3.1 AESTHETICS

The purpose of this chapter is to identify and evaluate key visual and aesthetic resources in the vicinity of the project site and to determine the degree of visual and aesthetic impacts that would be attributable to the proposed project.

The character of the existing visual environment was documented through field reconnaissance, photographic records, and aerial photograph interpretation. The description of the visual environment of the project site provides a baseline against which the effects of the proposed project on key views are assessed. Descriptors used to assess the visual environment include visual character, visual quality, visual resources, viewer groups and their sensitivity, and view duration. The analysis describes the potential aesthetic effects of the proposed project on the existing landscape and built environment, focusing on the compatibility of the proposed project with existing conditions and its potential effects on visual resources. Several visual simulations have been prepared and are presented in this chapter. The visual simulations presented illustrate the conceptual design of the proposed project and are not necessarily representative of the project final design.

3.1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

VISUAL CHARACTER

The visual character of urban environments can be defined as the overall physical image of the urban environment. Several factors contribute to this image, including: (1) nature and quality of building architecture and the landscape; (2) cohesion of the area's collective architecture and landscape; (3) compatibility between uses and activities with the built environment; (4) quality of the streetscape, including roadways, sidewalks, plazas, parks, and street furniture; and (5) quality and nature of private property landscaping that is visible to the general public.

PROJECT SITE VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS

The 32-acre project site is located at 1245 North Spring Street in the highly urbanized eastern portion of the City of Los Angeles, approximately 1.5 miles north of downtown Los Angeles and directly east of the Chinatown district.

The LASHP, historically known as River Station, but most recently known as the Cornfield or Chinatown Yard property, is a site of social, historical, and cultural importance, and one of the last large open spaces in the downtown Los Angeles. In June 1971, the City recognized the local significance of the project site by officially designating the site as Historic-Cultural Monument No. 82 for its role in the late 1800's as the Southern Pacific Railroad Company's River Station railroad yard.[1]

[1] City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning, Office of Historic Resources, Cultural Heritage Commission, Historic Cultural Monument (HCM) Report for Central City North Community Planning Area, Last Updated April 6, 2011, available at: http://www.preservation.lacity.org/designated-sites, accessed: October 25, 2011.

The project site is currently open for day-uses such as picnicking, jogging, running, informal play, and other activities that require large open areas. In addition, the project site also hosts a number of small and large special events that attract regional attendance. The project site consists of a long strip of land that tapers at each end. The project site is approximately 3,700 feet long and 600 feet wide. The project site comprises an elongated, grass-covered park that is currently developed with paved and unpaved walkways, with a long, linear walkway connecting the southwestern and northeastern ends of the park. The existing operations and maintenance yard, including a park administration building and a maintenance trailer, is located within the northeastern end of the park near the terminus of Baker Street. There are no structures on the project site above one-story in height. A circular, mandala-like garden, referred to as the Anabolic Monument, occupies the central portion of the park. The remaining southwestern 13 acres were recently developed in 2006 with an IPU park consisting of curvilinear walkways, trees, and open grass play areas.[2] The 13-acre IPU park uses were provided for immediate public use of LASHP while permanent planning and a long-term vision for the project site was developed. The existing IPU park includes the following: interpretive and educational features such as exhibits and panels in an outdoor facility, viewing area with patios, overlooks and/or decks; an information kiosk; landscaped public use area with turf amphitheater, picnic area, and walkways; a small lunch stand; site barriers, including fencing; temporary restroom facilities; informal parking, including bus capacity for school groups; and a maintenance yard. The project site does not include any unique or protected visual features.

Naturally occurring vegetation on the project site is sparse and limited to weedy growth dominated by plants that are able to exist in an urban environment. The 13-acre IPU park is landscaped with native trees and grasses. There are currently approximately 330 trees of various species on the project site, all of which are native. The existing trees on the project site range from 10 to 30 feet in height. The vegetation on the project site is visible from roadways that surround the project site. The project site is relatively flat with a gentle slope trending southeast.[3]

A vehicular driveway is provided along Spring Street at the southwestern end of the project site. A surface parking area is available within the south-central portion of the project site, near Spring Street. In addition, parking is currently available in the dirt/gravel areas along Spring Street, as well as along Baker Street. Pedestrian access to the project site is provided along Spring Street. However, public sidewalks are located only adjacent to the southeastern portion of the project site, along Spring Street. An approximately five-foot-tall, black chain-linked fence is located along the Spring Street edge of the property.

Southwestern views of the downtown Los Angeles skyline, including City Hall, are available from many areas of the project site. However, the project site is not located on a state scenic highway. In addition, the project site includes approximately 10-foot-tall lighting on portions of various pathways and grassy areas, including one standard covered lighting fixture per pole. The light poles and fixtures on the project

[2] CDPR, *Los Angeles State Historic Park*, 2009, available at: http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/22272/files/losangeles_shp_web_31709.pdf, accessed: February 3, 2011.

