

3.2. AESTHETICS

The following summarizes the applicable regulations and the existing setting and provides a detailed impact assessment related to aesthetics. Refer to the Aesthetics Technical Report (Appendix C) for additional details related to applicable regulations and the existing setting.

3.2.1 Regulatory Framework

3.2.1.1 Federal Regulations

There are no existing federal regulations pertaining to aesthetics and visual resources that are applicable to the Proposed Project.

3.2.1.2 State Regulations

California Scenic Highway Program. California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) manages the California Scenic Highway Program, which was created in 1963 by the California legislature to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from changes that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. The program includes a list of highways that are eligible for designation as scenic highways or that have been designated as such. A highway may be designated as scenic based on how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes on the traveler's enjoyment of the view. State laws governing the California Scenic Highway Program are found in the Streets and Highways Code, Sections 260 through 263.

3.2.1.3 Local Regulations

The following local regulations are applicable to the Proposed Project.

City of Los Angeles

City of Los Angeles General Plan. The Framework Element contains objectives and policies for the provision, management, and conservation of Los Angeles' open space resources. In addition to the Framework Element, the Urban Design, Conservation, and Mobility Elements include relevant objectives and policies to aesthetics and visual resources.

North Hollywood Redevelopment Project Commercial Core Urban Design Guidelines. The Commercial Core Urban Design Guidelines outline the North Hollywood Redevelopment Project's vision for development within North Hollywood by creating vibrant districts within the Project Area which most notably consist of the NoHo Arts District and the Lankershim Core District. The Design Guidelines identify distinct design criteria and recommendations aimed at concentrating particular types of businesses in the design districts as well as unique characteristics to give the districts a sense of place.

City of Los Angeles Municipal Code. The City of Los Angeles Municipal Code contains chapters pertaining to planning and zoning (Chapter 1) and building regulations (Chapter 9) which pertain to aesthetics and visual quality. While the municipal code regulations generally pertain to development projects and buildings, aspects of the regulations dictate allowable lighting and signage conditions along roadways and sidewalks as well as design regulations regarding street design, pedestrian areas, and landscaping.

City of Burbank

Land Use, Open Space, and Conservation Element of the Burbank 2035 General Plan. The Burbank 2035 General Plan addresses aesthetics in the Land Use Element and Open Space and Conservation Element.

Burbank Center Plan. The Burbank Center Plan is an economic revitalization plan for Downtown Burbank and surrounding areas. The plan is divided into three subareas (City Center, South San Fernando, and City Center West) and addresses transitioning underused industrial properties into mixed-use neighborhoods with an attractive pedestrian environment.

Media District Specific Plan. The Media District Specific Plan was adopted in 1991 in response to the development of several high-rise office buildings in the 1980s and the potential effects that similar future development could have on surrounding residential neighborhoods.

City of Burbank Zoning Ordinance. Title 10 of the Burbank Municipal Code addresses the aesthetic considerations of development. The Zoning Ordinance sets development standards for parking, building heights, setbacks, density, lot coverage, open space requirements, and signs. The Burbank Municipal Code includes numerous references and requirements to avoid effects of light and glare on neighboring properties and uses.

City of Glendale

Open Space and Conservation, Recreation, and Land Use Elements of the Glendale General Plan. The City of Glendale's General Plan is a comprehensive, long range declaration of purposes, policies and programs for the development of the City. The Open Space and Conservation and Recreation Elements of the General Plan outline policies, goals, and objectives that are applicable to visual and scenic resources.

Greater Downtown Strategic Plan. The Greater Downtown Strategic Plan includes the downtown area and the adjacent residential neighborhoods. Goals of the plan include significantly increasing the amount of public open space and developed parkland in Downtown Glendale and strengthening the interdependence between downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Downtown Specific Plan (DSP). The DSP is designed to update and implement the vision, goals, and policies for the downtown as initially set forth in the Greater Downtown Strategic Plan. The DSP is an urban design-oriented plan, which sets the physical standard and guidelines as well as land use regulations for activities within the DSP area.

