Landscape Unit 1a, and would have an adverse effect on visual quality to viewer groups that include commuting/touring motorists as well as rural residents with high viewer sensitivity, in Landscape Unit 1d (and parts of Landscape Unit 1a), other project changes would not contrast with cultural order and would, in some cases, make the scene more orderly.

The most significant change to natural harmony would occur around the Una Lake area (at-grade tracks) and Foreston Drive in unincorporated Los Angeles County (at-grade tracks). The changes to natural harmony would be a substantial impact on visual quality because they would be located near high-sensitivity viewers, such as recreationists or residents. Lighting for nighttime construction would substantially disturb nearby residents and motorists.

Overall, the existing cultural order would not change as the many structures—including buildings, roadways, transmission poles, and power lines—are already highly visible in existing views. While the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section would have moderate project coherence in Landscape Unit 1c, it would have high project coherence in Landscape Units 1a and 1d, as the addition of the HSR infrastructure would contribute to existing urban character and somewhat unify the sprawling development that is of low visual quality. Overall changes in visual quality within Landscape Unit 1 for the E1 Build Alternative would be neutral. Most construction activities would cease within 1 to 2 years at any given location. The exception to this would be the concrete batch plants used to fabricate project components and some construction laydown areas that would be used for up to 5 years.

Adits (i.e., tunnel access shafts) would be used during construction to facilitate access by construction equipment. Temporary CSAs associated with the adits would introduce major visual changes to their immediate surroundings, with unsightly, visually disordered aggregations of stored material and equipment. The E1 Build Alternative has two options for adits. Both options are located within the ANF along little Tujunga Canyon Road (E1-A1 and E1-A2). During construction, each adit option would introduce adverse changes in existing visual quality. A small permanent structure and associated power facilities for emergency egress, maintenance, and ventilation equipment would remain at the selected adit locations. The E1-A1 and E1-A2 adit options would be visible to motorists along Little Tujunga Canyon Road with lower viewer sensitivity and to recreational viewers with high viewer sensitivity, and would contrast with the high natural harmony of their proposed locations, thereby causing a reduction of the existing visual quality.

Intermediate window option E1-W1 located north of Arrastre Canyon Road in a primarily undeveloped area would be visible to motorists with lower viewer sensitivity and would result in a reduction in the visual quality due to the contrasting industrial visual character with the natural harmony of the area.

Intermediate window options E1-W2a and E1-W2b would be located north or south, respectively, of the I-210 and SR 118 intersection, in an area dominated by transportation infrastructure. Typical viewers would include nearby residents, commercial and industrial workers, pedestrians, and motorists. The industrial visual character of intermediate windows would not contrast with the existing setting and would not be expected to be noticed by viewers, there would be no change in visual quality.

Together, construction activities would have a temporary adverse impact on visual quality in Landscape Unit 1 for the E1 and E1A Build Alternatives.

**E2 and E2A Build Alternatives**

Clearing, earthmoving, and erection of project facilities would introduce new lines, forms, and colors that would cause highly noticeable visual disturbances in the urban areas. Intensive construction activities would disturb residential areas with highly sensitive viewers, causing a reduction in the visual quality in Landscape Unit 1 by one to two levels depending on the setting. Because the E2 and E2A Build Alternatives would typically cross through commercial and industrial urban areas, visual impacts from construction of the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section would be less noticeable and would not decrease the visual quality of the landscape for typical viewer groups in these areas, including commercial and industrial workers, pedestrians, and motorists. Most construction activities would cease within 1 to 2 years at any given location. The exception to this would be concrete batch plants for fabricating project components and some construction laydown areas, which would be active for up to 5 years.

The selected adit option (i.e., tunnel access shaft) would be used during construction to facilitate access by construction equipment. Temporary CSAs associated with adits would introduce major visual changes to their immediate surroundings, with unsightly, visually disordered aggregations of stored material and equipment. The E2 Build Alternative includes two options for adits, one of which would be selected. Both options would be located within the ANF along Little Tujunga Canyon Road (E2-A1 and E2-A2). During construction, each adit option would reduce the existing visual quality.

The first intermediate window option, E2-W1, would be located in a relatively undeveloped area and would contrast with the natural harmony of the area. Conversely, E2-W2 would be located at the current site of the CalMat Mine and would be compatible with the industrial visual character of the area.

Together, construction activities would have a temporary adverse impact on visual quality in Landscape Unit 1 for the E2 and E2A Build Alternatives.

### *Landscape Unit 2*

#### All Six Build Alternatives

During construction activities such as clearing, earthmoving, and erection of project facilities, visual disruptions would increase noticeably for viewer groups in both urban and residential areas, including residents, workers, recreationists, and motorists, and would cause a reduction in the visual quality of Landscape Unit 2 by one to two levels. Significant visual impacts from construction activities would be observed around the Burbank Airport Station and associated surface parking facilities. Most construction activities would cease within 1 to 2 years at any given location along the alignment, and within approximately 3 years at the Burbank Airport Station site. The exception to this would be concrete batch plants for fabricating project components and some construction laydown areas that would be used for up to 5 years. Therefore, construction activities would have a temporary adverse impact on visual quality in Landscape Unit 2 for each of the six Build Alternatives.

#### CEQA Conclusion

Construction activities would contrast with the generally high natural harmony in Landscape Unit 1, which would temporarily decrease the overall visual quality rating of Landscape Unit 1 by one or more levels. Project construction would also decrease the overall visual quality of Landscape Unit 2 by one or more levels because construction activities would be highly visible and would result in substantial visual disturbance. Combined with overall moderate viewer sensitivity, the effect of construction on existing visual quality in Landscape Unit 1 and Landscape Unit 2 would be significant under CEQA before the consideration of mitigation.

For the significant impacts in Landscape Unit 1 and Landscape Unit 2, AVQ-MM#1 will require the contractor to implement measures to minimize construction-related disruption to aesthetics and visual quality, including activities such as minimizing pre-construction clearing, limiting building removal, post-construction regrading, and avoiding locating CSAs within 500 feet of existing residential neighborhoods, recreational areas, and other sensitive land uses. These measures would substantially reduce the noticeability of the construction activities for project neighbors. The contractor will be required to prepare a technical memorandum prior to construction identifying how the measures will be implemented to reduce impacts to a less than significant level. This technical memorandum will be reviewed and approved by the Authority. With the implementation of AVQ-MM#1, and because construction activities will be temporary in duration, construction impacts on existing visual quality would avoid substantial degradation of visual quality in non-urbanized areas or conflicts with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality in urbanized areas. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant for each of the six Build Alternatives.

**Impact AVQ#2: Temporary Construction Impacts from Light and Glare.**

Construction of the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section would create new sources of light and glare that may temporarily affect nighttime views. Lighting associated with nighttime construction would increase ambient light, which may adversely affect nighttime views.

### *Landscape Unit 1*

#### All Six Build Alternatives

In Landscape Unit 1, lighting may be an annoyance for some at the isolated and sporadic rural residential developments along the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section; it may be of more pervasive annoyance in the more dense and urban residential and commercial developments along the alignment. Construction would occur at night only intermittently over the construction period. Construction at any given location would typically last 1 to 2 years, although construction activities at concrete batch plants and some construction laydown areas would last for up to 5 years.

### *Landscape Unit 2*

**All Six Build Alternatives**

In Landscape Unit 2, lighting may be an annoyance in urban areas along the alignment. Construction would occur only intermittently at night throughout the construction period. Construction at any given location would typically last 1 to 2 years, although construction activities at concrete batch plants and some construction laydown areas would last for up to 5 years.

### *CEQA Conclusion*

Construction light and glare would be an annoyance to viewers in Landscape Unit 1 and Landscape Unit 2, reducing the visual quality rating by one or more levels depending upon the setting. Combined with an overall viewer sensitivity rating of moderate, the effect of construction light and glare in Landscape Unit 1 and Landscape Unit 2 would be significant under CEQA before the consideration of mitigation.

AVQ-MM#2 will require nighttime construction lighting to be shielded and directed downward in such a manner to minimize light that falls outside the construction site boundaries. The contractor will be required to prepare a technical memorandum prior to construction verifying how nighttime lighting would be shielded and directed downward to reduce impacts. Shielding nighttime construction lighting would minimize the light and glare within developed areas at nighttime, reducing this impact to less than significant.

**Impact AVQ#3: Temporary Construction Impacts on Scenic Vistas and Drives.**

### *Landscape Unit 1*

**All Six Build Alternatives**

As indicated in Section 3.16.5, the *Antelope Valley Area Plan: Town and County Scenic Drives Map* (Los Angeles County 2015a) and the *San Gabriel/Verdugo Mountains Scenic Preservation Specific Plan* (City of Los Angeles 2003) consider several roadways in the vicinity of each of the Build Alternatives to be scenic vistas or scenic drives.

Within Landscape Unit 1, each of the six Build Alternatives would cross scenic drives, including Sierra Highway (near Una Lake), Soledad Canyon Road, and Aliso Canyon Road. Furthermore, the Refined SR14, SR14A, E2, and E2A Build Alternatives would cross scenic drives at Little Tujunga Canyon Road, and the Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternative would run parallel to the SR 14 highway scenic drive.

### *Landscape Unit 2*

**All Six Build Alternatives**

There are no designated scenic vistas or drives located within Landscape Unit 2.

### *CEQA Conclusion*

Because there are no scenic vistas or drives located within Landscape Unit 2, there would be no impact on scenic vistas and drives from construction activities in Landscape Unit 2. However, in Landscape Unit 1 construction activities would temporarily decrease the visual quality rating of views seen from scenic vistas and drives by one or more levels. Combined with an overall viewer sensitivity rating of moderate, effects of construction activities on scenic vistas and drives in Landscape Unit 1 would be significant under CEQA before the consideration of mitigation.

For significant impacts in Landscape Unit 1, AVQ-MM#1 will require measures to minimize construction-related visual/aesthetic disruption, including activities such as minimizing pre-construction clearing, limiting building removal, post-construction regrading, and avoiding locating CSAs within 500 feet of recreational areas and other sensitive land uses. The contractor will be required to prepare a technical memorandum, prior to construction, identifying how the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section would implement these measures to reduce impacts. Furthermore, AVQ-MM#1 will require the preservation of existing vegetation where feasible that may screen

views of construction activities, and require the regrading, re-contouring, and revegetation of areas disturbed by construction, staging, and storage. These measures will open up and minimize views of construction elements that may contribute to impacts to the natural and cultural environment regarding visual quality, and locate CSAs away from sensitive viewer groups, including travelers and users of recreational areas in the RSA. AVQ-MM#1 would therefore minimize visual quality impacts from construction activities including those within the vicinity of scenic vistas and drives. With the implementation of AVQ-MM#1, construction impacts on scenic vistas and drives would be reduced to less than significant.

### *3.16.6.5 Permanent Construction and Operations Impacts*

The following sections describe permanent construction and operation impacts on visual quality.

**Impact AVQ#4: Permanent Construction Impacts on Visual Quality.**

As described in Section 3.16.4, aesthetic and visual impacts on each landscape unit are assessed by examining changes to visual quality at KVPs. In most cases, photo simulations were prepared to support the impact analysis. Existing views were compared to photo simulations of the proposed Build Alternative, considering changes in visual quality, changes in character, and viewer sensitivity. The degree of the visual quality impact was evaluated using the criteria described in Section 3.16.4.3. KVPs and visual simulations are discussed below and provided in Appendix 3.16-A.

**Landscape Unit 1: Central Subsection**

***Refined SR14 Build Alternative***

Table 3.16-14 summarizes the change to visual quality, viewer sensitivity, and CEQA significance for the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in Landscape Unit 1.

**Table 3.16-14 Change in Visual Quality of Landscape Unit 1 Key Viewpoints, Refined SR14 Build Alternative**

| Key Viewpoint | Visual Quality Rating – Existing | Visual Quality Rating – with Project | Viewer Sensitivity | Degree of Change to Visual Quality | CEQA Impact Determination |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Landscape Unit 1a: Acton Area** | | | | | |
| KVP 1.1: East Avenue S | Moderately low | Moderately low | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.2: Sierra Highway | Moderate | Moderately low | Low | Adverse | Significant and Unavoidable |
| KVP 1.5: Lamont Odett Vista Point 1 | Moderately high | Moderately high | Moderate | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.6: Lamont Odett Vista Point 2 | Moderately high | Moderately high | Moderate | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.7: Acton Agua Dulce Library | Moderately high | Moderately high | Moderate | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.8: Red Rover Mine Road | Moderate | Moderately low | Moderate | Adverse | Significant and Unavoidable |
| KVP 1.10: SR 14 East | Moderate | Moderately low | Low | Adverse | Significant and Unavoidable |

| Key Viewpoint | Visual Quality Rating – Existing | Visual Quality Rating – with Project | Viewer Sensitivity | Degree of Change to Visual Quality | CEQA Impact Determination |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| KVP 1.11: Escondido Canyon Road | Moderate | Moderately low | Low | Adverse | Significant and Unavoidable |
| **Landscape Unit 1b: Central State Route 14 Corridor** | | | | | |
| KVP 1.14: Pacific Crest Trail | High | Moderate | High | Adverse | Significant and Unavoidable |
| KVP 1.15: Vasquez Rocks | Moderately high | Moderately high | High | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.16: Agua Dulce Canyon Road | Moderate | Moderately low | Low | Adverse | Significant and Unavoidable |
| KVP 1.17: State Route 14 | Moderately high | Moderately high | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.18: Soledad Canyon Road 1 | Moderately low | Moderately low | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.19: Soledad Canyon Road 2 | Moderately low | Moderately low | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.20: Sequoia Road | Moderately low | Moderately low | High | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| **Landscape Unit 1d: Northeast San Fernando Valley** | | | | | |
| KVP 1.26: Gladstone Street | Low | Low[1] | High | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.27: Hansen Spreading Grounds | Low | Low | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.28: Sheldon Street | Low | Low | Moderate | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.29: Sun Valley Park | Low | Low | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |

[1] Not applicable: Refined SR14 Build Alternative would be underground in tunnels and, therefore, would not be visible.
KVP = key viewpoint

**Key Viewpoint 1.1: East Avenue S**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-1a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.1 is located on East Avenue S, looking west. Dominant forms visible from the viewpoint are a horizontal flat road lined with a series of vertical transmission poles to the left and streetlights backed with mature green trees to the right. A mix of residential, commercial, industrial, and vacant parcels is located along East Avenue S. Ridgelines of the San Gabriel Mountains provide the backdrop. The view of the distant

mountains is interrupted by transportation infrastructure and intermingled residential, commercial, industrial, and vacant land uses. The existing visual quality is moderately low.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-1b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would reconstruct and elevate East Avenue S to pass over the at-grade HSR tracks. The elevated East Avenue S would enhance views for motorists and bicyclists by providing an elevated vantage point with views of the San Gabriel Mountains, and the overpass would partially screen existing development. The visual quality with the project would continue to be moderately low. For travelers along East Avenue S, who would view the Refined SR14 Build Alternative for a relatively short duration and have low viewer sensitivity, the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would be consistent with the existing visual setting. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

In this urbanized location, the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. As described in Appendix 2-H, the project would be consistent with the City of Palmdale General Plan (City of Palmdale 1993).

**CEQA Conclusion**

At KVP 1.1, the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would be in an urbanized area and would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

**Key Viewpoint 1.2: Sierra Highway**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-2a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.2 is located on Sierra Highway, looking southeast toward Una Lake. Una Lake is the central feature, encircled by shrub vegetation. The topography is mostly flat, allowing views of the sky and the distant San Gabriel Mountains. A metal chain-link fence located between the lake and Sierra Highway detracts from the view by adding a non-natural form to the foreground. The existing visual quality is moderate.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-2b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the Refined SR14 Build Alternative alignment would cross Una Lake on an embankment, requiring substantial filling of the lake, entirely altering the visual characteristics of the landscape. The vegetation and the chain-link fence in the foreground would remain intact, but the trees and shrub-steppe vegetation around the lake, as well as the lake itself, would be removed. At-grade tracks and passing HSR trains would increase the Refined SR14 Build Alternative's visibility and temporarily dominate the view. However, the duration of passing trains would be fleeting (approximately 4 seconds, up to 16 times per hour during peak hours). OCS poles and wires along the tracks would also be visible but would not block the view from this KVP. Travelers along Sierra Highway would view the Refined SR14 Build Alternative for a short duration and would be relatively insensitive to visual changes. However, the filling of Una Lake would diminish the natural harmony of the view, which would reduce the visual quality to moderately low. The degree of change to visual quality would be adverse.

Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#4, AVQ-MM#5, and AVQ-MM#6, as described in Section 3.16.7, are required to reduce impacts on visual quality. These measures require landscape screening adjacent to residential areas, landscape treatments along the embankment, and the planting of vegetation within land acquired for the Refined SR14 Build Alternative that is not used for the HSR or related supporting infrastructure. Implementation of these measures would reduce the prominence of the embankment and project features. Nonetheless, with the implementation of mitigation, the project would still reduce visual quality from moderate to moderately low.