[3] United States Department of the Interior, Geological Survey, Los Angeles Quadrangle, California, Los Angeles Co., 7.5-Minute Series (Topographic), 1966, Photo Revised 1981, Minor Revision 1994.

site are consistent with the visual character of standard park lighting systems and do not posses any unique or ornamental visual features. There are no existing sources of glare on the project site.

Figures 3.1-1 through 3.1-5 below show the existing visual character and other existing features of the project site.

FIGURE 3.1-1: EXISTING PROJECT SITE LOOKING SOUTHWEST

FIGURE 3.1-2: EXISTING PROJECT SITE LOOKING WEST

FIGURE 3.1-3: EXISTING PROJECT SITE LOOKING NORTH

FIGURE 3.1-4: EXISTING PROJECT SITE LOOKING NORTHEAST

FIGURE 3.1-5: EXISTING PROJECT SITE LOOKING SOUTH

SURROUNDING VISUAL CHARACTERISTICS

The area surrounding the project site is a developed urban area consisting of a mix of commercial, light industrial, institutional, public facilities, and multi-family residential uses. Major landmarks in the project vicinity include Elysian Park and Dodger Stadium, which are located approximately 0.25 mile to the north.

One- to three-story industrial uses, a restaurant, as well as a large vacant City-owned lot are located south of the project site along Spring Street. Figure 3.1-6 shows the industrial buildings along Spring Street across from the project site. The elevated Metro Gold Line Chinatown Station is located further south of the project site at the intersection of Spring Street and College Street. The Metro Gold Line Chinatown Station includes numerous public art features that commemorate the involvement of Chinese immigrants in the construction of the railroads in the west and recognize the diverse ethnic populations that reside in the area surrounding the station.[4]

East of the project site, Spring Street spans the Los Angeles River within the North Spring Street Bridge, which was built in 1927. This bridge is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, listed on the California Register of Historical Resources, and is designated as a City Historic-Cultural Monument. As shown on Figure 3.1-7, directly east of the project site, several one- to three-story industrial uses are located along Baker Street. Located directly adjacent and east of these buildings are the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe railroad and the channelized Los Angeles River, which both travel in a north-south direction in the project area.

As mentioned in Chapter 2.0, Project Description, the City has plans for the widening and retrofit of the Spring Street Bridge and other modifications planned for Spring Street, adjacent to the project site and in accordance with the CASP. As part of the proposed street modifications, the intersection of Spring and Baker Streets would be altered or eliminated. In addition, a new traffic signal would be installed at the intersection of Spring and Wilhardt Streets.

Northeast of the project site, Broadway spans the Los Angeles River within the North Broadway Bridge, also previously known as the Buena Vista Street Bridge. This bridge was built in 1911 making it one of the oldest Los Angeles River bridges in the City. The North Broadway Bridge is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and is designated as a City Historic-Cultural Monument. This bridge is visible from within the project site.

Directly north of and adjacent to the project site is the Metro Gold Line right-of-way, including overhead catenary lines and poles up to a height of approximately 25 feet. An approximately five-foot-tall chain-link fence separates the project site from the Metro Gold Line right-of-way. Directly north of the Metro Gold Line right-of-way is Broadway. In the immediate project area, Broadway generally parallels the

[4] Chang, Chusien, *Wheels of Change*, USC Libraries, Going for Gold: California Stories on the Los Angeles Metro Gold Line: Communities, Public Art, and Placemaking Project funded by California Council for the Humanities through its California Stories: California Story Fund, available at: http://libguides.usc.edu/content.php?pid=31652&sid=312599, accessed: December 13, 2011.

Metro Gold Line right-of-way and is located at a higher grade and elevation than the project site and the Metro Gold Line (Figure 3.1-8). The land uses located north of the project site along Broadway are situated at the base of the Elysian Hills (Figure 3.1-9). These land uses include two-story office buildings and commercial uses, one- to two-story single-family residences, one- to three-story multi-family buildings, a three-story mixed-use building, St. Peter Italian Church, St. Bridget's Chinese Catholic Church, a Buddhist temple, and Cathedral High School. Some residential uses located along or north of Broadway may have a direct line-of-sight to the project site. Figure 3.1-10 shows the view of the project site looking southeast from Broadway.

The area surrounding the project site consists of primarily of small- to medium-scale industrial and commercial buildings, as well maintenance yards. The visual character of the project area is deteriorating, as the area is one of the oldest in the City, which has yet to be infilled with new developments, building façade improvements, signage improvements, or other exterior building improvements. A view of the downtown Los Angeles skyline is visible from most areas in the project vicinity. However, power transmission poles and lines, as well as existing intervening development interrupts many views of the skyline. There are no state scenic highways in the project area. The project area includes standard vehicular street lighting at a height of approximately 40 feet. Ornamental or decorative street lighting is located along Spring Street, near the Metro Gold Line Chinatown Station. There are no major sources of glare in the project area.