Glendale Town Center Specific Plan. The Glendale Town Center Specific Plan was adopted in 2004 and includes development standards to help protect aesthetic resources within the Glendale Town Center Specific Plan area. Chapter Three - Land Use and Development Standards in the Glendale Town Center Specific Plan includes design standards, such as height; landscaping; outdoor space; open, public, and park lands; lighting; fences and walls; trash collection areas; and signage, relevant to this aesthetics analysis. Chapter Five - Plan Implementation ensures compliance with these standards, a process for which is provided below.

Glendale Comprehensive Design Guidelines. The intent of the Guidelines is to provide predictability for property owners and developers, as well as residents and other stakeholders in the Glendale community. The Guidelines are used by all those applying for permits in the City, by City staff, the Design Review Board, and City Council. The Guidelines are separated into four categories: single family; hillside; commercial; and multifamily and mixed-use.

City of Glendale Municipal Code. Glendale Municipal Code Chapter 16.08 regulates development within ridgeline areas and provides an exception for public roadways and utilities subject to adoption of findings at a public hearing by the City Council if found necessary for project implementation. General Municipal Code Chapter 30.33 regulates the construction, alternation, repair, location, electrification and maintenance of any sign or sign structure within Glendale. Standards regulate sign size, height, quantity, materials, surface, support structures, spacing, and lighting for the different types of signs defined in the ordinance.

City of Pasadena

Land Use and Green Space, Recreation, and Parks Elements of the Pasadena General Plan. The City of Pasadena's General Plan is a comprehensive, long range declaration of purposes, policies and programs for the development of the City. The Land Use and Green Space, Recreation, and Parks Elements include relevant objectives and policies to aesthetics and visual resources.

Citywide Design Principles and Design Guidelines. The Citywide Design Principles and Design Guidelines are intended to guide the design of new development so that it complements the existing aesthetic environment and respects the existing character of Pasadena and its neighborhoods. The guidelines are intended to enhance the surrounding environment, incorporate human values and needs, and show creativity and imagination.

Central District Specific Plan. The Central District Specific Plan contains the required heights, setbacks, floor area ratios and residential densities for projects in the Central District. These development standards are implemented by the Zoning Code. The purpose of the Specific Plan is to encourage a diverse mix of land uses designed to create the primary business, financial, retailing and government center of the City.

Design Guidelines for Historic Districts. The Design Guidelines for Historic Districts provide guidance for improvements to historic properties and work in locally designated landmark and historic districts in the City. Besides promoting the preservation of the City's many structures with architectural, cultural, and historical significance, the guidelines preserve Pasadena's visual character by establishing high standards for quality urban design and architecture.

City of Pasadena Municipal Code. The following provisions from the Municipal Code are intended to minimize adverse aesthetic impacts associated with new development projects and are relevant to the General Plan Update. Relevant chapters of the municipal code include the following: 2.80 (Design Commission), 8.52 (City Trees and Tree Protection Ordinance), 17.44 (Landscaping), 17.62 (Historic Preservation), and 17.48 (Signs).