**CEQA Conclusion**

At KVP 1.2, implementation of the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would change visual quality from moderate to moderately low. Therefore, the project would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings in a non-urbanized area. Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#4, AVQ-MM#5, and AVQ-MM#6, as described in Section 3.16.7, are required to reduce impacts. These measures require landscape screening adjacent to residential areas, landscape treatments along the embankment, and the planting of vegetation within land acquired for the Refined SR14 Build Alternative that is not used for the HSR or related

supporting infrastructure. Implementation of these measures would reduce the prominence of the embankment and project features. However, after mitigation, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable for the Refined SR14 Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.5: Lamont Odett Vista Point 1**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-5a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.5 is located at the Lamont Odett Vista Point near the Aerospace Monument along SR 14, looking northeast toward Lake Palmdale. Prominent features visible from this viewpoint are soothing blue shades of Lake Palmdale and the California Aqueduct. Rectangular houses with pitched roofs are visible in contrast to the water resources in the viewshed. The presence of the curvilinear grey road, utility pipe, vertical transmission poles, a wind turbine, and sporadic mix of land uses in the distant background further affirms the human presence. The existing visual quality is moderately high.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-5b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would change little of the visual setting as passing trains would likely be visible in the distant background and the HSR tracks would be built at grade through this area, with one approximately 1,000-foot segment of elevated trackway crossing over East Barrel Springs Road. As a result, project features would generally be compatible with the existing setting because they would not introduce substantial new structures to the viewshed. The visual quality with the project would continue to be moderately high. Viewer groups would consist of visitors to the Lamont Odett Vista Point, who would be sensitive to visual changes in the viewshed but would view the Refined SR14 Build Alternative from a considerable distance. Therefore, overall viewer sensitivity would be moderate. While viewer sensitivity would be moderate because there would be no change in visual quality, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

In this urbanized location, the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. As described in Appendix 2-H, the project would be consistent with the City of Palmdale General Plan (City of Palmdale 1993).

**CEQA Conclusion**

At KVP 1.5, the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would be in an urbanized area and would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. This impact would be less than significant. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

**Key Viewpoint 1.6: Lamont Odett Vista Point 2**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-6a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.6 is located at the Lamont Odett Vista Point along SR 14, looking east toward the California Aqueduct. The view includes the linear, blue California Aqueduct and large expanses of rural, undeveloped terrain with scattered houses with pitched roofs lining up along the aqueduct. Several isolated buttes across the Antelope Valley are visible in the distance. The existing visual quality is moderately high.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-6b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would change little of the visual setting as passing trains would likely be visible in the distant background and the HSR tracks would be built at grade through this area, with one approximately 1,000-foot segment of elevated trackway crossing over East Barrel Springs Road. The Refined SR14 Build Alternative would not introduce a significant change to the visual setting and the visual quality would remain moderately high. Viewer groups would consist of visitors to the Lamont Odett Vista Point, who would be sensitive to visual changes in the viewshed but would view the Refined SR14 Build Alternative from a considerable distance. Therefore, overall viewer sensitivity would be moderate. While viewer sensitivity would be moderate because there would be no change in the visual quality rating, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

In this urbanized location, the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. As described in Appendix 2-H, the project would be consistent with the City of Palmdale General Plan (City of Palmdale 1993).

**CEQA Conclusion**

At KVP 1.6, the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would be in an urbanized area and would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. This impact would be less than significant. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

**Key Viewpoint 1.7: Acton Agua Dulce Library**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-7a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.7 is located near the Acton Agua Dulce Library on Crown Valley Road, looking northeast. Open space with low-lying rugged brown and green vegetation and mountainous ridgelines in the backdrop are the primary features from this viewpoint. The rectangular red roof of a house is visible in the distance. The existing visual quality is moderately high.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-7b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the HSR alignment in Landscape Unit 1b would be mostly below grade through a cut-and-cover tunnel. This would require structures or features above tunnel areas to be cleared during construction, including the nearest house in the view. The change in visual character would be relatively subtle because project features would be below ground, and removal of structures would enhance the view's natural harmony. Therefore, the visual quality with the project would continue to be moderately high. Nearby residences would be sensitive to visual changes but would view the Refined SR14 Build Alternative from a distance. Therefore, overall viewer sensitivity would be moderate. While viewer sensitivity would be moderate because there would be no change in the visual quality rating, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

**CEQA Conclusion**

The Refined SR14 Build Alternative would not decrease the overall visual quality rating for KVP 1.7, and overall viewer sensitivity would be moderate. As such, the project would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surrounding in a non-urbanized area and this impact would be less than significant. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

**Key Viewpoint 1.8: Red Rover Mine Road**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-8a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.8 is located on Red Rover Mine Road, looking south toward SR 14. This view is characterized by the dominant ridgelines of the San Gabriel Mountains in the backdrop with the curvilinear, grey roadway (Red Rover Mine Road) merging into the base of the mountains. Low-lying brown vegetation with occasional mature green trees are scattered on both sides of the road. The sharp, linear streak of SR 14 shoots through the view. Largely industrial and commercial uses are located around this area and are visible on the side of the road. Other visible infrastructure elements include vertical utility poles, rectangular billboards, and signage. The existing visual quality is moderate.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-8b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would construct a viaduct over Red Rover Mine Road, which would obstruct views of the San Gabriel Mountains for motorists traveling south. Project features at this location would be incompatible with the existing setting and would block mountain views. The viaduct structure at this location would be large in scale and, hence, highly visible to viewer groups, which would substantially change the existing visual character and reduce the visual quality to moderately low. Motorists traveling along Red Rover Mine Road would have low sensitivity to the visual change despite its large scale, as the view obstruction would be brief. Workers in the commercial/industrial land uses in the scattered developments along Red Rover Mine Road would be moderately sensitive to the project-induced visual changes; it is assumed that worker attention would be primarily focused elsewhere than toward a particular view. Residents along Red Rover Mine Road would have the greatest sensitivity to visual changes because the overcrossing would permanently obstruct mountain views from their locations and passing trains would also be visible. Overall, the viewer sensitivity would be moderate.

Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#3 and AVQ-MM#4, as described in Section 3.16.7, are required to reduce impacts on visual quality. With these measures Refined SR14 Build Alternative will

incorporate local design and aesthetic preferences into the design of the viaduct and require landscape treatments to screen the elevated guideway. Implementation of these measures would reduce the prominence of the viaduct. Nonetheless, with the implementation of mitigation, the project would still reduce visual quality from moderate to moderately low. With a decrease in the visual quality rating and a moderate viewer sensitivity the degree of change to visual quality would be adverse.

**CEQA Conclusion**

At KVP 1.8, implementation of the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would change visual quality from moderate to moderately low. Therefore, the project would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings in a non-urbanized area. Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#3 and AVQ-MM#4, as described in Section 3.16.7, are required to reduce impacts. These measures will incorporate local design and aesthetic preferences into the viaduct design as well as require landscape treatments adjacent to the elevated guideway. Implementation of these measures would reduce the prominence of the viaduct. However, after mitigation, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable for the Refined SR14 Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.10: State Route 14 East**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-10a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.10 is located between Ward Road and Red Rover Mine Road on SR 14 looking east. Transportation infrastructure, including the paved angular roadway, rectangular signs, and vehicles dominate the view. Parcels along SR 14 are mostly vacant and low-lying green/brown vegetation covers the ground. Asymmetrical ridgelines of the San Gabriel Mountains make a picturesque background. Both Sierra Highway and Red Rover Mine Road are diverging lines of infrastructure elements and can be seen in the distance near the base of the mountains. The existing visual quality is moderate.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-10b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would introduce an elevated viaduct structure crossing over the SR 14 freeway. A portal facility would be visible to the left side of the view where the HSR alignment would transition from the overcrossing to a tunnel. Given the presence of transportation infrastructure and commercial and residential development along the freeway in this area, the changes introduced by the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would not be substantially out of character. However, the new overcrossing structure would add a large-scale element compared to existing structures and the project would reduce visual quality to moderately low.

The primary viewers affected by the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in this area would be motorists, traveling on SR 14, with low viewer sensitivity. Their view of the San Gabriel Mountains would be partially to fully blocked by the elevated trackway. This view obstruction for motorists would be momentary while they pass through the area and would be similar to the type of view obstruction created by other roadway overpasses along the SR 14 freeway. Although viewer sensitivity would be low, the reduction in the visual quality rating from moderate to moderately low would result in an adverse degree of change to visual quality.

Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#3 and AVQ-MM#4, as described in Section 3.16.7, are required to reduce impacts on visual quality. These measures will incorporate local design and aesthetic preferences into the design of the viaduct and require landscape treatments to screen the elevated guideway. Implementation of these measures would reduce the prominence of the viaduct. Nonetheless, with the implementation of mitigation, the project would still reduce visual quality from moderate to moderately low.

**CEQA Conclusion**

At KVP 1.10, implementation of the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would change visual quality from moderate to moderately low. Therefore, the project would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings in a non-urbanized area. Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#3 and AVQ-MM#4, as described in Section 3.16.7, are required to reduce impacts. These measures will incorporate local design and aesthetic preferences into the

design of the viaduct and require landscape treatments to screen the elevated guideway. Implementation of these measures would reduce the prominence of the viaduct. However, after mitigation, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable for the Refined SR14 Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.11: Escondido Canyon Road**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-11a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.11 is located on Escondido Canyon Road east of Ward Road, looking southeast. The sharp ridgelines and wide sweeping view of the San Gabriel Mountains provide a backdrop to the viewshed. A linear, flat, paved, grey road with medium-sized green/brown vegetation on slanting slopes on either side of the road comprises the foreground. Vast open space encompasses the land around the road, with intermittent signage, utility poles, and a wooden fence. Animal care facilities are located further down the road. The existing visual quality is moderate.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-11b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would construct a large-scale elevated viaduct crossing over Escondido Canyon Road. The vertical piers and the horizontal bridge spanning Escondido Canyon Road would contrast with the existing setting's lack of substantial structures and mountain views. OCS poles and wires on the overcrossing would also be highly visible against the sky. These project features would contrast with the predominantly natural aesthetic and would reduce visual quality to moderately low. While the overcrossing would block views of the San Gabriel Mountains for motorists traveling on Escondido Canyon Road, this obstruction would be momentary and their sensitivity would be low. Although viewer sensitivity would be low, the reduction in the visual quality rating from moderate to moderately low would result in an adverse degree of change to visual quality.

Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#3 and AVQA-MM#4 will incorporate local design and aesthetic preferences into the design of the viaduct and require landscape treatments to screen the elevated guideway. Implementation of these measures would reduce the prominence of the viaduct. Nonetheless, with the implementation of mitigation, the project would still reduce visual quality from moderate to moderately low.

**CEQA Conclusion**

At KVP 1.11, implementation of the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would change visual quality from moderate to moderately low. Therefore, the project would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings in a non-urbanized area. Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#3 and AVQ-MM#4, as described in Section 3.16.7, are required to reduce impacts. These measures will incorporate local design and aesthetic preferences into the design of the viaduct as well as require landscape treatments to screen the elevated guideway. Implementation of these measures would reduce the prominence of the embankment and project features. However, after mitigation, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable for the Refined SR14 Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.14: Pacific Crest Trail**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-14a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.14 is located along the PCT south of SR 14, looking west. The Vasquez Rocks Natural Area Park is located north of this KVP across from SR 14. The view is characterized by green, rounded mountains in the background with linear lines of the canyons comprising the foreground. Various shades of green, brown, and yellow vegetation paint a vivid view to the hikers on the trail. The angular rock outcroppings associated with Vasquez Rocks are the focal point of the view. The linear/horizontal form of the SR 14 freeway is also visible in the distance, just below Vasquez Rocks. The PCT and Vasquez Rocks are both considered scenic resources, offering high natural harmony. The existing visual quality is high.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-14b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would construct an elevated viaduct structure that would cross over the PCT, introducing a highly visible and contrasting element in the view. During construction, the PCT would be rerouted through this area, and a portion of the trail would be permanently relocated away from both the SR 14 freeway

and HSR rail alignment during project operations. The Refined SR14 Build Alternative would substantially change the visual character of the setting. The most prominent project components would be vertical support piers and the horizontal bridge spanning over the trail. OCS poles and wires would also be visible. The viaduct would be highly visible to hikers (i.e., recreational neighbors) on the PCT south of SR 14 (primary viewers). The visual quality would be reduced to moderate. While motorists traveling on the SR 14 freeway, who would view the Refined SR14 Build Alternative for a relatively short duration, would be less sensitive to changes, hikers on the PCT would be highly sensitive to visual changes. Given the reduced visual quality rating and high sensitivity of viewers, the degree of change to visual quality would be adverse.

Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#3 and AVQ-MM#4, as described in Section 3.16.7, are required to reduce impacts on visual quality. These measures will incorporate local design and aesthetic preferences into the design of the viaduct and require landscape treatments to screen the elevated guideway. Implementation of these measures would reduce the prominence of the elevated alignment. Nonetheless, with the implementation of mitigation, the project would still reduce visual quality from high to moderate.

**CEQA Conclusion**

At KVP 1.14, implementation of the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would change visual quality from high to moderate. Therefore, the project would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings in a non-urbanized area. Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#3 and AVQ-MM#4, as described in Section 3.16.7, are required to reduce impacts. These measures will incorporate local design and aesthetic preferences into the design of the viaduct and require landscape treatments to screen the elevated guideway. Implementation of these measures would reduce the prominence of the elevated alignment. However, after mitigation, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable for the Refined SR14 Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.15: Vasquez Rocks**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-15a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.15 is located within Vasquez Rocks Natural Area Park, looking southeast toward the SR 14 freeway, capturing dramatic views of the ANF, San Gabriel Mountains, and Vasquez Rocks. The alternating canyons and ridgelines swell and recede in an unpredictable pattern. The fluctuating topography and ridgelines covered with natural shades of green, tan and brown vegetation create visual interest. The existing Metrolink tracks and the SR 14 freeway are visible at the base of the mountains, adding a linear/horizontal element to the view. The foreground comprises of an uneven terrain covered with scattered low- to medium-size vegetation. Also visible are cars, benches, trash cans, and railings, relaying the active recreational use of the area. The existing visual quality is moderately high.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-15b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would be at grade at relatively the same elevation as the SR 14 freeway. From this KVP, the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would be visually subordinate to the mountain views in the background and would not introduce substantial new structures. As a result, the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would not be highly visible from this KVP, nor would it introduce substantial change to the existing visual character or view. Visual quality would continue to be moderately high. The primary viewers would be the recreationists at Vasquez Rocks who would have high viewer sensitivity. Recreational neighbors may notice passing high-speed trains in the distant background; however, these would blend with the existing freeway traffic in the view. Although the viewer sensitivity would be high, because the visual quality rating would not change, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

**CEQA Conclusion**

The Refined SR14 Build Alternative would not decrease the overall visual quality rating for KVP 1.15 even though viewer sensitivity would be high. As such, the project would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings in a non-urbanized area. This impact would be less than significant. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

**Key Viewpoint 1.16: Agua Dulce Canyon Road**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-16a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.16 is located on Agua Dulce Canyon Road south of SR 14, looking south. Hillsides and ridgelines covered with low-lying vegetation form a scenic backdrop to the paved roadway. The flat grey curvilinear road in the foreground, lined with trees on each side, converge into the base of the mountains. Landscape composition within this view consists of natural shades of green, tan, yellow, and brown. Power lines are visible, conveying the presence of some ranching activities in the vicinity. The existing visual quality is moderate.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-16b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would introduce an elevated viaduct structure over Agua Dulce Canyon Road. The viaduct structure would be highly visible and would obstruct some views in the area. However, given the height of the viaduct, motorists' views under the structure and of near/foreground areas would be less affected, so the view obstruction would be partial. Overall, visual quality would be reduced to moderately low. The Refined SR14 Build Alternative's visibility for the workers in the nearby ranches would be screened by the steep slopes of the mountains. Motorists would have a low sensitivity to visual changes as the view of the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would be of short duration. While viewer sensitivity would be low because visual quality would be reduced to moderately low the degree of change to visual quality would be adverse.

Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#3 and AVQ-MM#4, as described in Section 3.16.7, are required to reduce impacts on visual quality. These measures will incorporate local design and aesthetic preferences into the design of the viaduct and require landscape treatments to screen the elevated guideway. Implementation of these measures would reduce the prominence of the elevated alignment. Nonetheless, with the implementation of mitigation, the project would still reduce visual quality from moderate to moderately low.