FIGURE 3.1-6: LOOKING SOUTHWEST ALONG SPRING STREET

FIGURE 3.1-7: LOOKING NORTHEAST ALONG BAKER STREET

FIGURE 3.1-8: LOOKING NORTH FROM SPRING STREET TOWARD BROADWAY AND ELYSIAN HILLS

FIGURE 3.1-9: LOOKING NORTHEAST ALONG BROADWAY

FIGURE 3.1-10: LOOKING SOUTHEAST FROM BROADWAY TOWARD PROJECT SITE AND SPRING STREET

3.1.2 REGULATORY SETTING

LOS ANGELES STATE HISTORIC PARK GENERAL PLAN

The LASHP General Plan/EIR was prepared by CDPR and subsequently adopted by the Commission on June 10, 2005. With the Commission's adoption of the LASHP General Plan/EIR, the project site was classified as a State Historic Park. Consistent with Cal. Pub. Res. Code Section 5002.2(e), interim park uses have provided for immediate public use of LASHP as permanent planning and a long-term vision for the project site are developed. The proposed project synthesizes the LASHP General Plan/EIR goals and guidelines into design concepts that would be implemented in phases as funding becomes available.

LOS ANGELES STATE HISTORIC PARK INTERPRETIVE MASTER PLAN

LASHP includes a unique history and location to provide interpretation of the greater trends, movements, and events that shaped Los Angeles' past and present. This direction comes from LASHP General Plan which emphasizes that the entire park is to be considered an interpretive site, and should be designed to function as an interpretive and cultural facility, as well as an inviting open space and gathering place for the local community and visitors. Completed on August 23, 2006, the LASHP Interpretive Master Plan is based extensively on direction provided in the LASHP General Plan. It provides a conceptual roadmap for developing and delivering interpretive programs and services. Specific interpretive plans are provided with recommendations for interpretive facilities, structures, and sites, ensuring that historical research, environmental reviews, thematic development, visitor studies and flow plans, exhibit designs, curriculum standards, etc., are current, accurate, relevant and consistent with the vision for LASHP as outlined in the General Plan.[5]

CORNFIELD ARROYO SECO SPECIFIC PLAN

The project site is located within the Draft CASP area. This document was circulated for public review in November 2010. In addition, the EIR process for the CASP is currently underway. Under the CASP, the project site is located within Sub-Area One and is designated as "Greenway."[6] The CASP area comprises approximately 663 acres north of Downtown Los Angeles, and includes the communities of Lincoln Heights, Cypress Park, and Chinatown. The purpose of the CASP is to facilitate the transformation of the area from vehicle-oriented and primarily industrial uses, to a mixed-use community oriented toward pedestrian and multimodal uses that would ultimately accommodate 10,000 residential units and 24.7 million square feet of light industrial and commercial uses. The Greenway District designation primarily allows for recreation or open space uses, and limited development providing for recreational, arts, educational, and/or community-related activities. Upon adoption by the City, the CASP's land use designations would become effective and govern development of the project site regardless of the underlying zoning established by the Community Plan.

[5] CDPR, *Los Angeles State Historic Park Interpretive Master Plan*, August 23, 2006.

[6] City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, Draft Cornfield Arroyo Seco Specific Plan, November 2010.

3.1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines, the proposed project would have a significant impact on aesthetics if it would:

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

METHODOLOGY FOR ASSESSING VISUAL IMPACT

The extent of the potential impact from a particular visual change is subjective and depends upon the degree of alteration, the scenic quality of the area disturbed, and the sensitivity of the viewers. The degree of alteration refers to the extent of visual change, including changes to landscaping, structure height, and setback length. Scenic quality is often indicated by special zoning and planning overlay zones, but can also be assessed based on the vividness or memorability of the view, and intactness and unity of the elements within the view. These terms are defined as follows:

Vividness — The memorability of the visual impression received from contrasting landscape elements as they combine to form a striking distinctive visual pattern.

Intactness — The integrity of visual order in the natural and man-built landscape, and the extent to which the landscape is free from visual encroachment.

Unity — The degree to which the visual resources of the landscape join together to form a coherent, harmonious visual pattern. Unity refers to the compositional harmony or inter-compatibility between landscape elements.[7]

Because of the nature and location of the project site, the proposed project would be visible to several different groups of people. To assess their potential response to the proposed project, it is important to identify and categorize different types of viewers depending on their sensitivity to change in the landscape. Viewer groups who currently experience the project site include park patrons, patrons and employees of industrial and other land uses in the project area, local residents, park employees, motorists

[7] U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). *Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects.* 1988.

and Metro Gold Line patrons passing the project site. Viewer sensitivity varies depending on the location of the viewer at the time the view is experienced, the duration of that view, the typical activities being undertaken while the view is experienced, and the number of viewers in the sensitive viewer group. A description of each viewer group follows, in order from the most to least sensitive viewer groups.