3.2.2. Existing Setting

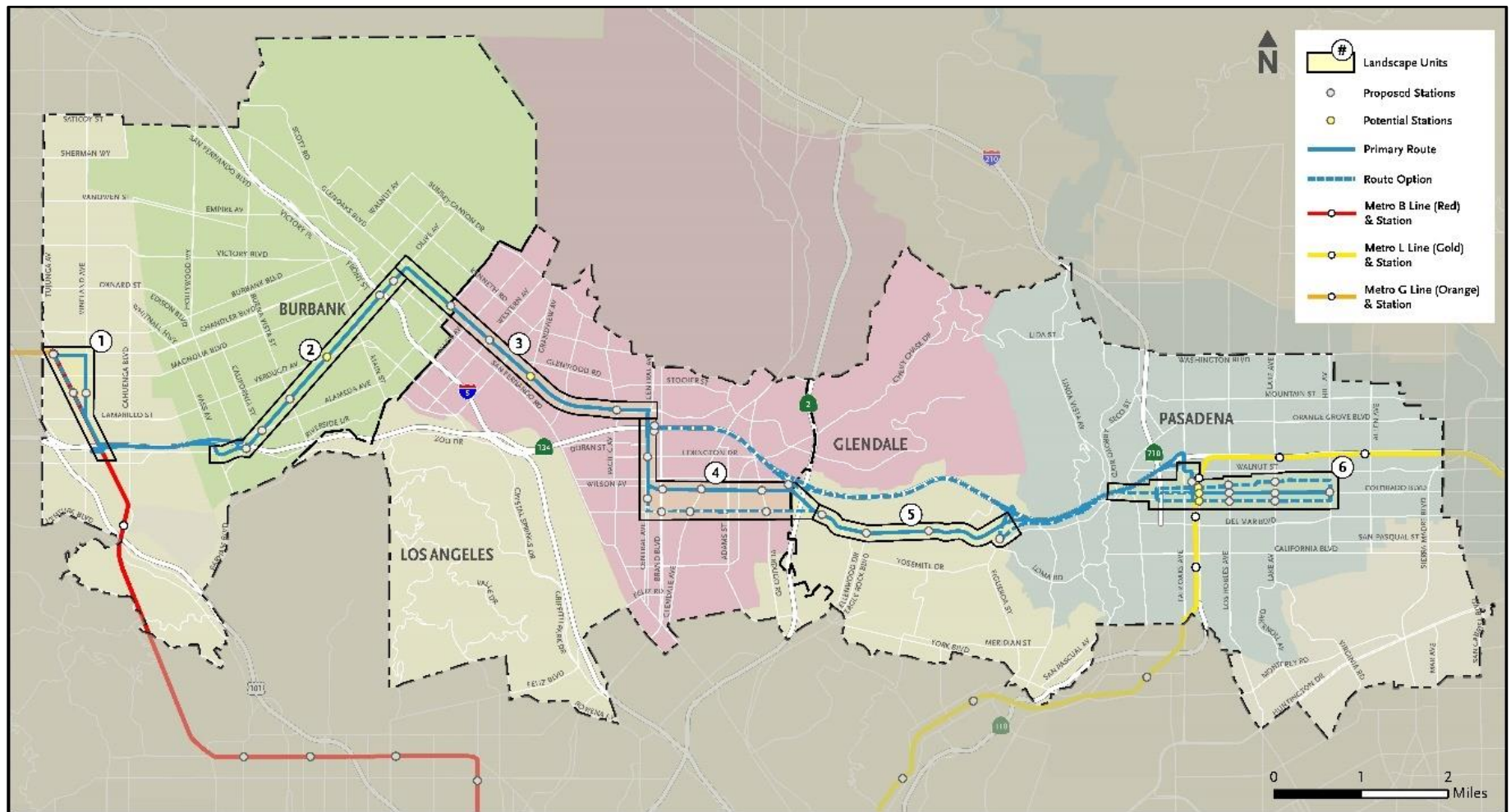
The Proposed Project runs east-west from North Hollywood in the San Fernando Valley to the City of Pasadena in the San Gabriel Valley. The Project Area is within a topographically flat area with a gradual northward slope toward the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains. There are several mountain ranges and topographic features including the San Gabriel Mountains and San Rafael Hills to the north and the Hollywood Hills to the south. The Proposed Project traverses an urbanized area with primarily residential and commercial land uses.

There are no designated scenic vista points or other public vistas within the Project Area but the Project Area is visible and falls within the viewshed of vista points at high elevation viewing locations, most notably, the Griffith Park Observatory which is located approximately two miles from the Proposed Project. Other than the Griffith Park Observatory, informal views of the Project Area are available from roadways along the mountainous terrain.

Existing lighting, glare, and shading in the Project Area are characteristic of a typical urban environment that includes commercial and residential buildings, and streetscape elements (light poles, street trees). Existing sources of light in the Project Area include streetlights, headlights and tail-lights on cars and other vehicles in the roadway, and interior and exterior lighting from adjacent buildings. There are no major sources of glare. Existing shading is from vehicles on the roadway, adjacent buildings, streetlights, and street trees.