**CEQA Conclusion**

At KVP 1.16, implementation of the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would change visual quality from moderate to moderately low. Therefore, the project would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings in a non-urbanized area. Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#3 and AVQ-MM#4, as described in Section 3.16.7, are required to reduce impacts. These measures will incorporate local design and aesthetic preferences into the design of the viaduct as well as require landscape treatments to screen the elevated guideway. Implementation of these measures would reduce the prominence of the elevated alignment. However, after mitigation, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable for the Refined SR14 Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.17: State Route 14**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-17a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.17 is located on SR 14 between Agua Dulce Canyon Road and Soledad Canyon Road, looking east. The view is characterized by alternating ridgelines and canyons of San Gabriel Mountains. The mountains appear smooth and carpet-like with sharp vertical lines appearing along the ridges. Low-lying scrub vegetation is scattered throughout. The color composition within these mountains is primarily beige and tan, with occasional patches of green. Some fencing and dirt roadways are visible at the foreground of this KVP. The existing visual quality is moderately high.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-17b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would introduce a linear/horizontal embankment associated with the at-grade high-speed rail trackway in the middle ground of the setting near the base of the mountains. The most prominent project feature visible would be passing HSR trains, which would temporarily increase the Refined SR14 Build Alternative's visibility. The Refined SR14 Build Alternative would be generally compatible with the visual character of the setting. Project features would blend in with the existing landscape and would not diminish the visual quality of the setting; visual quality would remain moderately high. The primary viewer group represented by this KVP, motorists traveling along SR 14, would have low sensitivity due to their short viewing duration. The degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would not decrease the visual quality rating for KVP 1.17 and overall viewer sensitivity would be low, the effect of the Refined SR14 Build Alternative on visual quality on KVP 1.17 would be less than significant. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

**Key Viewpoint 1.18: Soledad Canyon Road 1**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-18a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.18 is located along Soledad Canyon Road, looking south toward the Santa Clara River basin. An arrangement of dark green sharp ridgelines and rounded mountains make up the backdrop. In contrast, the foreground is a flat terrain covered with a mix of green, yellow, tan, and brown vegetation, including some medium-size trees. Also visible is some heavy machinery associated with mining. The existing visual quality is moderately low.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-18b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would introduce an elevated viaduct structure crossing over Soledad Canyon Road, the Santa Clara River, and the existing Metrolink rail alignment. In addition, a tunnel portal and associated facilities would be visible in the distance. Construction of the portal and associated facilities would result in conversion of mining operations in this area and restoration of some of the surrounding hillsides that have been affected by mining operations. The viaduct structure would be highly visible and would partially block views of the base of the hills. The portal and associated facilities would also be highly visible but would not block views. Visual quality would remain moderately low. The primary viewers affected would be motorists traveling on Soledad Canyon Road and SR 14. Their view of the San Gabriel Mountains would be partially obstructed by the Refined SR14 Build Alternative; however, this view would only be momentary so their sensitivity to the visual changes would be low. The degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

**CEQA Conclusion**

The Refined SR14 Build Alternative would not decrease the visual quality rating for KVP 1.18 and overall viewer sensitivity would be low. As such, the project would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings in a non-urbanized area, and this impact would be less than significant. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

**Key Viewpoint 1.19: Soledad Canyon Road 2**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-19a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.19 is located along Soledad Canyon Road near Lang Station Road, looking southeast. The view is dominated by the abandoned Nike Missile site and active Vulcan Mine. A sequence of unpredictable alternating canyons and ridgelines of the San Gabriel Mountains as well as hillside alterations from past mining activities are visible in the background. A curvilinear paved road vanishes into the base of the mountains. The flat terrain in the foreground is covered with a mix of low-lying scrub vegetation and a few riparian trees. Small rectangular buildings and heavy machinery are noticeable components in the setting. The existing visual quality is moderately low.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-19b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would introduce a tunnel portal and associated facilities at this location. While the foreground of the view would remain unaffected, the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would have a substantial effect on the background with the introduction of elevated track and tunnel portals. Construction of the portals and associated facilities would result in conversion of mining operations in this area and restoration of some of the surrounding hillsides that have been affected by mining operations. Overall, visual quality would remain moderately low. The primary viewers in this area would be motorists on local roadways (SR 14 and Lang Station Road) and industrial workers. These viewers would have low sensitivity to the visual changes. The degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

**CEQA Conclusion**

The Refined SR14 Build Alternative would not decrease the visual quality rating for KVP 1.19 and overall viewer sensitivity would be low. As such, the project would not substantially degrade the

visual character or quality of public views of the sites and its surroundings in a non-urbanized area, and this impact would be less than significant. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

**Key Viewpoint 1.20: Sequoia Road**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-20a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.20 is located on Sequoia Road between Yellowstone Lane and Gas Line Road, looking south. The alternating canyons and ridgelines of the San Gabriel Mountains and ANF dominate the backdrop of the view. The abandoned Nike Missile site, heavy machinery, and box-like structures are visible in the setting. Hillside alterations from past mining activities are more noticeable in the lower right-hand portion of the view. Horizontal linear lines of SR 14 and Soledad Canyon Road are visible in the foreground. The landscape is covered with scattered low-lying scrub vegetation providing the shades of green and brown. The existing visual quality is moderately low.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-20b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would introduce a viaduct structure, tunnel portal, and associated buildings into the view. Although, the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would introduce significant changes, the character of the view would remain essentially unchanged. Construction of the tunnel portal and associated facilities would result in conversion of mining operations in this area and restoration of some of the surrounding hillsides that have been affected by mining operations. Given that the duration of passing trains would be fleeting and in the distant background, this would not be a significant component of the view. Overall visual quality would remain moderately low. While the primary viewer group would be highly sensitive residential neighbors in the community located along Sequoia Road, the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would be generally compatible with the visual character of the setting. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

**CEQA Conclusion**

The Refined SR14 Build Alternative would not decrease the visual quality rating for KVP 1.20 even though overall viewer sensitivity would be high. As such, the project would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings in a non-urbanized area, and this impact would be less than significant. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

**Key Viewpoint 1.26: Gladstone Street**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-26a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.26 is located at the northern terminus of Gladstone Street at Fillmore Street, looking north. This KVP demonstrates a typical view from a residential area at the base of the foothills. Rounded mountains are visible in the background with utility poles and power lines strewn throughout. The dark grey fence and the rectangular elements of the residential structure are visible up close and account for the low visual quality of this setting. At this location, the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would be underground in a tunnel. There would be no change in visual quality because no aboveground facilities are planned in this area; hence, no visual simulation was prepared. While viewer sensitivity at this location would be high, because the project is not visible and visual quality remains low, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

In this urbanized location, the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. As described in Appendix 2-H, the project would be consistent with the City of Los Angeles General Plan (City of Los Angeles 2010).

**CEQA Conclusion**

At KVP 1.26, the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would be in an urbanized area and would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. This impact would be less than significant. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

**Key Viewpoint 1.27: Hansen Spreading Grounds**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-27a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.27 is located at Glenoaks Boulevard, looking southwest over the Hansen Spreading Grounds. The view is dominated by the Hansen

Spreading Grounds with its slanting striated cement surface, water, and a mix of dirt and rock. The asymmetrical linear profile of the San Gabriel Mountains is visible in the background. An amalgamation of irregular rectangular buildings, vegetation, and vertical utility poles also contribute to the background of the view. The existing visual quality is low.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-27b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would introduce at-grade HSR trackway after emerging from a tunnel to the north (right-hand side of view). The at-grade trackway would be constructed on an embankment, elevating the height of the at-grade profile relative to existing conditions. The project features, however, would generally be visually subordinate to the setting and would not introduce substantial change to the viewshed. The most prominent project feature visible from KVP 1.27 would be passing HSR trains, which would increase the Refined SR14 Build Alternative's visibility and temporarily dominate views; however, the duration of passing trains would be fleeting. Visual quality would remain low. The primary viewers would be motorists traveling on Glenoaks Boulevard and commercial and industrial neighbors, both of whom would have a low sensitivity to visual changes. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

In this urbanized location, the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. As described in Appendix 2-H, the project would be consistent with the City of Los Angeles General Plan (City of Los Angeles 2010).

**CEQA Conclusion**

At KVP 1.27, the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would be in an urbanized area and would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. This impact would be less than significant. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

**Key Viewpoint 1.28: Sheldon Street**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-28a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.28 is located on Sheldon Street near El Dorado Avenue, looking northeast. A mix of residential and commercial uses, with indistinctive architectural style, dominate the view. Various species of green trees and utility poles line up on either side of Sheldon Street in an irregular pattern. Distant rounded hillsides provide a consistent backdrop within the San Fernando Valley. Natural harmony and cultural order are low; hence, overall visual quality is low.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-28b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would introduce an elevated viaduct structure crossing over Sheldon Street. The viaduct structure would be highly visible and block views of the distant hillsides. However, given the existing urban development and large scale of the buildings in this area, the viaduct structure would not be substantially out of character with the surrounding visual environment. Visual quality would remain low. The primary viewers would be motorists traveling on Sheldon Street, who would view the Refined SR14 Build Alternative for a short duration and, thus, be relatively insensitive to visual changes. The Refined SR14 Build Alternative would also be visible to residential and commercial neighbors in the area. Commercial neighbors would likely be primarily focused on work-related activities and thus would be insensitive to visual changes. Conversely, residential neighbors would be sensitive to visual change. Overall, viewer sensitivity would be moderate. Regardless, because the Refined SR14 Build Alternative's scale is consistent with the existing visual character and would not change the visual quality, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

In this urbanized location, the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. As described in Appendix 2-H, the project would be consistent with the City of Los Angeles General Plan (City of Los Angeles 2010).

**CEQA Conclusion**

At KVP 1.28, the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would be in an urbanized area and would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. This impact would be less than significant. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

**Key Viewpoint 1.29: Sun Valley Park**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-29a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.29 is located on Cantara Street at the northeast corner of Sun Valley Park, looking east. Small rectangular buildings, flat grey road, sporadic landscaping, various signs, and vertical utility poles, and horizontal power lines dominate the viewshed. Interesting forms and lines created by the San Gabriel Mountains in the background are obscured by the foreground development. Cars are visible parked to one side of the street. This KVP depicts a disorderly development pattern and lacks unifying characteristics. The existing visual quality is low. No change in the existing visual setting would occur above the tunnel and no ancillary or aboveground facilities are planned in this area; hence, no visual simulation was prepared. Visual quality would remain low and viewer sensitivity would be low. Therefore, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

In this urbanized location, the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. As described in Appendix 2-H, the project would be consistent with the City of Los Angeles General Plan (City of Los Angeles 2010).

**CEQA Conclusion**

At KVP 1.29, the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would be in an urbanized area and would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. This impact would be less than significant. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

### *SR14A Build Alternative*

Table 3.16-15 summarizes the change to visual quality, viewer sensitivity, and CEQA significance for the SR14A Build Alternative in Landscape Unit 1.

**Table 3.16-15 Change in Visual Quality of Landscape Unit 2 Key Viewpoints, SR14A Build Alternative**

| Key Viewpoint | Visual Quality Rating – Existing | Visual Quality Rating – with Project | Viewer Sensitivity | Degree of Change to Visual Quality | CEQA Impact Determination |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Landscape Unit 1a: Acton Area** | | | | | |
| KVP 1.1: East Avenue S | Moderately low | Moderately low | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.2: Sierra Highway | Moderate | Moderate | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.3: Soledad Siphon | Moderate | Low | High | Adverse | Significant and Unavoidable |
| KVP 1.4: Soledad Siphon | Low | Low | High | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.5: Lamont Odett Vista Point 1 | Moderately high | Moderately high | Moderate | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.6: Lamont Odett Vista Point 2 | Moderately high | Moderately high | Moderate | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.9: SR14A Acton Intermediate Window | Moderately high | Moderately high | Moderate | Neutral | Less than Significant |

| Key Viewpoint | Visual Quality Rating – Existing | Visual Quality Rating – with Project | Viewer Sensitivity | Degree of Change to Visual Quality | CEQA Impact Determination |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Landscape Unit 1b: Central State Route 14 Corridor** | | | | | |
| KVP 1.16: Agua Dulce Canyon Road | Moderate | Moderately low | Low | Adverse | Significant and Unavoidable |
| KVP 1.17: State Route 14 | Moderately high | Moderately high | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.18: Soledad Canyon Road 1 | Moderately low | Moderately low | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.19: Soledad Canyon Road 2 | Moderately low | Moderately low | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.20: Sequoia Road | Moderately low | Moderately low | High | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| **Landscape Unit 1d: Northeast San Fernando Valley** | | | | | |
| KVP 1.26: Gladstone Street | Low | Low[1] | High | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.27: Hansen Spreading Grounds | Low | Low | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.28: Sheldon Street | Low | Low | Moderate | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.29: Sun Valley Park | Low | Low | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |

[1] Not applicable: the SR14A Build Alternative would be underground in tunnels and, therefore, would not be visible.
KVP = key viewpoint

**Key Viewpoint 1.1: East Avenue S**

The SR14A Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**
Because the SR14A and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.1, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.1 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the SR14A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.2: Sierra Highway**

KVP 1.2 is located on Sierra Highway, looking southeast toward Una Lake. Una Lake is the central feature, encircled by shrub vegetation. The topography is mostly flat, allowing views of the sky and the distant San Gabriel Mountains. A metal chain-link fence located between the lake and Sierra Highway detracts from the view by adding a non-natural form to the foreground. The existing visual quality is moderate.

The SR14A Build Alternative alignment would pass east of Una Lake in the distance, avoiding the need to place fill in the lake as would be needed with the Refined SR14 Build Alternative. By

locating the alignment further east, SR14A results in minimal changes in the visual characteristics of the landscape. The vegetation and the chain-link fence in the foreground as well as the trees and shrub steppe vegetation around the lake, and the lake itself, would remain unchanged. At-grade tracks and passing HSR trains would be visible in the distance. The duration of passing trains would be fleeting (approximately 4 seconds, up to 16 trains in the peak hour). OCS poles and wires along the tracks may be visible but would not block the view from this KVP. The visual quality with the project would continue to be moderate. Travelers along Sierra Highway may notice the tracks and passing trains in the distance for short durations and would have a low sensitivity to visual changes. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

**CEQA Conclusion**

The SR14A Build Alternative would not decrease the overall visual quality rating for KVP 1.2 and overall viewer sensitivity would be low. As such, the project would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surrounding in a non-urbanized area and impacts would be less than significant. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

**Key Viewpoint 1.3: Soledad Siphon**

KVP 1.3 is located along Sierra Highway in the vicinity of Lake Palmdale and Una Lake looking south along the highway. This location is just north of where the California Aqueduct (Soledad Siphon) crosses under the roadway. Sierra highway at this location is a rural 2-lane highway that is well traveled during peak hours. Sparse development can be seen along both sides of the highway along with undeveloped land and the San Gabriel Mountains forming the backdrop. The existing visual quality is moderate.

The SR14A Build Alternative 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; overall viewer sensitivity would be high. The viaduct would reduce the natural harmony by blocking distant views including those of the San Gabriel Mountains, and visual quality would be reduced to low. The overall change to visual quality would be adverse.

Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#3 and AVQ-MM#4 will incorporate local design and aesthetic preferences into the design of the viaduct and require landscape treatments to screen the elevated guideway. Implementation of these measures would reduce the prominence of the viaduct. Nonetheless, with the implementation of mitigation, the project would still reduce visual quality from moderate to low.

**CEQA Conclusion**

At KVP 1.3, implementation of the SR14A Build Alternative would change visual quality from moderate to moderately low. Therefore, the project would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings in a non-urbanized area. Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#3 and AVQ-MM#4, as described in Section 3.16.7, are required to reduce impacts. These measures will incorporate local design and aesthetic preferences into the design of the viaduct as well as require landscape treatments to screen the elevated guideway. Implementation of these measures would reduce the prominence of the embankment and project features. However, after mitigation, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable for the SR14A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.4: Soledad Siphon**

KVP 1.4 is located along Sierra Highway south of the California Aqueduct looking north toward the city of Palmdale (not visible). At this location, Sierra highway is a rural two-lane highway that is well traveled during peak hours. Sparse development can be seen along both sides of the highway along with undeveloped land, however, looking north there are no prominent visual features within the view. The existing visual quality is low.

The SR14A Build Alternative alignment would cross over Sierra Highway on an elevated viaduct that would be highly visible to motorists and surrounding residents and businesses, and viewer sensitivity would be high overall. The elevated 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 also block distant views and would reduce the existing natural harmony along this portion of Sierra Highway; visual quality would remain low. Although viewer sensitivity at his KVP is high, since the visual quality rating would remain low, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

**CEQA Conclusion**

The SR14A Build Alternative would not decrease the visual quality rating for KVP 1.4 and the overall viewer sensitivity would be low. As such, the project would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surrounding in a non-urbanized area, and impacts would be less than significant. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

**Key Viewpoint 1.5: Lamont Odett Vista Point 1**

The SR14A Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the SR14A and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.5, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.5 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the SR14A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.6: Lamont Odett Vista Point 2**

The SR14A Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the SR14A and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.6, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.6 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the SR14A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.9: SR14A Acton Intermediate Window**

KVP 1.9 is located along SR 14, looking east/northeast toward the community of Acton. The view is rural in nature with sparse residential development visible in the distance and the San Gabriel Mountains forming a picturesque backdrop. The existing visual quality is moderately high.