- Local Residents: Private views of the proposed project may potentially be experienced from the windows, frontyards, and balconies of the single- and multi-family residential uses located along Broadway in the project area. These residential uses are located on elevated hillside locations along the north side of Broadway, potentially resulting in private residential views downward into the project site. There are currently no residential uses located along Spring or Baker Streets in the project area. Some of the residences located along Broadway may have direct views of the project site and others may not due to the small hill that separates the project site from Broadway, as well as intervening commercial development along the north side of Broadway. However, the sensitivity of these residential viewers would still be considered high.

- Patrons and Employees of the Park: Patrons and employees of the park are considered to be less sensitive as compared to the residential viewers. Patrons of the park, including lunch time users, would typically continue to visit the project site despite the aesthetics, landscaping, and interpretive features implemented within the park. Although the employees of the park, and particularly the patrons of the park, have a strong interest in the visual appearance of the project site, they would have less of a personal investment. For these reasons, park patrons and employees would be moderately sensitive to changes at the project site.

- Patrons and Employees of Industrial and Other Land Uses in the Project Area: Patrons of the industrial, commercial, church, and other land uses in the project area would primarily experience views of the proposed project as they approach and leave their destinations. These employees are likely to be indoors throughout the day, except for the time spent commuting to work – by vehicle, on foot, by bicycle, or public transportation – thus they would experience moderate sensitivity to visual changes. Similarly, employees of the industrial, commercial, church, and other land uses in the project area would primarily experience views of the project site as they approach and leave work, as the majority of their time as patrons/customers is likely spent indoors. However, these viewers would have less personal investment in the visual appearance of the project site and surrounding areas. These viewers would be moderately sensitive to changes at the project site.

- Passing Motorists and Metro Gold Line Patrons: The proposed project would be visible to motorists traveling along Spring Street and Baker Street. These views would be somewhat indirect or fleeting because there are very few traffic signals or stop signs along these streets that would cause motorists to be idle, resulting in more time to view the proposed project. Motorist's view of the proposed project from the northeast-bound side of Broadway would be indirect due to the presence of the small hill that separates the project site from Broadway. In addition, patrons riding the Metro Gold Line in the project area would have direct views of the proposed project

due to the close proximity of the light rail line to the project site. The sensitivity of motorists and Metro Gold Line patrons passing the proposed project would vary depending on the purpose of their trips. Motorists and light rail riders traveling for pleasure may be more sensitive to their views, while commuting motorists and light rail riders may pay little or no attention to views outside the roadway or light rail right-of-way. In addition, commuting light rail riders may spend time on the train completing work or other activities that would potentially cause them to ignore the environment outside of the train completely. As a park improvement project, motorists and light rail riders would be very aware of and sensitive to the proposed project during construction; however, in terms of the long-term operational impact, based upon their travel speed and focus on driving or riding activity, motorist and Metro Gold Line patron sensitivity is considered low.

It is possible to acknowledge a visual change as potentially adverse, but not significant, because either viewers are not sensitive or the scenic quality of the surrounding area is not high.

IMPACT ANALYSIS

VIS-1 *The proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. The impact would be less than significant.*

The proposed project would include the construction and operation of a 32-acre park including various event spaces, observation and interpretive areas, recreation areas and pathways, parking, constructed wetlands and habitat area, as well as park furnishings and infrastructure. Currently, there are some indirect and interrupted north-facing views of the San Gabriel Mountains and various hills from the project site. Views of the mountains and hills are more direct from the residential and commercial area located along Broadway and in the Elysian Hills located north of the project site. In addition, views of the downtown Los Angeles skyline are currently available from the project site and surrounding project area.

The proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on the north-facing view of the mountains and hills because the proposed project would not include any tall buildings or structures that would potentially block this view. In addition, the proposed project would not block any views of the mountains and hills, or the downtown Los Angeles skyline from the residential and commercial area located along Broadway as this area is located at a higher elevation than the project site. The proposed project would include numerous trees of various heights, as well as a 14-foot-tall elevated walkway including the Roundhouse Observation Deck in the central portion of the project site. Depending on the vantage point, the new trees and the elevated walkway may result in a change of the view of the downtown Los Angeles skyline from within the proposed project. However, the proposed project would include a 32-acre park and there would be a variety of areas within the proposed project from which the view of the downtown Los Angeles skyline would not be disrupted. Further, the view of the downtown Los Angeles skyline would be enhanced when viewed from on the elevated walkway and Roundhouse Observation Deck. In addition, existing views from the project area are not designated or protected views. Impacts related to scenic vistas would be less than significant.

VIS-2 *The proposed project would not substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock, outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway. The impact would be less than significant.*

The proposed project would not substantially damage any scenic resources. There are currently approximately 330 trees of various species on the project site, all of which are native. None of these trees are of a protected species. At least 50 of these existing trees would be protected in place with the proposed project. Any existing trees that must be removed from the project site would either be offered for transplant by other parties to a new location or would be reused on the site in another capacity. No scenic state highways are located within the project site or vicinity. The nearest designated state scenic highway to the project site is Route 2 in La Cañada Flintridge, which is located 9.46 miles north of the project site.[8] The proposed project would not damage or remove any scenic resources or scenic resources located on a state scenic highway. Therefore, impacts related to scenic resources would be less than significant.

VIS-3 *The proposed project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. The impact would be less than significant.*

CONSTRUCTION

The construction phase of the proposed project would be temporary; lasting approximately one year from Spring 2013 to Spring 2014. The construction activities would include fencing off and closing the project site to the public; grading the site; moving and balancing soil on-site; establishment of stockpile areas and storage of materials and equipment on-site; export of only the unsuitable material from the site; import of fertilizers and soil amendments; establishment of a temporary operations and maintenance yard with associated parking; and the implementation of the appropriate combination of resource avoidance and monitoring as described in Chapter 2.0, Project Description. No major buildings or structures would be demolished with the construction of the proposed project.

During the construction phase, the visual character of the project site would change temporarily but substantially from existing conditions. The project site would be fenced off with a chain-linked fence. In addition, the visual character of the project site associated with the open grassy areas, trees, and other landscaping which currently contributes to the character of the project site, would vary visually as the proposed landscaping and interpretive area plans are put into place. The designated construction areas, including the construction vehicle ingress/egress area at the southern end of the project site would be busier than under existing conditions, with trucks moving carrying materials on- and off-site, and work crews and construction equipment moving around the project site.

The construction activities may potentially be visible from various single- and multi-family residences located north of the project site along Broadway and in the Elysian Hills. Some of these residences may potentially have a downward-looking or bird's-eye view of the construction site. This would result in a

[8] California Department of Transportation, *Officially Designated State Scenic Highways*, updated November 7, 2011, available at: http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic/schwy.htm, accessed: December 14, 2011.

substantial change in the visual character of the site, as the views of the park and associated landscaping would temporarily be characterized as a fenced construction site. However, as previously mentioned the construction phase would be temporary. This short-term condition would create a temporary change in visual character typically associated with construction activities. A temporary impact to the visual character would result because the residences located along Broadway or in the Elysian Hills would have a high sensitivity and personal investment in these visual changes, due primarily to their daily views from their neighborhood or place of residence.

The construction activities would also result in a change in visual character with respect to the patrons and employees of the park as the project site would be fenced off and closed to the public during the construction phase. Patrons that regularly use the park for various recreational activities, as well as lunch time users, would be temporarily required to travel to other nearby parks if they desire to continue their recreational activities during the temporary construction phase. In addition, the CDPR employees that regularly work at the project site would have a limited need to access the site because the park would not require the maintenance usually needed during operations. A temporary impact would result related to the visual experience of park patrons and employees, a viewer group that would be moderately sensitive to visual changes and have less of a personal investment in the visual appearance of the project site.

The patrons and employees of industrial and other land uses in the project area would primarily experience views of the construction activities on the project site as they approach and leave their destination or place of work. Therefore, their views of the construction activities would primarily take place while enroute to and from these locations in the project area. The employees of project area land uses would not be highly sensitive to visual changes occurring on the project site during the construction phase. In addition, patrons of project area land uses may be more sensitive than the employees, but nevertheless would not likely change their patronage due to visual changes taking place on the project site during the construction phase. A temporary impact to the visual character would result for project area patrons and employees, a viewer group that would be moderately sensitive to visual changes but have less of a personal investment in the visual appearance of the project site.

Passing motorists would primarily experience views of construction activities while driving along the roadways near the project site. These views would be indirect or fleeting because there are very few traffic signals or stop signs along these streets that would cause motorists to be idle, resulting in more time to view the construction site. In addition, patrons riding the Metro Gold Line in the project area would have direct views of the construction site due to the close proximity of the light rail line directly adjacent to the project site. The change in the visual character of the project site during the construction phase would be noticed by passing motorists and Metro Gold Line patrons. However, passing motorists and Metro Gold Line patrons are considered to have a low sensitivity to any visual changes on the project site as they are likely passing through the project area to reach their destinations and do not necessarily have a personal investment in the visual character of the project site.