The SR14A Build Alternative alignment through this area would be underground in a tunnel and would not be visible from this KVP or from locations within the community of Acton. However, from this vantage point an intermediate window, which would be used for construction of the tunnel (temporary) and where, once construction is complete, a small permanent building would be located for access and tunnel ventilation, would be visible; visual quality would remain moderately high. The permanent building would be visible from this KVP and appear as a small industrial-style building in the distance. Various viewer groups, including motorists and rural residents, are present at this viewpoint. The overall viewer sensitivity would be moderate. Because the building would not block views or change the existing natural harmony or cultural order of this KVP the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

**CEQA Conclusion**

The SR14A Build Alternative would not decrease the visual quality rating for KVP 1.9 and the overall viewer sensitivity would be moderate. As such, the project would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surrounding in a non-urbanized area, and this impact would be less than significant. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

**Key Viewpoint 1.16: Agua Dulce Canyon Road**

KVP 1.16 is located on Agua Dulce Canyon Road south of SR 14 looking south. Hillsides and ridgelines covered with low-lying vegetation form a scenic backdrop to the paved roadway. The flat grey curvilinear road in the foreground, lined with trees on either side, converge into the base

of the mountains. Landscape composition within this view consists of natural shades of green, tan, yellow, and brown. Power lines are visible, conveying the presence of some ranching activities in the vicinity. The existing visual quality is moderate.

The SR14A Build Alternative alignment would introduce an elevated viaduct structure over Agua Dulce Canyon Road similar to the Refined SR14. The viaduct structure would be highly visible and would obstruct some views in the area but would be lower in height (30 feet vs 70 feet) than under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative. The visibility of SR14A in this area for the workers in the nearby ranches would be screened by the steep slopes of the mountains. Motorists would have low sensitivity to visual changes as the view of the SR14A Build Alternative would be of short duration; however, the scale of the overcrossing structure would substantially alter visual character. While SR14A would reduce the scale of this structure over Agua Dulce Canyon Road, overall visual quality would be reduced to moderately low. The degree of change to visual quality would continue to be adverse.

Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#4, AVQ-MM#5, and AVQ-MM#6, as described in Section 3.16.7, are required to reduce impacts on visual quality. These measures require landscape screening adjacent to residential areas, landscape treatments along the embankment, and the planting of vegetation within land acquired for the SR14A Build Alternative that is not used for the HSR or related supporting infrastructure. Implementation of these measures would reduce the prominence of the embankment and project features. Nonetheless, with the implementation of mitigation, the project would still reduce visual quality from moderate to moderately low.

**CEQA Conclusion**

At KVP 1.16, implementation of the SR14A Build Alternative would change visual quality from moderate to moderately low. Therefore, the project would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings in a non-urbanized area. Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#4, AVQ-MM#5, and AVQ-MM#6, as described in Section 3.16.7, are required to reduce impacts. These measures require landscape screening adjacent to residential areas, landscape treatments along the embankment, and the planting of vegetation within land acquired for the SR14A Build Alternative that is not used for the HSR or related supporting infrastructure. Implementation of these measures would reduce the prominence of the embankment and project features. However, after mitigation, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable for the SR14A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.17: State Route 14**

The SR14A Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the SR14A and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.17, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.17 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the SR14A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.18: Soledad Canyon Road 1**

The SR14A Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the SR14A and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.18, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.18 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the SR14A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.19: Soledad Canyon Road 2**

The SR14A Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the SR14A and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.19, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.19 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the SR14A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.20: Sequoia Road**

The SR14A Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the SR14A and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.20, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.20 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the SR14A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.26: Gladstone Street**

The SR14A Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the SR14A and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.26, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.26 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the SR14A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.27: Hansen Spreading Grounds**

The SR14A Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the SR14A and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.27, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.27 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the SR14A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.28: Sheldon Street**

The SR14A Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the SR14A and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.28, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.28 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the SR14A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.29: Sun Valley Park**

The SR14A Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the SR14A and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.29, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.29 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the SR14A Build Alternative.

### *E1 Build Alternative*

Table 3.16-16 summarizes the change to visual quality, viewer sensitivity, and CEQA significance for the E1 Build Alternative in Landscape Unit 1.

**Table 3.16-16 Change in Visual Quality of Landscape Unit 1 Key Viewpoints, E1 Build Alternative**

| Key Viewpoint | Visual Quality Rating – Existing | Visual Quality Rating – with Project | Viewer Sensitivity | Degree of Change to Visual Quality | CEQA Impact Determination |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Landscape Unit 1a: Acton Area** | | | | | |
| KVP 1.1: East Avenue S | Moderately low | Moderately low | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.2: Sierra Highway | Moderate | Moderately low | Low | Adverse | Significant and Unavoidable |
| KVP 1.5: Lamont Odett Vista Point 1 | Moderately high | Moderately high | Moderate | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.6: Lamont Odett Vista Point 2 | Moderately high | Moderately high | Moderate | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.12: Foreston Drive | Moderate | Moderately low | High | Adverse | Significant and Unavoidable |
| KVP 1.13: Aliso Canyon Road | Moderate | Moderate | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| **Landscape Unit 1c: San Gabriel Mountains/Angeles National Forest** | | | | | |
| KVP 1.21: Arrastre Canyon Road | High | High | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| **Landscape Unit 1d: Northeast San Fernando Valley** | | | | | |
| KVP 1.26: Gladstone Street | Low | Low[1] | High | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.27: Hansen Spreading Grounds | Low | Low | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.28: Sheldon Street | Low | Low | Moderate | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.29: Sun Valley Park | Low | Low | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |

[1] Not applicable: the E1 Build Alternative would be underground in tunnels and, therefore, would not be visible
KVP = key viewpoint

#### Key Viewpoint 1.1: East Avenue S

The E1 Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**
Because the E1 and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.1, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.1 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the E1 Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.2: Sierra Highway**
The E1 Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**
Because the E1 and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.2, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.2 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the E1 Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.5: Lamont Odett Vista Point 1**

The E1 Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**
Because the E1 and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.5, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.5 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the E1 Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.6: Lamont Odett Vista Point 2**

The E1 Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**
Because the E1 and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.6, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.6 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the E1 Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.12: Foreston Drive**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-12a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.12 is located on Foreston Drive in unincorporated Los Angeles County, looking east toward residences, at-grade roadway alignments, and power transmission towers. The primary viewer groups represented are residential neighbors and travelers on Foreston Drive. The viewpoint is from a dirt road bordered by white fences and residences within a small, isolated neighborhood. Irregularly spaced trees line the street. Power transmission towers and power lines associated with the SCE Vincent Substation are visible in the distance, creating a distinctly industrial feature in the otherwise rural setting. The San Gabriel Mountains emerge in the distance. The existing visual quality is moderate.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-12b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the E1 Build Alternative would be built at grade near this viewpoint. Foreston Drive would be rebuilt and elevated to cross over the HSR tracks. Several residences in this area may need to be acquired for construction of this overpass. The E1 Build Alternative would introduce several large-scale pieces of infrastructure (HSR trackway and Foreston Drive overpass) into the visual landscape, which would contrast with the existing rural setting. This would alter visual character from a more naturally harmonious setting to a more culturally ordered setting. These project features would be consistent with the existing industrial elements of the power transmission towers and lines (SCE Vincent Substation) but would contrast with the existing relatively undeveloped feel of the landscape. Visual quality would be reduced to moderately low overall. While travelers would have a relatively low sensitivity due to shorter duration of views, residential neighbors would be highly sensitive to this change. Overall, viewer sensitivity to visual changes would be high and the degree of change to visual quality would be adverse.

Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#4, AVQ-MM#5, and AVQ-MM#6, as described in Section 3.16.7, are required to reduce impacts on visual quality. These measures require landscape screening adjacent to residential areas, the planting of vegetation within land acquired for the E1 Build Alternative that is not used for the HSR or related supporting infrastructure, as well as require screening of traction power substations from public view. Implementation of these measures would reduce the prominence of the embankment and project features. Nonetheless, with the

implementation of mitigation, the project would still reduce visual quality from moderate to moderately low.

**CEQA Conclusion**

At KVP 1.12, implementation of the E1 Build Alternative would change visual quality from moderate to moderately low. Therefore, the project would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings in a non-urbanized area. Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#4, AVQ-MM#5, and AVQ-MM#6, as described in Section 3.16.7, are required to reduce impacts. These measures require landscape screening adjacent to residential areas, the planting of vegetation within land acquired for the E1 Build Alternative that is not used for the HSR or related supporting infrastructure, as well as require screening of traction power substations from public view. Implementation of these measures would reduce the prominence of the embankment and project features. However, after mitigation, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable for the E1 Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.13: Aliso Canyon Road**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-13a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.13 is in unincorporated Los Angeles County, looking north from Aliso Canyon Road toward the hills and Blum Ranch. Aliso Canyon Road winds through a relatively undeveloped landscape, looking toward Blum Ranch and some scattered development in the background surrounded by hills. The existing visual quality is moderate.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-13b (in Appendix 3.16-A), an elevated guideway would carry train tracks over the Santa Clara River and the tracks would return to ground level at Aliso Canyon Road. This would require rebuilding Aliso Canyon Road to cross under the HSR corridor. The elevated trackway would be highly visible and, because of its scale and distinct form, color, and texture, would visually dominate the view in the foreground. HSR trains, security fencing, and details of the OCS poles and wires would be clearly visible and contribute a highly industrial character that would be out of character with the surrounding landscape. From this vantage point, the E1 Build Alternative elevated guideway would not substantially block views of surrounding hills in the distance. Overall visual quality would continue to be moderate. Travelers along Aliso Canyon Road would comprise the primary viewer group; motorists would view the E1 Build Alternative for a short duration and overall sensitivity to visual impacts would be low. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

**CEQA Conclusion**

The E1 Build Alternative would not decrease the visual quality rating for KVP 1.13 and the overall viewer sensitivity would be low. As such, the project would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surrounding in a non-urbanized area and this impact would be less than significant. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

**Key Viewpoint 1.21: Arrastre Canyon Road**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-21a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.21 shows the view looking southeast from the end of the publicly accessible portion of Arrastre Canyon Road towards 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 also visible. The natural setting offers high visual quality overall to travelers along Arrastre Canyon Road who have low viewer sensitivity. Visual quality would remain high because the E1 Build Alternative would be underground in this location and not visible; therefore, no visual simulation was prepared. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

**CEQA Conclusion**

The E1 Build Alternative would not decrease the visual quality rating for KVP 1.21 and the overall viewer sensitivity would be low. As such, the project would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surrounding in a non-urbanized area, and this impact would be less than significant. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

**Key Viewpoint 1.26: Gladstone Street**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-26a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.26 is located at the northern terminus of Gladstone Street at Fillmore Street, and is looking north. This KVP demonstrates a typical view from a residential area at the base of the foothills. Well-rounded mountains are visible in the background with utility poles and power lines strewn throughout. The dark grey fence and the rectangular elements of the residential structure are visible up close and account for the low visual quality of this setting. At this location, the E1 Build Alternative would be underground in a tunnel and there would be no change in the visual setting; therefore, no visual simulation was prepared. While viewer sensitivity at this location would be high because the project is not visible and visual quality would remain low, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

In this urbanized location, the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. As described in Appendix 2-H, the project would be consistent with the City of Los Angeles General Plan (City of Los Angeles 2010).

**CEQA Conclusion**

At KVP 1.26, the E1 Build Alternative would be in an urbanized area and would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. This impact would be less than significant. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

**Key Viewpoint 1.27: Hansen Spreading Grounds**

The E1 Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the E1 and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.27, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.27 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the E1 Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.28: Sheldon Street**

The E1 Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the E1 and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.28, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.28 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the E1 Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.29: Sun Valley Park**

The E1 Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**
Because the E1 and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.29, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.29 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the E1 Build Alternative.

### *E1A Build Alternative*

Table 3.16-17 summarizes the change to visual quality, viewer sensitivity, and CEQA significance for the E1A Build Alternative in Landscape Unit 2.

**Table 3.16-17 Change in Visual Quality of Landscape Unit 1 Key Viewpoints, E1A Build Alternative**

| Key Viewpoint | Visual Quality Rating – Existing | Visual Quality Rating – with Project | Viewer Sensitivity | Degree of Change to Visual Quality | CEQA Impact Determination |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Landscape Unit 1a: Acton Area** | | | | | |
| KVP 1.1: East Avenue S | Moderately low | Moderately low | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.2: Sierra Highway | Moderate | Moderate | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.3: Soledad Siphon | Moderate | Low | High | Adverse | Significant and Unavoidable |
| KVP 1.4: Soledad Siphon | Low | Low | High | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.5: Lamont Odett Vista Point 1 | Moderately high | Moderately high | Moderate | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.6: Lamont Odett Vista Point 2 | Moderately high | Moderately high | Moderate | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.12: Foreston Drive | Moderate | Moderately low | High | Adverse | Significant and Unavoidable |
| KVP 1.13: Aliso Canyon Road | Moderate | Moderate | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| **Landscape Unit 1c: San Gabriel Mountains/Angeles National Forest** | | | | | |
| KVP 1.21: Arrastre Canyon Road | High | High | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| **Landscape Unit 1d: Northeast San Fernando Valley** | | | | | |
| KVP 1.26: Gladstone Street | Low | Low[1] | High | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.27: Hansen Spreading Grounds | Low | Low | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.28: Sheldon Street | Low | Low | Moderate | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.29: Sun Valley Park | Low | Low | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |

1 Not applicable: the E1A Build Alternative would be underground in tunnels and, therefore, would not be visible
KVP = key viewpoint

**Key Viewpoint 1.1: East Avenue S**

The E1A Build Alternative is identical to the E1 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the E1A and E1 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.1, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.1 under the E1 Build Alternative remains valid for the E1A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.2: Sierra Highway**

KVP 1.2 is located on Sierra Highway, looking southeast toward Una Lake. Una Lake is the central feature, encircled by shrub vegetation. The topography is mostly flat, allowing views of the sky and the distant San Gabriel Mountains. A metal chain-link fence located between the lake and Sierra Highway detracts from the view by adding a non-natural form to the foreground. The existing visual quality is moderate.

The E1A Build Alternative alignment would pass east of Una Lake in the distance, avoiding the need to place fill in the lake as would be needed with the E1 Build Alternative. By locating the alignment further east, the E1A Build Alternative results in minimal changes in the visual characteristics of the landscape. The vegetation and the chain-link fence in the foreground as well as the trees and shrub steppe vegetation around the lake, and the lake itself, would remain unchanged. At-grade tracks and passing HSR trains would be visible in the distance. The duration of passing trains would be fleeting (approximately 4 seconds, up to 16 trains in the peak hour). OCS poles and wires along the tracks may be visible but would not block the view. Visual quality would remain moderate. Travelers along Sierra Highway may notice the tracks and passing trains in the distance for short durations, and would have low viewer sensitivity. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

**CEQA Conclusion**

The E1A Build Alternative would not decrease the visual quality rating for KVP 1.2 and the viewer sensitivity would be low. As such, the project would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surrounding in a non-urbanized area, and impacts would be less than significant. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

**Key Viewpoint 1.3: Soledad Siphon**

KVP 1.3 is located along Sierra Highway in the vicinity of Lake Palmdale and Una Lake looking south along the highway. This location is just north of where the California Aqueduct (Soledad Siphon) crosses under the roadway. At this location, Sierra highway is a rural two-lane highway that is well traveled during peak hours. Sparse development can be seen along both sides of the highway along with undeveloped land and the San Gabriel Mountains forming the backdrop. The existing visual quality is moderate.

The E1A Build Alternative 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; overall viewer sensitivity would be high. The viaduct would reduce the natural harmony by blocking distant views including those of the San Gabriel Mountains, and would reduce the visual quality to low. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be adverse.

Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#3 and AVQ-MM#4, as described in Section 3.16.7, are required to reduce impacts on visual quality. These measures will incorporate local design and aesthetic preferences into the design of the viaduct and require landscape treatments to screen the elevated guideway. Implementation of these measures would reduce the prominence of the viaduct. Nonetheless, with the implementation of mitigation, the project would still reduce visual quality from moderate to low.

**CEQA Conclusion**

At KVP 1.3, implementation of the E1A Build Alternative would change visual quality from moderate to moderately low. Therefore, the project would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings in a non-urbanized area. Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#3 and AVQ-MM#4, as described in Section 3.16.7, are required to reduce impacts. These measures will incorporate local design and aesthetic preferences into the

viaduct design as well as require landscape treatments adjacent to the elevated guideway. Implementation of these measures would reduce the prominence of the viaduct. However, after mitigation, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable for the E1A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.4: Soledad Siphon**

KVP 1.4 is located along Sierra Highway located south of the California Aqueduct looking north toward the city of Palmdale (not visible). At this location, Sierra highway is a rural two-lane highway that is well traveled during peak hours. Sparse development can be seen along both sides of the highway along with undeveloped land, however looking north there are no prominent visual features within the view. The existing visual quality is low.