Overall, the construction phase would represent a temporary change in the visual quality and character of the project site. However, the project site would appear similar to other construction sites throughout the City and in nearby urban areas. During construction, the project site may potentially stand out as a

memorable or remarkable feature in the landscape due to its temporary negative impact on the visual character and quality of the site and its surroundings. However, the construction impact would be temporary and reversible, and would have a less than significant impact on the visual character of the project site and surroundings.

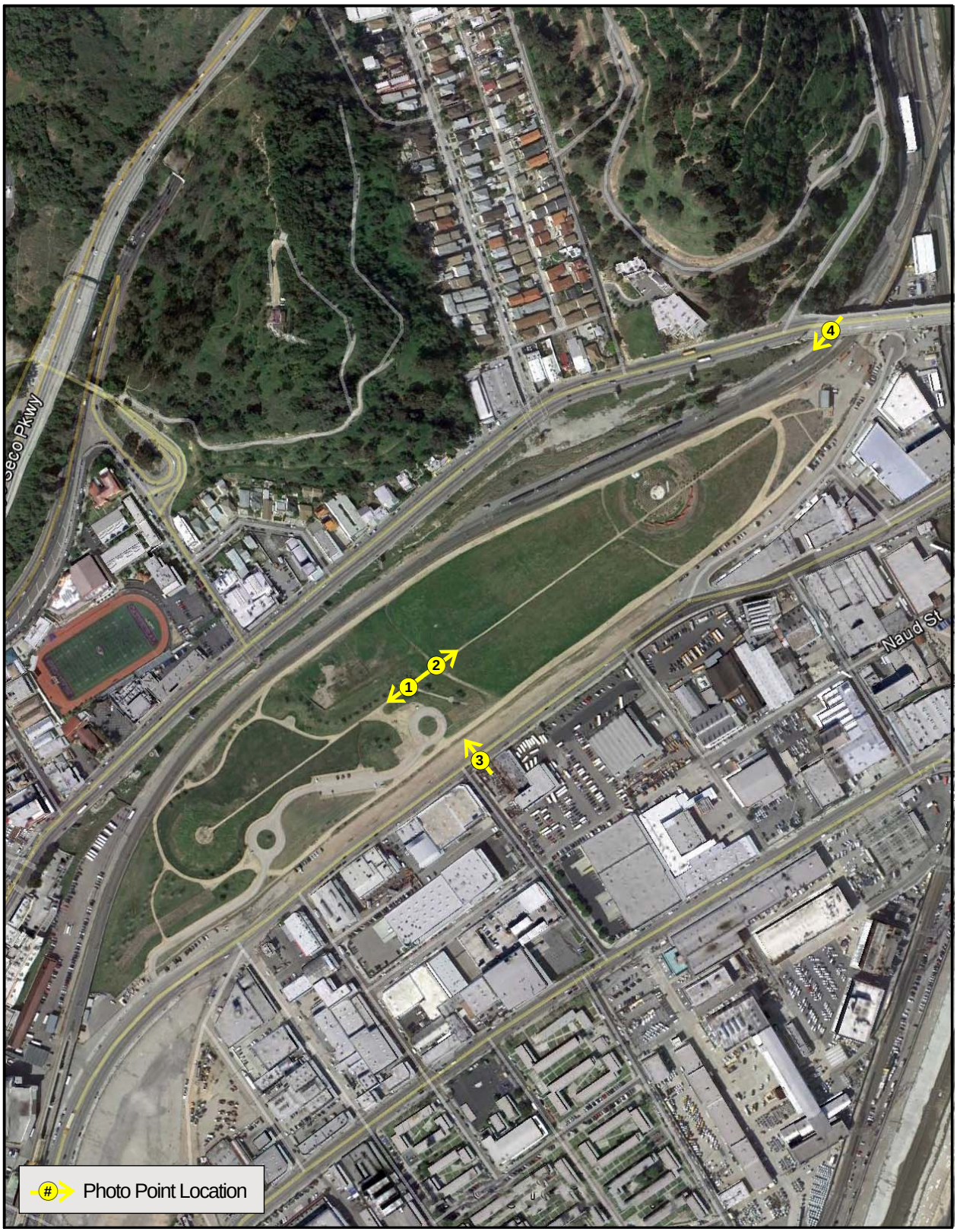
In addition, as stated in Chapter 2.0, Project Description, construction work hours would be limited to between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Construction activities would not take place during the nighttime hours and would not significantly affect the nighttime visual character of the project site and surroundings. As such, a less than significant impact would result related to nighttime visual character.

OPERATION

In order to assess the potential visual changes that would result from the operation of the proposed project, four key views were selected for the proposed project as shown below. Visual simulations from these key views were prepared to provide a before and after comparison of the visual effects that would result from the proposed project. The locations of the key views are shown in Figure 3.1-11.

The key views are representative of direct views within the project site and area; simulations from the same locations show how these views would change as a result of the proposed project. The simulated elevated walkway, trees, landscaping, minor park features, and other project details are based on the types of materials that may potentially be used in the construction of the proposed project, and are not intended to represent the final project design. Similarly, all of the simulations presented in this chapter represent the conceptual design of the proposed project. The simulations are included in this chapter in order to conceptually illustrate the general visual changes that would be expected to occur with the proposed project. However, the simulations may not include all of the design elements discussed in the text of this chapter and does not represent the final design of the proposed project.

The proposed project would further improve the project site and would not construct any new large buildings or add new land uses to the project site. The proposed project would entail the construction and operation of a 32-acre park including various event spaces, observation and interpretive areas, recreation areas and pathways, parking, constructed wetlands and habitat area, as well as park furnishings and infrastructure. In addition, the proposed project would include one-story Welcome Station and operations buildings, a 14-foot-tall elevated walkway including the Roundhouse Observation Deck, a series of entry plazas located along Spring Street, hardscaped walkways and/or plazas, approximately 550 new trees, six-foot-tall interpretive fencing, new poled-lighting ranging in height from approximately 10 to 25 feet tall.



AECOM

No Scale

N

Figure 3.1-11
Location of Key Views

The key views and simulations are shown in Figures 3.1-12 through 3.1-15.

Key View 1 shows the project site looking southwest from the central portion of the project site (Figure 3.1-12). This is a view that is typically seen by patrons and employees of the park. The downtown Los Angeles skyline is visible in the background of this view. As shown in Figure 3.1-12, with the installation of the elevated walkway, constructed landforms or small hills, decomposed granite pedestrian pathways, additional trees, and landscaping, the proposed project would result in an improvement in the visual character from this view. The primary change in this view would be the addition of the constructed landforms or small hills, the elevated walkway, and additional trees. Although some of the new trees may block views of the downtown Los Angeles skyline, the proposed project would include a 32-acre park and there would be a variety of areas within the proposed project from which the view of the skyline would not be disrupted. Further, the view of the downtown Los Angeles skyline would be enhanced when viewed from the elevated walkway and Roundhouse Observation Deck.

The proposed project in this view does not stand out as a memorable or remarkable feature in the landscape and does not possess a unique visual character or visual interest. With the exception of the elevated walkway and constructed landforms and small hills, the proposed project would be visually similar to the existing project site. From Key View 1, the proposed project would not represent a substantial change in the visual character of the area. As such, impacts would be less than significant.

Key View 2 shows the project site looking northeast from the central portion of the project site (Figure 3.1-13). This is a view that is typically seen by patrons and employees of the park. The Elysian Hills (on the left), North Broadway-Buena Vista Bridge, industrial uses, overhead power transmission poles and lines, and other background hills are visible in this view. As shown in Figure 3.1-13, with the installation of additional trees and landscaping, the proposed project would result in an improvement in the visual character from this view. The primary change in this view would be the addition of new trees. Although some of the new trees may block views of the historic North Broadway-Buena Vista Bridge, the proposed project would include a 32-acre park and there would be a variety of areas within the proposed project from which the view of the bridge would not be disrupted. Further, the view of the bridge may be enhanced when viewed from the elevated walkway and Roundhouse Observation Deck. The proposed project in this view does not stand out as a memorable or remarkable feature in the landscape and does not possess a unique visual character or visual interest. From Key View 2, the proposed project would be visually similar to the existing project site. The proposed project would not represent a substantial change in the visual character of the area from this view. As such, impacts would be less than significant.

FIGURE 3.1-12: KEY VIEW 1 - BEFORE AND AFTER SIMULATION LOOKING SOUTHWEST AT THE PROPOSED ELEVATED WALKWAY AND ROUNDHOUSE OBSERVATION DECK

FIGURE 3.1-13: KEY VIEW 2 - BEFORE AND AFTER SIMULATION LOOKING NORTHEAST AT THE OPEN GRASSY AREA

Key View 3 shows the project site looking northeast from the south side of Spring Street (Figure 3.1-14). This is a view that is typically seen by passing motorists patrons and pedestrians. A Metro Gold Line train, commercial and residential buildings along Broadway at the base of the Elysian Hills, a large radio tower (center), and the large poled lighting of the Dodger Stadium parking lot (on the left) are visible in this view. As shown in Figure 3.1-14, with the installation of the new vehicular entrance, surface parking area, one-story Welcome Station building, additional trees, and landscaping, the proposed project would result in an improvement in the visual character from this view. The primary change in this view would be the addition of the new Welcome Station building, surface parking area, and additional trees. The proposed project in this view does not stand out as a memorable or remarkable feature in the landscape and does not possess a unique visual character or visual interest. From Key View 3, the proposed project would be visually similar to the existing project site. The proposed project would not represent a substantial change in the visual character of the area from this view. As such, impacts would be less than significant.