The E1A Build Alternative alignment would cross over Sierra Highway on an elevated viaduct which would be highly visible to motorist and surrounding residents and businesses; viewer sensitivity would be high overall. The elevated 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 also block distant views and would reduce the existing natural harmony along this portion of Sierra Highway. Although viewer sensitivity at his KVP is high, since the visual quality rating would remain low, the overall degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the E1A Build Alternative would not decrease the visual quality rating for KVP 1.4 and the viewer sensitivity would be low, the effect of the E1A Build Alternative on visual quality for KVP 1.4 would be less than significant. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

**Key Viewpoint 1.5: Lamont Odett Vista Point 1**

The E1A Build Alternative is identical to the E1 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the E1A and E1 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.5, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.5 under the E1 Build Alternative remains valid for the E1A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.6: Lamont Odett Vista Point 2**

The E1A Build Alternative is identical to the E1 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the E1A and E1 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.6, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.6 under the E1 Build Alternative remains valid for the E1A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.12: Foreston Drive**

The E1A Build Alternative is identical to the E1 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the E1A and E1 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.12, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.12 under the E1 Build Alternative remains valid for the E1A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.13: Aliso Canyon Road**

The E1A Build Alternative is identical to the E1 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the E1A and E1 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.13, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.1 under the E1 Build Alternative remains valid for the E1A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.21: Arrastre Canyon Road**

The E1A Build Alternative is identical to the E1 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the E1A and E1 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.21, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.21 under the E1 Build Alternative remains valid for the E1A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.26: Gladstone Street**

The E1A Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the E1A and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.26, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.26 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the E1A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.27: Hansen Spreading Grounds**

The E1A Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the E1A and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.27, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.27 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the E1A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.28: Sheldon Street**

The E1A Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the E1A and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.28, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.28 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the E1A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.29: Sun Valley Park**

The E1A Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the E1A and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.29, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.29 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the E1A Build Alternative.

### *E2 Build Alternative*

Table 3.16-18 summarizes the change to visual quality, viewer sensitivity, and CEQA significance for the E2 Build Alternative in Landscape Unit 1.

**Table 3.16-18 Change in Visual Quality of Landscape Unit 1 Key Viewpoints, E2 Build Alternatives**

| Key Viewpoint | Visual Quality Rating – Existing | Visual Quality Rating – with Project | Viewer Sensitivity | Degree of Change to Visual Quality | CEQA Impact Determination |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Landscape Unit 1a: Acton Area** | | | | | |
| KVP 1.1: East Avenue S | Moderately low | Moderately low | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.2: Sierra Highway | Moderate | Moderately low | Low | Adverse | Significant and Unavoidable |
| KVP 1.5: Lamont Odett Vista Point 1 | Moderately high | Moderately high | Moderate | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.6: Lamont Odett Vista Point 2 | Moderately high | Moderately high | Moderate | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.12: Foreston Drive | Moderate | Moderately low | High | Adverse | Significant and Unavoidable |
| KVP 1.13: Aliso Canyon Road | Moderate | Moderate | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| **Landscape Unit 1c: San Gabriel Mountains/Angeles National Forest** | | | | | |
| KVP 1.21: Arrastre Canyon Road | High | High[1] | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.22: Lake View Terrace | Moderately high | Moderate | High | Adverse | Significant and Unavoidable |
| **Landscape Unit 1d: Northeast San Fernando Valley** | | | | | |
| KVP 1.23: Lake View Terrace 2 | Moderate | Moderate | High | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.24: Big Tujunga Wash | Moderately high | Moderate | High | Adverse | Significant and Unavoidable |
| KVP 1.25: Interstate 210 | Moderately low | Moderately low | High | Neutral | Less than Significant |

[1] Not applicable: the E2 Build Alternative would be underground in tunnels and, therefore, would not be visible
KVP = key viewpoint

**Key Viewpoint 1.1: East Avenue S**

The E2 Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**
Because the E2 and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.1, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.1 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the E2 Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.2: Sierra Highway**
The E2 Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**
Because the E2 and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.2, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.2 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the E2 Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.5: Lamont Odett Vista Point 1**

The E2 Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**
Because the E2 and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.5, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.5 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the E2 Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.6: Lamont Odett Vista Point 2**

The E2 Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**
Because the E2 and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.6, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.6 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the E2 Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.12: Foreston Drive**

The E2 Build Alternative is identical to the E1 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the E1 and E2 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.12, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.12 under the E1 Build Alternative be the same for the E2 Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.13: Aliso Canyon Road**

The E2 Build Alternative is identical to the E1 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the E1 and E2 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.13, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.13 under the E1 Build Alternative remains valid for the E2 Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.21: Arrastre Canyon Road**

The E2 Build Alternative is identical to the E1 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effect from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the E1 and E2 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.21, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.21 under the E1 Build Alternative remains valid for the E2 Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.22: Lake View Terrace**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-22a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.22 shows the view from Kurt Street at Nadina Street in unincorporated Los Angeles County, looking northeast from the Lake View Terrace neighborhood toward scenic hills. The view features an open, grassy field surrounded by scenic hills. Electrical transmission towers and lines descend from the hills into the adjacent neighborhood, revealing the interface of wildlands and development. Natural harmony is moderately high and cultural order is high; hence, overall visual quality is moderately high.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-22b (in Appendix 3.16-A), with the E2 Build Alternative the HSR tracks would emerge from a tunnel beneath the hills at a currently vacant field. The introduction of these project elements would be highly visible and would contrast with the natural harmony of the view,

and visual quality would be reduced to moderate. Residential neighbors adjacent to this area would be highly sensitive to these visual changes as they would impinge upon the natural harmony of the view from their foothill community, shifting the scene toward a more industrial character. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be adverse.

Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#4, AVQ-MM#5, and AVQ-MM#6, as described in Section 3.16.7, are required to reduce impacts on visual quality. These measures require landscape screening adjacent to residential areas, landscape treatments along the embankment, and the planting of vegetation within land acquired for the E2 Build Alternative that is not used for the HSR or related supporting infrastructure. Implementation of these measures would reduce the prominence of the embankment and project features. Nonetheless, with the implementation of mitigation, the project would still reduce visual quality from moderately high to moderate.

**CEQA Conclusion**

At KVP 1.22, implementation of the E2 Build Alternative would change visual quality from moderately high to moderate. Therefore, the project would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings in a non-urbanized area. Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#4, AVQ-MM#5, and AVQ-MM#6, as described in Section 3.16.7, are required to reduce impacts. These measures require landscape screening adjacent to residential areas, landscape treatments along the embankment, and the planting of vegetation within land acquired for the E2 Build Alternative that is not used for the HSR or related supporting infrastructure. Implementation of these measures would reduce the prominence of the embankment and project features. However, after mitigation, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable for the E2 Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.23: Lake View Terrace 2**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-23a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.23 shows the view from Foothill Boulevard at Wheatland Avenue, looking northwest toward foothills in unincorporated Los Angeles County. The view is dominated by a wide, flat, paved intersection with surrounding residences. The area around the intersection contains a mix of commercial, residential, and undeveloped parcels. Street trees and vegetation are abundant and dispersed in no apparent pattern along the roadside. Transmission poles and lines, stoplights, and streetlights line the roadway. The viewpoint is located one block north of the I-210 overcrossing. The existing visual quality is moderate.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-23b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the E2 Build Alternative would introduce an elevated viaduct crossing over residences and Foothill Boulevard. OCS poles and wires along the track would also be visible. The large horizontal scale of the elevated viaduct would mirror that of the paved roadway and would also be consistent with the visual character of the nearby overcrossing of I-210. Despite its large scale, the overcrossing would not substantially block views from this location. Overall, visual quality would remain moderate. Commercial neighbors and travelers along Foothill Boulevard and Wheatland Avenue would be relatively less sensitive than the nearby residential neighbors, who would be highly sensitive to project changes; viewer sensitivity would be high overall. Given the consistency of project features with the existing visual setting, which does not reduce the existing visual quality, the overall degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

In this urbanized location, the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. As described in Appendix 2-H, the project would be consistent with the City of Los Angeles General Plan (City of Los Angeles 2010).

**CEQA Conclusion**

At KVP 1.23, the E2 Build Alternative would be in an urbanized area and would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. This impact would be less than significant. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

**Key Viewpoint 1.24: Big Tujunga Wash**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-24a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.24 shows the view from the end of Wheatland Avenue near the Foothill Freeway over Tujunga Wash and power transmission towers, looking southwest. The viewpoint looks from the Foothill Freeway (I-210) on- and off-ramps on Wheatland Avenue toward undeveloped land and Tujunga Wash, interrupted by power transmission towers and power lines. Ranches and other commercial developments are located around the intersection, with residential neighborhoods nearby. The existing visual quality is moderately high.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-24b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the E2 Build Alternative would be on an elevated viaduct across Big Tujunga Wash. The viaduct structure, vertical piers, and distant circular tunnel portal would be highly visible and would contrast with the existing visual setting, lowering the existing natural harmony. Visual quality would be reduced to moderate with the project. Workers in the adjacent ranches and commercial areas, and the residents, would be highly sensitive to these visual changes because they would impinge upon the natural harmony of the view from their community. The overall degree of change to visual quality would be adverse.

Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#3 and AVQ-MM#4, as described in Section 3.16.7, are required to reduce impacts on visual quality. These measures will incorporate local design and aesthetic preferences into the design of the viaduct and require landscape treatments to screen the elevated guideway. Implementation of these measures would reduce the prominence of the viaduct. Nonetheless, with the implementation of mitigation, the project would still reduce visual quality from moderately high to moderate.

**CEQA Conclusion**

At KVP 1.24, implementation of the E2 Build Alternative would change visual quality from moderate to moderately low. Therefore, the project would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings in a non-urbanized area. Mitigation Measures AVQ-MM#3 and AVQ-MM#4, as described in Section 3.16.7, are required to reduce impacts. These measures will incorporate local design and aesthetic preferences into the viaduct design as well as require landscape treatments adjacent to the elevated guideway. Implementation of these measures would reduce the prominence of the viaduct. However, after mitigation, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable for the E2 Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.25: Interstate 210**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-25a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.25 depicts the view from the I-210 freeway, looking east, from the vantage point of highway motorists. The flat, grey road extends into the distance and dominates the view, vanishing into the backdrop of alternating ridgelines of the mountains. Vertical streetlights, rectangular signs, a power transmission tower, power lines, and green mature trees are scattered throughout in an irregular pattern. The existing visual quality is moderately low.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-25b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the E2 Build Alternative would introduce an elevated viaduct structure across the I-210 freeway. The elevated structure would not, however, be out of character or contrast substantially with the I-210 freeway and would be similar in scale and appearance to similar overhead structures associated with interchanges and roadway crossings that occur along the I-210 freeway in this urbanized environment. Overall, visual quality would continue to be moderately low. This elevated structure would be highly visible to motorists and surrounding residents and workers. The elevated structure would also partially block distant views for motorists; however, this view obstruction would be brief given highway travel speeds, so motorists would not be sensitive to visual changes. Overall, the viewer sensitivity at this KVP is high, however, because the visual quality would remain moderately low, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

In this urbanized location, the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. As described in Appendix 2-H, the project would be consistent with the City of Los Angeles General Plan (City of Los Angeles 2010).

**CEQA Conclusion**

At KVP 1.25, the E2 Build Alternative would be in an urbanized area and would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. This impact would be less than significant. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

### *E2A Build Alternative*

Table 3.16-19 summarizes the change to visual quality, viewer sensitivity, and CEQA significance for the E2A Build Alternative in Landscape Unit 1.

**Table 3.16-19 Change in Visual Quality of Landscape Unit 1 Key Viewpoints, E2A Build Alternative**

| Key Viewpoint | Visual Quality Rating – Existing | Visual Quality Rating – with Project | Viewer Sensitivity | Degree of Change to Visual Quality | CEQA Impact Determination |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Landscape Unit 1a: Acton Area** | | | | | |
| KVP 1.1: East Avenue S | Moderately low | Moderately low | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.2: Sierra Highway | Moderate | Moderate | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.3: Soledad Siphon | Moderate | Low | Low | Adverse | Significant and Unavoidable |
| KVP 1.4: Soledad Siphon | Low | Low | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.5: Lamont Odett Vista Point 1 | Moderately high | Moderately high | Moderate | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.6: Lamont Odett Vista Point 2 | Moderately high | Moderately high | Moderate | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.12: Foreston Drive | Moderate | Moderately low | High | Adverse | Significant and Unavoidable |
| KVP 1.13: Aliso Canyon Road | Moderate | Moderate | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| **Landscape Unit 1c: San Gabriel Mountains/Angeles National Forest** | | | | | |
| KVP 1.21: Arrastre Canyon Road | High | High[1] | Low | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.22: Lake View Terrace | Moderately high | Moderate | High | Adverse | Significant and Unavoidable |
| **Landscape Unit 1d: Northeast San Fernando Valley** | | | | | |
| KVP 1.23: Lake View Terrace 2 | Moderate | Moderate | High | Neutral | Less than Significant |
| KVP 1.24: Big Tujunga Wash | Moderately high | Moderate | High | Adverse | Significant and Unavoidable |
| KVP 1.25: Interstate 210 | Moderately low | Moderately low | High | Neutral | Less than Significant |

[1] Not applicable: the E2A Build Alternative would be underground in tunnels and, therefore, would not be visible
KVP = key viewpoint

**Key Viewpoint 1.1: East Avenue S**

The E2A Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**
Because the E2A and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.1, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.1 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the E2A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.2: Sierra Highway**
The E2A Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**
Because the E2A and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.2, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.2 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the E2A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.3; and Key Viewpoint 1.4: Soledad Siphon**

From these two KVPs (shown in Figures 3.16-A-3 and 3.16-A-4 in Appendix 3.16-A), the E2A Build Alternative would have the same visual effects as those described for the SR14A Build Alternative. While the E2A Build Alternative would have a slightly different alignment south of Una Lake and across the California Aqueduct, this difference in alignment would not result in a substantive difference in terms of visual change from these viewpoints and in this portion of the landscape unit.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the E2A and SR14A Build Alternatives would be identical at KVPs 1.3 and 1.4, the CEQA conclusion for KVPs 1.3 and 1.4 under the SR14A Build Alternative remain valid for the E2A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.5: Lamont Odett Vista Point 1**

The E2A Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**
Because the E2A and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.5, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.5 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the E2A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.6: Lamont Odett Vista Point 2**

The E2A Build Alternative is identical to the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**
Because the E2A and Refined SR14 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.6, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.6 under the Refined SR14 Build Alternative remains valid for the E2A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.12: Foreston Drive**

The E2A Build Alternative is identical to the E2 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because E2A and E2 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVPs 1.12, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.12 under the E2 Build Alternative remains valid for the E2A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.13: Aliso Canyon Road**

The E2A Build Alternative is identical to the E1 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the E2A and E1 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.13, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.13 under the E1 Build Alternative remains valid for the E2A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.21: Arrastre Canyon Road**

The E2A Build Alternative is identical to the E1 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effect from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the E2A and E1 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.21, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.21 under the E1 Build Alternative remains valid for the E2A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.22: Lake View Terrace**

The E2A Build Alternative is identical to the E2 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the E2A and E2 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.22, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.22 under the E2 Build Alternative remains valid for the E2A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.23: Lake View Terrace 2**

The E2A Build Alternative is identical to the E2 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the E2A and E2 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.23, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.23 under the E2 Build Alternative remains valid for the E2A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.24: Big Tujunga Wash**

The E2A Build Alternative is identical to the E2 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the E2A and E2 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.24, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.24 under the E2 Build Alternative remains valid for the E2A Build Alternative.

**Key Viewpoint 1.25: Interstate 210**

The E2A Build Alternative is identical to the E2 Build Alternative in design and ancillary facilities in this area and therefore would have the same visual effects from this KVP.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because the E2A and E2 Build Alternatives would be identical at KVP 1.25, the CEQA conclusion for KVP 1.25 under the E2 Build Alternative remains valid for the E2A Build Alternative.

### *Landscape Unit 2*

**All Six Build Alternatives**

As described in Section 3.16.4, aesthetic and visual impacts on each landscape unit are assessed by examining changes to visual quality at KVPs. In most cases, photo simulations were prepared to support the impact analysis. Existing views were compared to photo simulations of the Refined SR14 Build Alternative, considering changes in visual quality and character, and taking into account viewer sensitivity. The degree of the visual impact was evaluated using the criteria of significance for both NEPA and CEQA, as discussed in Sections 3.16.4.2 and 3.16.4.5,

respectively. KVPs and visual simulations are discussed below and provided in Appendix 3.16-A. See Chapter 4, Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) Evaluations, for detailed information pertaining to Section 4(f) and 6(f) resources.

In this landscape unit, the HSR trains would operate near existing Metrolink trains, which would reduce the uniqueness of seeing trains moving through the area as train operations are already common. The Burbank Airport Station would be a new activity focal point in the community and would appear as a highly active transportation hub. However, the Burbank Airport Station would be close to the Hollywood Burbank Airport, which is an existing active transportation hub. The Hollywood Burbank Airport is currently considering relocating the main terminal buildings. One option would place the new main terminal close to the proposed Burbank Airport Station. Locating these two transportation hubs close to each other would intensify the visual impact on the aesthetics of the area. Table 3.16-20 summarizes the change to visual quality, viewer sensitivity, and CEQA significance for all six Build Alternatives in Landscape Unit 2.