Key View 4 shows the project site looking southwest from the North Broadway-Buena Vista Bridge (Figure 3.1-15). This is a view that is typically seen by passing motorists and pedestrians. The downtown Los Angeles skyline is visible in the background of this view. In addition, the industrial uses along Spring Street and the Metro Gold Line right-of-way are visible in this view. As shown in Figure 3.1-15, with the installation of the elevated walkway, constructed landforms or small hills, additional trees, and landscaping, the proposed project would result in an improvement in the visual character from this view. The primary change in this view would be the addition of new trees and landscaping. From this view, the proposed project would not disrupt the view of the downtown Los Angeles skyline. The proposed project in this view does not stand out as a memorable or remarkable feature in the landscape and does not possess a unique visual character or visual interest. With the exception of the elevated walkway, constructed landforms and small hills, and new trees, the proposed project would be visually similar to the existing project site. From Key View 4, the proposed project would not represent a substantial change in the visual character of the area. As such, impacts would be less than significant.

Overall, the proposed project would not result in a substantial change in the visual character of the project site and surrounding project area. The improvements installed at the project site would assist in improving the visual character of this primarily industrial area of the City. As such, impacts related to visual character would be less than significant.

In addition, as stated in Chapter 2.0, Project Description, most of the daily park activities are assumed to occur between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. The proposed project would not substantially alter the project site from existing conditions. As discussed below, new and additional pedestrian pathway, parking area and security lighting may render the park more visible at night than under existing conditions. However, the operation of the proposed project would not significantly affect the nighttime visual character of the project site and surroundings. As such, a less than significant impact would result related to nighttime visual character.

FIGURE 3.1-14: KEY VIEW 3 - BEFORE AND AFTER SIMULATION LOOKING NORTHWEST AT THE PROPOSED PROJECT FROM SPRING STREET

FIGURE 3.1-15: KEY VIEW 4 - BEFORE AND AFTER SIMULATION LOOKING SOUTHWEST AT THE PROPOSED PROJECT FROM NORTH BROADWAY-BUENA VISTA BRIDGE

VIS-4 *The proposed project would not create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. Impacts would be less than significant.*

The project site is located in an urban area near downtown Los Angeles, Chinatown, and Dodger Stadium, an area that currently has high levels of ambient lighting. The project site currently includes nighttime building lighting, limited park and pathway lighting, and maintenance yard (parking lot) lighting. The proposed project would include new parking lot lighting, pedestrian pathway lighting, security lighting, and security cameras, which would be installed to enhance public safety. The lighting would meet dark sky guidelines in order to prevent unnecessary light pollution to surrounding neighborhoods. The new parking lot lighting would be provided on poles and would be installed within the on-site surface lot, as well as the existing operations and maintenance yard to remain in place on the north end of the project site. Smaller scale poled-lighting would be provided for all pedestrian pathways. The new lighting would consist of a simple design and fixture to blend into the landscape. Several plazas within the park would include enhanced lighting to create unique spaces within the park. Enhanced lighting would include pedestrian-scale pole lighting, wall lights, uplighting for monument signage, accent lighting for water features, as well as lighting on and underneath the elevated walkway and Roundhouse Observation Deck. New poled-lighting would range in height from approximately 10 to 25 feet tall. The installation of temporary lighting may be required for various special events within the proposed project.

All lighting fixtures and any lighting that may be temporarily installed on the project site due to special events, would be installed in accordance with the applicable specifications and standards, and would be aimed downward as appropriate to ensure that the light does not spillover onto residential uses located upgradient and north of the project site along Broadway. The nearest residential use to the project site is located approximately 205 feet north of, and is upgradient from the project site. The small hill and the Broadway roadway itself, which separates the project site from the residential uses along Broadway, would act as a light buffer, reducing the potential for substantial proposed project lighting to spillover onto these uses. Since no residential or other light-sensitive uses are located directly adjacent to the project site, the proposed project would not result in substantial light spillover. With the implementation of applicable lighting specifications and standards, nighttime views would not be substantially altered and the proposed project would result in less than significant impacts related to nighttime lighting.

Glare is produced when any visible light source is brighter than the surroundings in the line of vision. Reflections from smooth, polished reflective surfaces can also be a cause of glare. The proposed project would not include any new major sources of glare and no reflective surfaces would be introduced to the project site. Two one-story buildings would be included with the proposed project. These buildings would include windows, however, would not include new major sources of glare or reflective surfaces. Any lighting that may be temporarily installed on the project site due to special events, would be installed in accordance with applicable specifications and standards, and would be aimed at the appropriate angle as appropriate to ensure that nighttime glare is not produced and that residential uses located along Broadway would not have a direct line-of-sight to the temporary light sources. As such, the proposed

project would not substantially alter nighttime views and would result in less than significant impacts related to glare.

3.1.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation measures are required.

3.1.5 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

Impacts related to aesthetics would be less than significant without mitigation.

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