**Table 3.16-20 Change in Visual Quality of Landscape Unit 2 Key Viewpoints, All Six Build Alternatives**

| Key Viewpoint | Visual Quality Rating – Existing | Visual Quality Rating – with Project | Viewer Sensitivity | Degree of Change to Visual Quality | CEQA Impact Determination |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| KVP 2.1: San Fernando Road 1 | Moderate | Moderately high | Moderate | Beneficial | Less than Significant |

KVP = key viewpoint

**Key Viewpoint 2.1: San Fernando Road**

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-30a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 2.1 is located on North Hollywood Way, looking northwest toward an expansive parking lot for Hollywood Burbank Airport. 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. A fence topped with barbed wire separates the lot from the North Hollywood Way sidewalk. The existing visual quality is moderate.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-30b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the Burbank Airport Station would add station facilities near Hollywood Way such as the transit center. Since most station facilities would be below ground, the scale and mass of station facilities would be relatively small. The area along Hollywood Way would be transformed into a transit center for buses and shuttles, with shelters and small buildings scattered throughout. Cultural order would be enhanced with a wider sidewalk and no fence barriers separating the station from the street. The transit center would be heavily landscaped with trees, enhancing the presently low level of natural harmony. Therefore, visual quality would be raised to moderately high overall. Station features would be visible to commercial neighbors and to motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians traveling along North Hollywood Way. These viewer groups would have a low viewer sensitivity to visual changes. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be beneficial.

**CEQA Conclusion**

Because all six Build Alternatives would increase the overall visual quality rating for KVP 2.1 and the viewer sensitivity would be moderate, the existing visual character and quality of the site and its surroundings would not be degraded. The impact of the Refined SR14, SR14A, E1, E1A, E2, and E2A Build Alternatives on visual quality for KVP 2.1 would be less than significant. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

**Impact AVQ#5: Permanent Impacts from Operations.**

***Landscape Unit 1 and Landscape Unit 2***

**All Six Build Alternatives**

None of the operational activities associated with the six Build Alternatives would involve substantial visual changes to the natural or cultural environments. Maintenance activities and security patrols would be infrequent and would not introduce permanent new structures. Lighting associated with maintenance and security would be minimal. Passing HSR trains would blend into the already-built HSR structure. HSR train headlights would be directed toward the track. Light generated by HSR trains, tracks, signs, and signals would be minimal and would be directed to the tracks. Light spillover would be minimal. Glare from the HSR trains and structures would be minimal, and retaining walls, guideways, and other built structures would use materials that do not cause substantial amounts of glare.

**CEQA Conclusion**

The operational activities associated with the six Build Alternatives would not involve substantial changes to the natural or cultural environments. Therefore, project operations would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings in non-urbanized areas and project operation would not conflict with applicable zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality in urbanized areas. Additionally, project operations would not create new permanent sources of substantial light or glare. Permanent impacts from operations in Landscape Unit 1 and Landscape Unit 2 for each of the six Build Alternatives would be less than significant. Therefore, CEQA does not require any mitigation.

## 3.16.7 Mitigation Measures

The 2005 Statewide Program EIR/EIS has committed to a general mitigation strategy that the proposed facilities be designed so that they are attractive and integrate into their settings, reduce the potential to block views, and minimize light/shadow impacts and other visual impacts. Some of the standard mitigation measures developed for the California HSR System include selecting fast-growing species of vegetation and applying irrigation to achieve quicker mitigation and factoring in durability and ease of cleaning into the construction materials so that the mitigation could be maintained longer. The selection of native vegetation and use of surface coatings that are resistant to weather and graffiti are specific examples of addressing performance standards.

As part of the final design and the Construction Management Plan (TRA-MM#12), the Authority will work with local jurisdictions to develop appropriate visual/aesthetic treatments. These treatments would need to reflect reasonable costs and meet engineering design parameters. Appropriate treatments would vary by location but would be compatible with the context of areas adjacent to them. Treatments may include some or all of the following:

- Fencing or screening
- Vegetation around guideway structures, columns, and other project components, such as adits and TPSSs
- Colors, patterns, and textures on guideway structures, columns, and sound walls
- Pavement treatments at stations

Mitigation measures are additional measures that have been identified to further reduce, compensate for, or offset project impacts. This Draft EIR/EIS identifies mitigation measures that the Authority proposes to implement with a Build Alternative.

The mitigation measures listed below for aesthetics and visual resources are consistent with mitigation measures for similar-scale transportation projects and have proven to be effective in minimizing impacts noted above. Mitigation measures for temporary construction impacts and permanent impacts associated with physical changes of the landscape by facilities as well as project operations are consistent with standard California HSR mitigation measures that discuss

various landscapes and elements of the built and natural environments associated with the California HSR System.

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

Prior to construction (any ground-disturbing activity), the contractor will prepare a technical memorandum identifying how the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section would 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 obstruct 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 in compliance with 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 would be minimum 5-gallon containers and replaced trees will be minimum 24-inch box and minimum 8 feet in height.
- To the extent feasible, do not locate CSAs within the immediate foreground distance (0 to 500 feet) of existing residential neighborhoods, recreational areas, or other land uses that would include highly sensitive viewers. Where such siting would be unavoidable, screen staging sites from viewers using appropriate solid screening materials such as temporary fencing and walls. The contractor will paint over or remove any graffiti or visual defacement of temporary fencing and walls within five business days of it occurring.

The technical memorandum would 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 will prepare a technical memorandum verifying how they will shield nighttime construction lighting and direct it downward in such a manner to minimize light that falls outside the construction site boundaries. The technical memorandum will 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. Refer to Aesthetic Review Process for Non-Stations Structures (Authority 2013). 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 shall 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 (ISCC 2010) would be planted. Upon maturity, the crowns of trees used would be tall enough to partially, or fully, screen views of the elevated guideway from adjacent at-grade areas. Upon maturity, trees

would 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 would be installed within the tree planting areas.

The contractor will 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#5: Replant Unused Portions of Land Acquired for the HSR**

Prior to operations and maintenance, the contractor will plant vegetation within land acquired for the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section (e.g., shifting roadways) that is not used for the HSR or related supporting infrastructure, or other higher or better use. Plantings will allow adequate space between the vegetation and the HSR alignment and catenary lines. All street trees and other visually important vegetation removed in these areas during construction would be replaced with similar vegetation that, upon maturity, would be similar in size and character to the removed vegetation. Replaced shrubs would be minimum 5-gallon containers and trees will be minimum 24-inch box and 8 feet in height. The Authority will provide for continuous maintenance with appropriate irrigation systems. The contractor will install the irrigation system within the planting areas. No species listed on the Invasive Species Council of California's list of invasive species would be planted.

**AVQ-MM#6: Screen Traction Power Supply Stations and Radio Communication Towers**

Within 90 days of completing station construction, the contractor will screen from public view the TPSSs (located at approximately 30-mile intervals along the HSR guideway), including radio towers where required, through the use of landscaping or solid walls or fences. This screening will consist of context-appropriate landscaping of a type and scale that does not draw attention to the station or feature. Plant species 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. The landscaping will be continuously maintained, and appropriate irrigation systems will be installed within the landscaped areas. Walls would be constructed of cinderblock, or similar material, and will be painted a neutral color to blend in with the surrounding context. If a chain-link or cyclone fence is used, it will include slats in the fencing.

Any graffiti or visual defacement or damage of fencing and walls will be painted over or repaired within a reasonable period as agreed between the Authority and local jurisdiction. None of the mitigation measure options is expected to result in secondary effects. The mitigation measures are typical of visual treatments applied on linear transportation facilities; they have been defined to be specific in range and implementable according to context and design in coordination with local jurisdictions.

The contractor will prepare a technical memorandum documenting how the requirements in this measure were implemented. The technical memorandum will be submitted to the Authority to document compliance.

### *3.16.7.1 Impacts from Implementing Mitigation Measures*

None of the mitigation measures listed above would be expected to result in secondary effects. The mitigation measures are typical of visual treatments applied on linear transportation facilities; they have been defined to be specific and implementable and in coordination with local jurisdictions.

## 3.16.8 NEPA Impacts Summary

This section summarizes the impacts of the six Build Alternatives. Table 3.16-21 summarizes the effects of the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section on existing visual quality and viewer sensitivity at individual KVPs and for each landscape unit as a whole for the Refined SR14, SR14A, E1, E1A, E2, and E2A Build Alternatives (described in detail in Section 3.16.6).

### 3.16.8.1 Build Alternatives

Impacts of the six Build Alternatives are identified based on project-related changes in visual quality of the existing landscape setting, prevailing viewer sensitivity, project visibility, and anticipated viewer response. In general, during construction and operations, a greater and wider variety of visual impacts would occur under the Refined SR14, SR14A, E2, and E2A Build Alternatives than under the E1 and E1A Build Alternatives. The E1 and E1A Build Alternatives would be largely below grade and would thus result in the least visual impact on their surroundings. The Refined SR14, SR14A, E2, and E2A Build Alternatives, would also include substantial below-grade portions, but would cross various waterways and other scenic natural resources above grade, thereby causing greater changes in visual quality. The following list summarizes visual impacts resulting from each Build Alternative within each landscape unit.

**Temporary Construction Impacts**

The six Build Alternatives would have similar temporary visual effects from construction. Conventional construction methods would be used for at-grade segments. Construction activities would cause substantial visual disturbance in all landscape units, including earth preparation, railbed construction, and associated truck hauling and other major material and equipment storage and movement. These activities would be highly visible in more populated areas along the six Build Alternatives. Likewise, construction activities associated with tunneling in Landscape Unit 1, including utility relocation, demolition, site and staging area preparation, drilling of piles, aerial structure, tunneling (including tunnel portals), and construction of tracks would be highly visually intrusive. Adits would be utilized at several locations along the alignment, causing major visual changes during construction. Staging areas, which would occur along the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section in all landscape units, would introduce major visual changes to their immediate surroundings, with unsightly, visually disordered aggregations of stored material and equipment. In addition, concrete batch plants used for production of concrete during construction of the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section would be introduced within the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section right-of-way for the duration of construction. Mitigation measure AVQ-MM#1 will implement measures to minimize construction-related disruption to visual quality, such as minimizing pre-construction clearing, limiting building removal, post-construction regrading, and avoiding locating CSAs within 500 feet of existing residential neighborhoods and other sensitive land uses, substantially reducing the noticeability of construction activities to viewers. Lighting for nighttime construction would substantially disturb nearby residents and motorists. AVQ-MM#2 will require nighttime construction lighting to be shielded and directed downward in such a manner to minimize light that falls outside the construction site boundaries, limiting disruption on nearby residents and motorists. Additionally, these impacts would be temporary and disturbed areas would be remediated after completion of construction.

**Permanent Construction Impacts**

Permanent impacts to aesthetic and visual quality resulting from changes to visual quality at KVPs would occur for all six Build Alternatives. Permanent construction impacts for Landscape Unit 1 are summarized below. See Section 3.16.6.5 for more details on permanent construction impacts due to changes to visual quality at KVPs.

- The overall degree of change to visual quality, together with viewer sensitivity, would be adverse from the Refined SR14 Build Alternative in Landscape Unit 1. While the Refined SR14 Build Alternative would generally be either near existing transportation infrastructure or below ground in tunnels, large-scale overcrossing structures would block views in some areas, such as on Red Rover Mine Road (KVP 1.8) and the PCT (KVP 1.14). Mitigation measures AVQ-MM#3 through AVQ-MM#6 would reduce impacts on visual quality, but permanent impacts would still occur for the Refined SR14 Build Alternative.
- The overall degree of change to visual quality, together with viewer sensitivity, would be adverse from the SR14A Build Alternative in Landscape Unit 1. The SR14A Build Alternative would tunnel underneath and thus avoid impacts to areas impacted by the Refined SR14 Build Alternative, including Red Rover Mine Road and the PCT. However, the SR14A Build

Alternative would still introduce large-scale overcrossing structures that would block views, including over the Sierra Highway by Soledad Siphon (KVP 1.3 and KVP 1.4), and across Agua Dulce Canyon Road (KVP 1.16). Mitigation measures AVQ-MM#3 through AVQ-MM#6 would reduce impacts on visual quality, but permanent impacts would still occur for the SR14A Build Alternative.

- The overall degree of change to visual quality, together with viewer sensitivity, would be neutral from the E1 and E1A Build Alternatives in Landscape Unit 1. Adverse visual impacts would occur at certain KVPs within Landscape Unit 1a, and mitigation measures AVQ-MM#3 through AVQ-MM#6 would reduce impacts on visual quality, but permanent impacts would still occur for Landscape Unit 1a. The E1 and E1A Build Alternatives would not be visible (i.e., it would be in a tunnel below ground) in Landscape Unit 1c and would have neutral visual effects throughout Landscape Unit 1d.
- The overall degree of change to visual quality, together with viewer sensitivity, would be adverse from the E2 and E2A Build Alternatives in Landscape Unit 1. While the project components for the E2 and E2A Build Alternatives would mostly be not visible below ground in tunnels within Landscape Unit 1c and large portions of Landscape Unit 1d, near the tunnel portals the project's features would contrast with natural harmony of some views, such as near Lake View Terrace (KVP 1.22) and Big Tujunga Wash (KVP 1.24). Mitigation measures AVQ-MM#3 through AVQ-MM#6 would reduce impacts on visual quality, but permanent impacts would still occur for the E2 and E2A Build Alternatives.

In Landscape Unit 2, the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section's scale, form, and materials would generally be compatible with the existing environments of commercial, industrial, and/or residential development in Burbank. All six Build Alternatives would have a beneficial degree of change to visual quality in Landscape Unit 2.

**Permanent Operations Impacts**

The six Build Alternatives would not substantially differ in their permanent visual effects from HSR operations. Visual/aesthetic effects of operation would result from high-speed trains running on the system, increased activity and traffic on local roadways from passengers arriving at and departing from stations, and ongoing maintenance activities. During peak hours, trains would pass a viewpoint as often as 12 times per hour. However, given the speed of the trains, their visibility would be very short in duration and, therefore, the degree of change in visual quality would be neutral.

Visual change around station areas would primarily result from new facilities and infrastructure to support the station. However, new stations would be a point of increased activity, with passengers arriving at and departing from stations throughout the day. This increase in activity would make stations more highly visible and prominent within the visual environment.

Maintenance activities would occur around all stations and trackway periodically throughout the life of the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section. These activities would be similar to maintenance activities that already occur for other major infrastructure facilities in the area such as freeways, the Metrolink rail line, and local major arterial streets. These activities would create more focus on the HSR facilities while they occur because of increased activity and equipment being present along the HSR facilities; however, these activities would be relatively brief and visually compatible with other maintenance activities already occurring within the area associated with other infrastructure.

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**Table 3.16-21 Comparison of High-Speed Rail Build Alternative Impacts for Aesthetics and Visual Quality**

| Impact | Build Alternative | | | | | | NEPA Conclusion before Mitigation (All Build Alternatives) | Mitigation | NEPA Conclusion post Mitigation (All Build Alternatives) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Refined SR14 | SR14A | E1 | E1A | E2 | E2A | | | |
| **Temporary Construction Impacts** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Impact AVQ#1: Temporary Construction Impacts on Existing Visual Quality.** Construction activities would contrast with the generally high natural harmony in Landscape Unit 1, which would temporarily decrease the overall visual quality rating of Landscape Unit 1 by one or more levels. Project construction would also decrease the overall visual quality of Landscape Unit 2 by one or more levels because construction activities would be highly visible and would result in substantial visual disturbance. | | | | | | | | | |
| Landscape Unit 1: Central Subsection—Construction activities would temporarily decrease the overall visual quality rating of Landscape Unit 1 by one or more levels and would been seen by viewers with overall moderate sensitivity. | X | X | X | X | X | X | Adverse Effect | AVQ-MM#1 | No Adverse Effect<br>See Section 3.16.6.4 |
| Landscape Unit 2: Burbank Subsection—Construction activities would not decrease the overall visual quality rating of Landscape Unit 2 and would be seen by viewers with overall moderate sensitivity. | X | X | X | X | X | X | Adverse Effect | AVQ-MM#1 | No Adverse Effect<br>See Section 3.16.6.4 |
| **Impact AVQ#2: Temporary Construction Impacts from Light and Glare.** Construction light and glare would be an annoyance to viewers in Landscape Unit 1 and Landscape Unit 2, reducing the visual quality rating by one or more levels, depending upon the setting. | | | | | | | | | |
| Landscape Unit 1: Central Subsection—Intrusive nighttime lighting during construction could be an annoyance to viewers, reducing the visual quality rating by one or more levels, and would be seen by viewers with overall moderate sensitivity. | X | X | X | X | X | X | Adverse Effect | AVQ-MM#2 | No Adverse Effect<br>See Section 3.16.6.4 |
| Landscape Unit 2: Burbank Subsection—Intrusive nighttime lighting during construction could be an annoyance to viewers and would decrease the overall visual quality rating of Landscape Unit 2, and would be seen by viewers with overall moderate sensitivity. | X | X | X | X | X | X | Adverse Effect | AVQ-MM#2 | No Adverse Effect<br>See Section 3.16.6.4 |
| **Impact AVQ#3: Temporary Construction Impacts on Scenic Vistas and Drives.** There are no scenic vistas or drives located within Landscape Unit 2. In Landscape Unit 1, construction activities would temporarily decrease the visual quality rating of views seen from scenic vistas and drives by one or more levels. | | | | | | | | | |
| Landscape Unit 1: Central Subsection—Construction activities in this landscape unit would temporarily decrease scenic views along Sierra Highway (near Una Lake), Soledad Canyon Road, Aliso Canyon Road and Little Tujunga Canyon Road, and SR 14 highway scenic drive. The Palmdale to Burbank Project Section would also be visible from the Lamont Odett Vista Point. | X | X | X | X | X | X | Adverse Effect | AVQ-MM#1 | No Adverse Effect<br>See Section 3.16.6.4 |
| Landscape Unit 2: Burbank Subsection—There are no scenic vistas or drives in this landscape unit. | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | No mitigation needed | N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.4 |

| Impact | Build Alternative | | | | | | NEPA Conclusion before Mitigation (All Build Alternatives) | Mitigation | NEPA Conclusion post Mitigation (All Build Alternatives) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Refined SR14 | SR14A | E1 | E1A | E2 | E2A | | | |
| **Permanent Construction and Operations Impacts** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Impact AVQ#4: Permanent Construction Impacts on Visual Quality.** The overall degree of change to visual quality for Landscape Unit 1 would vary across Build Alternatives. In Landscape Unit 2, the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section's scale, form, and materials would generally be compatible with the existing environments of commercial, industrial, and/or residential development in Burbank. All six Build Alternatives would have a neutral degree of change to visual quality in Landscape Unit 2. | | | | | | | | | |
| **Landscape Unit 1: Central Subsection** | | | | | | | | | |
| KVP 1.1: East Avenue S | X | X | X | X | X | X | No Adverse Effect | No mitigation needed | N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.2: Sierra Highway | X | X | X | X | X | X | **Refined SR14, E1, E2**: Adverse Effect<br>**SR14A, E1A, E2A**: No Adverse Effect | AVQ-MM#4<br>AVQ-MM#5<br>AVQ-MM#6 | **Refined SR14, E1, E2:** Adverse Effect<br>**SR14A, E1A, E2A**: N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.3: Soledad Siphon | N/A[1] | X | N/A[1] | X | N/A[1] | X | **Refined SR14, E1, E2**: N/A<br>**SR14A, E1A, E2A**: Adverse Effect | AVQ-MM#3<br>AVQ-MM#4 | **Refined SR14, E1, E2**: N/A<br>**SR14A, E1A, E2A**: Adverse Effect<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.4: Soledad Siphon | N/A[1] | X | N/A[1] | X | N/A[1] | X | **Refined SR14, E1, E2**: N/A<br>**SR14A, E1A, E2A:** No Adverse Effect | No mitigation needed | N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.5: Lamont Odett Vista Point 1 | X | X | X | X | X | X | No Adverse Effect | No mitigation needed | N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.6: Lamont Odett Vista Point 2 | X | X | X | X | X | X | No Adverse Effect | No mitigation needed | N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.7: Acton Agua Dulce Library | X | N/A[2] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | **Refined SR14**: No Adverse Effect<br>**SR14A, E1, E1A, E2, E2A**: N/A | No mitigation needed | N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.8: Red Rover Mine Road | X | N/A[2] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | **Refined SR14**: Adverse Effect<br>**SR14A, E1, E1A, E2, E2A**: N/A | AVQ-MM#3<br>AVQ-MM#4 | **Refined SR14**: Adverse Effect<br>**SR14A, E1, E1A, E2, E2A**: N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.9: SR14A Acton Intermediate Window | N/A[1] | X | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | **SR14A**: No Adverse Effect<br>**Refined SR14, E1, E1A, E2, E2A**: N/A | No mitigation needed | N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.10: State Route 14 East | X | N/A[2] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | **Refined SR14**: Adverse Effect<br>**SR14A, E1, E1A, E2, E2A**: N/A | AVQ-MM#3<br>AVQ-MM#4 | **Refined SR14**: Adverse Effect<br>**SR14A, E1, E1A, E2, E2A**: N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.11: Escondido Canyon Road | X | N/A[2] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | **Refined SR14**: Adverse Effect<br>**SR14A, E1, E1A, E2, E2A**: N/A | AVQ-MM#3<br>AVQ-MM#4 | **Refined SR14**: Adverse Effect<br>**SR14A, E1, E1A, E2, E2A**: N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.12: Foreston Drive | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | X | X | X | X | **Refined SR14, SR14A**: N/A<br>**E1, E1A, E2, E2A:** Adverse Effect | AVQ-MM#4<br>AVQ-MM#5<br>AVQ-MM#6 | **Refined SR14, SR14A**: N/A<br>**E1, E1A, E2, E2A**: Adverse Effect<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |

| Impact | Build Alternative | | | | | | NEPA Conclusion before Mitigation (All Build Alternatives) | Mitigation | NEPA Conclusion post Mitigation (All Build Alternatives) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Refined SR14 | SR14A | E1 | E1A | E2 | E2A | | | |
| KVP 1.13: Aliso Canyon Road | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | X | X | X | X | **Refined SR14, SR14A**: N/A<br>**E1, E1A, E2, E2A**: No Adverse Effect | No mitigation needed | N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.14: Pacific Crest Trail | X | N/A[2] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | **Refined SR14**: Adverse Effect<br>**SR14A, E1, E1A, E2, E2A**: N/A | AVQ-MM#3<br>AVQ-MM#4 | **Refined SR14**: Adverse Effect<br>**SR14A, E1, E1A, E2, E2A**: N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.15: Vazquez Rocks | X | N/A[2] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | **Refined SR14**: No Adverse Effect<br>**SR14A, E1, E1A, E2, E2A**: N/A | No mitigation needed | N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.16: Agua Dulce Canyon Road | X | X | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | **Refined SR14, SR14A**: Adverse Effect<br>**E1, E1A, E2, E2A**: N/A | AVQ-MM#4<br>AVQ-MM#5<br>AVQ-MM#6 | **Refined SR14, SR14A:** Adverse Effect<br>**E1, E1A, E2, E2A**: N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.17: State Route 14 | X | X | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | **Refined SR14, SR14A**: No Adverse Effect<br>**E1, E1A, E2, E2A**: N/A | No mitigation needed | N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.18: Soledad Canyon Road 1 | X | X | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | **Refined SR14, SR14A**: No Adverse Effect<br>**E1, E1A, E2, E2A**: N/A | No mitigation needed | N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.19: Soledad Canyon Road 2 | X | X | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | **Refined SR14, SR14A**: No Adverse Effect<br>**E1, E1A, E2, E2A**: N/A | No mitigation needed | N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.20: Sequoia Road | X | X | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | **Refined SR14, SR14A**: No Adverse Effect<br>**E1, E1A, E2, E2A**: N/A | No mitigation needed | N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.21: Arrastre Canyon Road | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | X | X | X | X | **Refined SR14, SR14A**: N/A<br>**E1, E1A, E2, E2A**: No Adverse Effect | No mitigation needed | N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.22: Lake View Terrace | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | X | X | **Refined SR14, SR14A, E1, E1A**: N/A<br>**E2, E2A**: Adverse Effect | AVQ-MM#4<br>AVQ-MM#5<br>AVQ-MM#6 | **Refined SR14, SR14A, E1, E1A**: N/A<br>**E2, E2A:** Adverse Effect<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.23: Lake View Terrace 2 | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | X | X | **Refined SR14, SR14A, E1, E1A**: N/A<br>**E2, E2A**: No Adverse Effect | No mitigation needed | N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.24: Big Tujunga Wash | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | X | X | **Refined SR14, SR14A, E1, E1A**: N/A<br>**E2, E2A**: Adverse Effect | AVQ-MM#3<br>AVQ-MM#4 | **Refined SR14, SR14A, E1, E1A:** N/A<br>**E2, E2A:** Adverse Effect<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.25: Interstate 210 | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | X | X | **Refined SR14, SR14A, E1, E1A**: N/A<br>**E2, E2A**: No Adverse Effect | No mitigation needed | N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |

| Impact | Build Alternative | | | | | | NEPA Conclusion before Mitigation (All Build Alternatives) | Mitigation | NEPA Conclusion post Mitigation (All Build Alternatives) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Refined SR14 | SR14A | E1 | E1A | E2 | E2A | | | |
| KVP 1.26: Gladstone Street | X | X | X | X | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | **Refined SR14, SR14A, E1, E1A**: No Adverse Effect<br>**E2, E2A**: N/A | No mitigation needed | N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.27: Hansen Spreading Grounds | X | X | X | X | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | **Refined SR14, SR14A, E1, E1A**: No Adverse Effect<br>**E2, E2A**: N/A | No mitigation needed | N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.28: Sheldon Street | X | X | X | X | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | **Refined SR14, SR14A, E1, E1A**: No Adverse Effect<br>**E2, E2A**: N/A | No mitigation needed | N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| KVP 1.29: Sun Valley Road | X | X | X | X | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | **Refined SR14, SR14A, E1, E1A**: No Adverse Effect<br>**E2, E2A**: N/A | No mitigation needed | N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| **Landscape Unit 2: Burbank Subsection** | | | | | | | | | |
| KVP 2.1: San Fernando Road | X | X | X | X | X | X | Beneficial Effect | No mitigation needed | N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| **Impact AVQ#5: Permanent Impacts from Operations.** | | | | | | | | | |
| Landscape Unit 1: Central Subsection—Operational activities would not involve substantial changes to the natural or cultural environments, or create new permanent sources of substantial light or glare. | X | X | X | X | X | X | No Adverse Effect | No mitigation needed | N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |
| Landscape Unit 2: Burbank Subsection—Operational activities would not involve substantial changes to the natural or cultural environments, or create new permanent sources of substantial light or glare. | X | X | X | X | X | X | No Adverse Effect | No mitigation needed | N/A<br>See Section 3.16.6.5 |

[1] Not applicable: this KVP is not located along this Build Alternative
[2] Not applicable: the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section would be underground in tunnels and, therefore, would not be visible.
KVP = key viewpoint; N/A = not available; SR = State Route

### 3.16.9 CEQA Significance Conclusions

Table 3.16-22 summarizes impacts, mitigation measures, and the level of significance after mitigation for the Refined SR14, SR14A, E1, E1A, E2, and E2A Build Alternatives, respectively. With the incorporation of mitigation measures, all impacts would be reduced, though not always to a less than significant level under CEQA.

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**Table 3.16-22 Summary of CEQA Significance Conclusions and Mitigation Measures for Aesthetics and Visual Quality**

| Impact | CEQA Level of Significance before Mitigation | | | | | | Mitigation Measure | | | | | | CEQA Level of Significance after Mitigation | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Refined SR14 | SR14A | E1 | E1A | E2 | E2A | Refined SR14 | SR14A | E1 | E1A | E2 | E2A | Refined SR14 | SR14A | E1 | E1A | E2 | E2A |
| **Temporary Construction Impacts** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Impact AVQ#1: Temporary Construction Impacts on Existing Visual Quality.** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Landscape Unit 1: Central Subsection—Construction activities would temporarily decrease the overall visual quality rating of Landscape Unit 1 by one or more levels and would been seen by viewers with overall moderate sensitivity. | S | S | S | S | S | S | AVQ-MM#1 | AVQ-MM#1 | AVQ-MM#1 | AVQ-MM#1 | AVQ-MM#1 | AVQ-MM#1 | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS |
| Landscape Unit 2: Burbank Subsection—Construction activities would not decrease the overall visual quality rating of Landscape Unit 2 and would be seen by viewers with overall moderate sensitivity. | S | S | S | S | S | S | AVQ-MM#1 | AVQ-MM#1 | AVQ-MM#1 | AVQ-MM#1 | AVQ-MM#1 | AVQ-MM#1 | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS |
| **Impact AVQ#2: Temporary Construction Impacts from Light and Glare.** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Landscape Unit 1: Central Subsection—Intrusive nighttime lighting during construction could be an annoyance to viewers, reducing the visual quality rating by one or more levels, and would be seen by viewers with overall moderate sensitivity. | S | S | S | S | S | S | AVQ-MM#2 | AVQ-MM#2 | AVQ-MM#2 | AVQ-MM#2 | AVQ-MM#2 | AVQ-MM#2 | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS |
| Landscape Unit 2: Burbank Subsection—Intrusive nighttime lighting during construction could be an annoyance to viewers but would not decrease the overall visual quality rating of Landscape Unit 2, and would be seen by viewers with overall moderate sensitivity. | S | S | S | S | S | S | AVQ-MM#2 | AVQ-MM#2 | AVQ-MM#2 | AVQ-MM#2 | AVQ-MM#2 | AVQ-MM#2 | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS |

| Impact | CEQA Level of Significance before Mitigation | | | | | | Mitigation Measure | | | | | | CEQA Level of Significance after Mitigation | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Refined SR14 | SR14A | E1 | E1A | E2 | E2A | Refined SR14 | SR14A | E1 | E1A | E2 | E2A | Refined SR14 | SR14A | E1 | E1A | E2 | E2A |
| **Impact AVQ#3: Temporary Construction Impacts on Scenic Vistas and Drives.** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Landscape Unit 1: Central Subsection—Construction activities in this landscape unit would temporarily decrease scenic views along Sierra Highway (near Una Lake), Soledad Canyon Road, Aliso Canyon Road and Little Tujunga Canyon Road, and SR 14 highway scenic drive. The Palmdale to Burbank Project Section would also be visible from the Lamont Odett Vista Point. | S | S | S | S | S | S | AVQ-MM#1 | AVQ-MM#1 | AVQ-MM#1 | AVQ-MM#1 | AVQ-MM#1 | AVQ-MM#1 | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS |
| Landscape Unit 2: Burbank Subsection—There are no scenic vistas or drives in this landscape unit. | No Impact | No Impact | No Impact | No Impact | No Impact | No Impact | No mitigation measures are required. | No mitigation measures are required. | No mitigation measures are required. | No mitigation measures are required. | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required. | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| **Permanent Construction and Operations Impacts** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Impact AVQ#4: Permanent Construction Impacts on Visual Quality.** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Landscape Unit 1: Central Subsection** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KVP 1.1: East Avenue S | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| KVP 1.2: Sierra Highway | S | LTS | S | LTS | S | LTS | AVQ-MM#4, AVQ-MM#5, AVQ-MM#6 | No mitigation measures are required | AVQ-MM#4, AVQ-MM#5, AVQ-MM#6 | No mitigation measures are required | AVQ-MM#4, AVQ-MM#5, AVQ-MM#6 | No mitigation measures are required | SU | N/A | SU | N/A | SU | N/A |
| KVP 1.3: Soledad Siphon | N/A[1] | S | N/A[1] | S | N/A[1] | S | N/A[1] | AVQ-MM#3, AVQ-MM#4 | N/A[1] | AVQ-MM#3, AVQ-MM#4 | N/A[1] | AVQ-MM#3, AVQ-MM#4 | N/A[1] | SU | N/A[1] | SU | N/A[1] | SU |
| KVP 1.4: Soledad Siphon | N/A[1] | LTS | N/A[1] | LTS | N/A[1] | LTS | N/A[1] | No mitigation measures are required | N/A[1] | No mitigation measures are required | N/A[1] | No mitigation measures are required | N/A[1] | N/A | N/A[1] | N/A | N/A[1] | N/A |

| Impact | CEQA Level of Significance before Mitigation | | | | | | Mitigation Measure | | | | | | CEQA Level of Significance after Mitigation | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Refined SR14 | SR14A | E1 | E1A | E2 | E2A | Refined SR14 | SR14A | E1 | E1A | E2 | E2A | Refined SR14 | SR14A | E1 | E1A | E2 | E2A |
| KVP 1.5: Lamont Odett Vista Point 1 | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| KVP 1.6: Lamont Odett Vista Point 2 | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| KVP 1.7: Acton Agua Dulce Library | LTS | N/A[2] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | No mitigation measures are required | N/A[2] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A | N/A[2] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] |
| KVP 1.8: Red Rover Mine Road | S | N/A[2] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | AVQ-MM#3, AVQ-MM#4 | N/A[2] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | SU | N/A[2] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] |
| KVP 1.9: SR14A Acton Intermediate Window | N/A[1] | LTS | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | No mitigation measures are required | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] |
| KVP 1.10: State Route 14 East | S | N/A[2] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | AVQ-MM#3, AVQ-MM#4 | N/A[2] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | SU | N/A[2] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] |
| KVP 1.11: Escondido Canyon Road | S | N/A[2] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | AVQ-MM#3, AVQ-MM#4 | N/A[2] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | SU | N/A[2] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] |
| KVP 1.12: Foreston Drive | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | S | S | S | S | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | AVQ-MM#4, AVQ-MM#5, AVQ-MM#6 | AVQ-MM#4, AVQ-MM#5, AVQ-MM#6 | AVQ-MM#4, AVQ-MM#5, AVQ-MM#6 | AVQ-MM#4, AVQ-MM#5, AVQ-MM#6 | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | SU | SU | SU | SU |
| KVP 1.13: Aliso Canyon Road | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

| Impact | CEQA Level of Significance before Mitigation | | | | | | Mitigation Measure | | | | | | CEQA Level of Significance after Mitigation | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Refined SR14 | SR14A | E1 | E1A | E2 | E2A | Refined SR14 | SR14A | E1 | E1A | E2 | E2A | Refined SR14 | SR14A | E1 | E1A | E2 | E2A |
| KVP 1.14: Pacific Crest Trail | S | N/A[2] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | AVQ-MM#3, AVQ-MM#4 | N/A[2] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | SU | N/A[2] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] |
| KVP 1.15: Vazquez Rocks | LTS | N/A[2] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | No mitigation measures are required | N/A[2] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A | N/A[2] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] |
| KVP 1.16: Agua Dulce Canyon Road | S | S | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | AVQ-MM#4, AVQ-MM#5, AVQ-MM#6 | AVQ-MM#4, AVQ-MM#5, AVQ-MM#6 | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | SU | SU | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] |
| KVP 1.17: State Route 14 | LTS | LTS | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A | N/A | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] |
| KVP 1.18: Soledad Canyon Road 1 | LTS | LTS | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A | N/A | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] |
| KVP 1.19: Soledad Canyon Road 2 | LTS | LTS | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A | N/A | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] |
| KVP 1.20: Sequoia Road | LTS | LTS | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A | N/A | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] |
| KVP 1.21: Arrastre Canyon Road | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

| Impact | CEQA Level of Significance before Mitigation | | | | | | Mitigation Measure | | | | | | CEQA Level of Significance after Mitigation | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Refined SR14 | SR14A | E1 | E1A | E2 | E2A | Refined SR14 | SR14A | E1 | E1A | E2 | E2A | Refined SR14 | SR14A | E1 | E1A | E2 | E2A |
| KVP 1.22: Lake View Terrace | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | S | S | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | AVQ-MM#4, AVQ-MM#5, AVQ-MM#6 | AVQ-MM#4, AVQ-MM#5, AVQ-MM#6 | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | SU | SU |
| KVP 1.23: Lake View Terrace 2 | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | LTS | LTS | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A | N/A[1] |
| KVP 1.24: Big Tujunga Wash | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | S | S | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | AVQ-MM#3, AVQ-MM#4 | AVQ-MM#3, AVQ-MM#4 | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | SU | SU |
| KVP 1.25: Interstate 210 | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | LTS | LTS | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A | N/A |
| KVP 1.26: Gladstone Street | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A[1] | N/A[1] |
| KVP 1.27: Hansen Spreading Grounds | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A[1] | N/A[1] |
| KVP 1.28: Sheldon Street | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A[1] | N/A[1] |
| KVP 1.29: Sun Valley Road | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | N/A[1] | N/A[1] | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A[1] | N/A[1] |

| Impact | CEQA Level of Significance before Mitigation | | | | | | Mitigation Measure | | | | | | CEQA Level of Significance after Mitigation | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Refined SR14 | SR14A | E1 | E1A | E2 | E2A | Refined SR14 | SR14A | E1 | E1A | E2 | E2A | Refined SR14 | SR14A | E1 | E1A | E2 | E2A |
| **Landscape Unit 2: Burbank Subsection** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KVP 2.1: San Fernando Road | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| **Impact AVQ#5: Permanent Impacts from Operations.** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Landscape Unit 1: Central Subsection— Operational activities would not involve substantial changes to the natural or cultural environments, or create new permanent sources of substantial light or glare. | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | No mitigation measures are required. | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required. | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Landscape Unit 2: Burbank Subsection— Operational activities would not involve substantial changes to the natural or cultural environments, or create new permanent sources of substantial light or glare. | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | LTS | No mitigation measures are required. | No mitigation measures are required. | No mitigation measures are required. | No mitigation measures are required. | No mitigation measures are required | No mitigation measures are required. | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

[1] Not applicable: this KVP is not located along this Build Alternative
[2] Not applicable: the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section would be underground in tunnels and, therefore, would not be visible.
CEQA = California Environmental Quality Act; LTS = less than significant; N/A = not available; S = significant; SU = significant and unavoidable; SR = State Route

## 3.16.10 United States Forest Service Impact Analysis

This section summarizes aesthetic and visual quality effects associated with the Refined SR14, SR14A, E1, E1A, E2, and E2A Build Alternatives on the ANF, including lands within the SGMNM.

### *3.16.10.1 Consistency with Applicable United States Forest Service Policies*

Appendix 3.1-B, USFS Policy and Consistency Analysis, contains a comprehensive evaluation of laws, regulations, plans, and policies relative to portions of the Build Alternative alignments within the ANF including SGMNM. Policies in the Angeles National Forest Management plan regarding aesthetics and visual quality are generally related to USFS's ability to maintain the scenic integrity of areas within the ANF including SGMNM.

This analysis concludes that the portions of the six Build Alternatives located on lands managed by USFS would be consistent with applicable policies pertaining to aesthetics and visual quality. Above-ground infrastructure within the ANF boundaries associated with each of the six Build Alternatives, including adit facilities, would typically be located on private inholdings, within existing utility corridors, or along roadways which do not provide high scenic integrity. Above-ground infrastructure adjacent to the ANF would not be located near any established viewpoints within the ANF towards areas outside of the ANF boundaries. The main location where above-ground infrastructure would be located adjacent to ANF boundaries, is along Aliso Canyon Road near Blum Ranch (KVP 1.13). Although the E1, E1A, E2, and E2A Build Alternatives would introduce highly visible elevated trackway in this area, ANF viewers would be limited to motorists along Aliso Canyon Road who would not be particularly sensitive to visual changes and whose views would be brief. Additionally, there are no federal or State-designated scenic highways identified in the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section.

### *3.16.10.2 United States Forest Service Resource Analysis*

#### Temporary Construction Impacts

During construction of the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section, changes to natural visual resources would occur in the ANF, including the SGMNM, for construction of tunnel portals, adits, and utility and access infrastructure. The changes from construction would be temporary and disturbed areas would be remediated after completion of construction. Temporary CSAs associated with the adits would introduce major visual changes to their immediate surroundings, with unsightly, visually disordered aggregations of stored material and equipment. However as noted above, these adits would be located on private inholding which do not provide high scenic integrity.

Clearing, earthmoving, and erection of project facilities would introduce new lines, forms, and colors that would typically contrast with the existing landscape forms, causing a decrease in the visual quality of most existing views. Most construction activities would cease within 1 to 2 years at any given location. Implementation of AVQ-MM#1 (discussed in Section 3.16.7) will require the contractor to prepare a technical memorandum, prior to construction, identifying how the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section would minimize construction-related disruption to visual quality, including activities such as minimizing pre-construction clearing, limiting building removal, post-construction regrading, and avoiding locating CSAs within 500 feet of sensitive land uses within the ANF including SGMNM.

#### Permanent Construction and Operations Impacts

As discussed in Section 3.16.5, Affected Environment, visual resources include designated scenic routes; views toward/within natural areas; parks; and urban areas that have been identified as having historical or cultural significance or that include buildings of similar significance or landmark status. These visual resources have been identified in planning and policy documents, in cultural resource reports, or in evaluations of scenic quality during field work related to aesthetics and visual resources. The selection of KVPs for this analysis was based on these visual resources, as seen by identified viewer groups and taking into consideration the six Build Alternatives and where each Build Alternative would result in aboveground changes. Since large portions of each Build

Alternative consist of underground tunnels that cross under the ANF, including portions designated as the SGMNM, the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section would cause few aboveground changes, except where as discussed above under Construction Impacts. Additionally, adits and associated infrastructure would be located on private inholdings within the ANF, which may result in adverse changes to visual quality depending on the adit option selected (see Section 3.16.6.4). Publicly accessible viewpoints within the ANF where the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section would be visible are limited. Of the KVPs selected for this analysis, only KVP 1.13 is located within the ANF, including the SGMNM. However, views of the ANF are prominent from KVPs 1.18 through 1.22, which are located outside of the ANF boundary. Changes in visual quality resulting from project implementation are described below for these KVPs.

***KVP 1.18: Soledad Canyon Road 1 (Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives)***

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-18a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.18 is located along Soledad Canyon Road, north of the ANF boundaries, looking south toward the Santa Clara River basin. An arrangement of dark green sharp ridgelines and rounded mountains make up the backdrop. In contrast, the foreground is a flat terrain covered with a mix of green, yellow, tan, and brown vegetation and some medium-size trees. Also visible is some heavy machinery associated with mining. The existing visual quality is moderately low.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-18b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives would introduce an elevated viaduct structure crossing over Soledad Canyon Road, the Santa Clara River, and the existing Metrolink rail alignment. In addition, a tunnel portal and associated facilities would be visible in the distance. Construction of the portal and associated facilities would result in conversion of mining operations in this area and restoration of some of the surrounding hillsides that have been affected by mining operations. The viaduct structure would be highly visible and would partially block views of the base of the hills. The portal and associated facilities would also be highly visible but would not block views. The primary affected viewers would be motorists, with low sensitivity, traveling on Soledad Canyon Road and SR 14. Their view of the San Gabriel Mountains would be partially obstructed by the Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives. However, this would only be momentary. The overall degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

***KVP 1.19: Soledad Canyon Road 2 (Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives)***

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-19a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.19 is located northwest of the ANF, along Soledad Canyon Road, near Lang Station Road. The tunnel portal and associated facilities would be visible looking southeast from KVP 1.19. The view is dominated by the abandoned Nike Missile site and active Vulcan Mine. A sequence of unpredictable alternating canyons and ridgelines of the San Gabriel Mountains as well as hillside alterations from past mining activities are visible in the background. A curvilinear paved road vanishes into the base of the mountains. The flat terrain in the foreground is covered with a mix of low-lying scrub vegetation and a few riparian trees. Small rectangular buildings and heavy machinery are noticeable components in the setting. The existing visual quality is moderately low.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-19b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives would introduce a tunnel portal and associated facilities at this location. While the foreground of the view would remain unaffected, the Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives would have a substantial effect on the background with the introduction of elevated track and tunnel portals. Construction of the portals and associated facilities would take place in an area used for mining operations.[3] The primary viewers in this area would be motorists on local roadways (SR 14 and Lang Station Road) and industrial workers. These viewers would have low sensitivity to the visual changes. The overall degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

[3] Upon the completion of mining activities at Vulcan Mine, the leaseholders will be responsible for restoring the mine site consistent with Surface Mining and Reclamation Act regulations and requirements, which would be anticipated to enhance visual harmony at the site relative to existing conditions, constituting a beneficial change to visual quality to the area.

### *KVP 1.20: Sequoia Road (Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives)*

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-20a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.20 is located outside the ANF on Sequoia Road between Yellowstone Lane and Gas Line Road. A viaduct structure, tunnel portal, and associated ancillary facilities would be visible looking south towards the ANF; however, the alternating canyons and ridgelines of the San Gabriel Mountains dominate the backdrop of the view. The abandoned Nike Missile site, heavy machinery, and box-like structures are visible in the setting. Hillside alterations from past mining activities are more noticeable in the lower right-hand portion of the view. Horizontal linear lines of SR 14 and Soledad Canyon Road are visible in the foreground. The landscape is covered with scattered low-lying scrub vegetation providing the shades of green and brown. The existing visual quality is moderately low.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-20b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives would introduce a viaduct structure, portal, and associated buildings into the view. Although the Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives would introduce significant changes, the character of the view of the ANF, including the SGMNM, from Sequoia Road would remain essentially unchanged. Construction of the tunnel portal and associated facilities would take place in an area used for mining operations.[4] While the primary viewer group would be highly sensitive residential neighbors in the community located along Sequoia Road, the Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives would be generally compatible with the visual character of the setting. Given that the duration of passing trains would be fleeting and in the distant background, this would not comprise a significant component of the view. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

### *KVP 1.13: Aliso Canyon Road (E1, E1A, E2, and E2A Build Alternatives)*

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-13a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.13 is located within the ANF, including the SGMNM, in unincorporated Los Angeles County, looking north from Aliso Canyon Road toward hills and Blum Ranch. An elevated HSR track, security fencing, and details of the OCS poles and wires would be visible from KVP 1.13. Aliso Canyon Road winds through a relatively undeveloped landscape, looking toward Blum Ranch and some scattered development in the background surrounded by hills. There are no developed trails, picnic, or camping areas within the ANF in this area. The primary ANF users who would experience this view are those traveling along Aliso Canyon Road. The existing visual quality is moderate.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-13b (in Appendix 3.16-A), an elevated guideway would carry train tracks over Aliso Creek and the tracks would return to ground level at Aliso Canyon Road. This would require rebuilding Aliso Canyon Road to cross under the HSR corridor. The elevated trackway would be highly visible to viewers within the ANF and because of its scale and distinct form, color, and texture would visually dominate the view in the foreground. HSR trains, security fencing, and details of the OCS poles and wires would be clearly visible and contribute a highly industrial character that would be out of character with the surrounding landscape. However, travelers along Aliso Canyon Road would represent the primary viewer group; motorists would view facilities associated with the E1, E1A, E2, and E2A Build Alternatives for a short duration and would not be sensitive to visual changes. Furthermore, from this vantage point, the E1, E1A, E2, and E2A Build Alternatives would not result in substantial blocking of views of the surrounding hills in the distance. Because viewer sensitivity would be low and the views of surrounding hills would not be blocked, the overall degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

### *KVP 1.21: Arrastre Canyon Road (E1, E1A, E2, and E2A Build Alternatives)*

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-21a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.21 shows the view looking southeast towards the E1, E1A, E2, and E2A Build Alternatives from the end of the publicly accessible portion of Arrastre Canyon Road where the natural setting includes views towards the San Gabriel Mountains. The natural environment also includes an intermittent wash that feeds into the Santa Clara River. Within the cultural environment a dirt road and a building are visible in the distance. The existing visual quality is high while the viewers, travelers along Arrastre Canyon Road, have a

[4] Ibid.

low sensitivity. The E1, E1A, E2, and E2A Build Alternatives would be underground in this location and therefore not visible; thus, no simulation was prepared. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be neutral.

***KVP 1.22: Lake View Terrace (E2 and E2A Build Alternatives)***

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-22a (in Appendix 3.16-A), KVP 1.22 shows the view from Kurt Street at Nadina Street in unincorporated Los Angeles County, looking northeast from the Lake View Terrace neighborhood toward scenic hills located within the ANF. The view features an open, grassy field surrounded by scenic hills. Electrical transmission towers and lines descend from the hills into the adjacent neighborhood, revealing the interface of wildlands and development. Natural harmony is moderately high and cultural order is high; hence, overall visual quality is moderately high.

As shown in Figure 3.16-A-22b (in Appendix 3.16-A), the E2 and E2A Build Alternative alignments would emerge from a tunnel beneath the hills at a currently vacant field. The introduction of these project elements would be highly visible and contrast with the natural harmony of the view. Residential neighbors adjacent to this area would be highly sensitive to these visual changes, as they would impinge upon the natural harmony of the view from their foothill community, shifting the scene toward a more industrial character. Overall, the degree of change to visual quality would be adverse for the E2 and E2A Build Alternatives.

**Adits within the Angeles National Forest**

Several optional adit sites are located in the ANF, but only one would be selected. Refer to Chapter 2, Alternatives, for figures depicting the adit option locations for each Build Alternative.

The Refined SR14 and SR14A Build Alternatives include three options for adits, one of which would be selected. Of the three, only Refined SR14-A1 would be located within the ANF along Little Tujunga Canyon Road on a private inholding. There are two adit options for the E1 and E1A Build Alternatives, one of which would be selected; both also would be located along Little Tujunga Canyon Road on private inholdings within the ANF. The first adit option (E1-A1) would extend west from the underground cavern to a CSA north of Little Tujunga Canyon Road, while the second adit option (E1-A2) would extend east from the underground cavern to a CSA along Little Tujunga Canyon Road.

The E2 and E2A Build Alternatives include two options for adits, one of which would be selected. The first adit option (E2-A1) would connect to Little Tujunga Canyon Road within the ANF, extending west from the underground cavern to a temporary CSA within a private inholding approximately 0.4 mile north of Gold Creek Road. The second adit option (E2-A2) would connect to Little Tujunga Canyon Road within the ANF, extending west from the underground cavern to a temporary CSA within a private inholding along Gold Creek Road.

During HSR operations, a structure and associated power facilities for emergency egress, maintenance, and ventilation equipment would remain at the selected adit location. The construction and operations of the adit within the ANF would contrast with the high natural harmony of its surroundings, thereby causing an adverse change to visual quality.

As part of the final design and the Construction Management Plan (TRA-MM#12), the Authority will work with USFS to develop appropriate visual/aesthetic treatments. These treatments will need to reflect reasonable costs and meet engineering design parameters. Appropriate treatments will vary by location but would be compatible with the context of areas adjacent to them. Treatments may include some or all of the following:

- Fencing or screening
- Vegetation around guideway structures, columns, and other project components, such as adits and TPSSs
- Colors, patterns, and textures on guideway structures, columns, and sound walls