To illustrate the existing visual setting, representative landscape units (LUs) were selected to provide a summarized description of the visual character and quality of the Project Area as well as an account of visual resources present. An LU is a portion of the regional landscape and can be thought of as an outdoor room that exhibits a distinct visual character. The LUs were selected based on geographic and jurisdictional divisions along the route and route options with a focus on the visual consistency among development patterns, visual resources, and overall character. Each LU is delineated on maps and numbered from LU-1 to LU-6. **Figure 3.2-1** provides an overview of the LUs geographic extent within the Project Area. In addition, representative viewpoints (RVs) were selected for each LU to illustrate the typical viewshed in each LU and are numbered RV-1 to RV-7. Freeway portions of the Proposed Project and route options were not included in selected LUs as no physical changes to freeways would occur.

Figure 3.2-1 - Landscape Unit Overview



3.2.2.1 LU-1 North Hollywood, Vineland Avenue and Lankershim Boulevard

LU-1 includes the Project segment within the North Hollywood community including the North Hollywood Metro B/G Line (Red/Orange) Station, Chandler Boulevard, Vineland Avenue, Lankershim Boulevard, and a short portion of Riverside Drive between Lankershim Boulevard and Cahuenga Boulevard. The affected roadways within this LU all consist of two vehicle lanes in each direction with a center median and/or turn lanes. There are parking spaces and sidewalks throughout the LU with bicycle lanes in both directions along Chandler Boulevard and Vineland Avenue. Both Vineland Avenue and Lankershim Boulevard are developed as transit-oriented corridors with a mixture of commercial retail, office buildings, restaurants, and medium to high density apartments. LU-1 has been developed and designed consistent with the design goals of the NoHo Arts District and North Hollywood Redevelopment Plan.

LU-1 includes a variety of streetscape features the most prevalent of which are along Lankershim Boulevard which includes a landscaped median, decorative pavement markings, street trees along sidewalks, and informational signage related to the NoHo Arts District. The mix of urban streetscape elements, artistic street treatments, palette of street trees, and variety of architectural design gives Lankershim Boulevard a high degree of vividness. Vineland Avenue also includes a landscaped median and a meandering walking path situated between Vineland Avenue and the frontage road (Vineland Place). Overhead utilities are present along both sides of Vineland Avenue with infrastructure (telephone poles) situated within the median as well. In the northbound direction, the San Gabriel Mountains are visible yet distant; in the southbound direction, the Santa Monica Mountains/Hollywood Hills are visible.

Visual resources within LU-1 consist of mature street trees, decorative street treatments particularly along Lankershim Boulevard, the landscaped median and walking path along Vineland Avenue, and historic buildings visible from the roadway including the following:

- Lankershim Train Depot (11275 Chandler Boulevard)
- El Portal Theater (5269 Lankershim Boulevard)
- The Federal (5303 Lankershim Boulevard)
- Los Angeles Department of Water and Power Building (5108 Lankershim Boulevard)

3.2.2.2 LU-2 Burbank, Olive Avenue

LU-2 includes the segment of the Project along Olive Avenue in the City of Burbank as well as a short stretch of Riverside Drive between Pass Avenue and Olive Avenue. Olive Avenue consists of two vehicle lanes in each direction with a center turn lane. There are parking spaces and sidewalks throughout the LU with limited streetscape amenities consisting of street trees and grassy parkways along the sidewalk of Olive Avenue.

Land uses fronting the roadway in LU-2 are almost entirely commercial and related to the Burbank Media District businesses including TV and film studios (e.g., iHeart Radio Theater, Warner Bros. Studios, Walt Disney Studios), office buildings, and small single-story local serving businesses such as restaurants. Low and medium density residential uses are one block north of Olive Avenue and one block south of Olive Avenue. Further northeast of the

Media District, commercial and residential uses are lower density with educational uses (John Burroughs High School and Walt Disney Elementary School), the Olive Recreation Center park, and churches interspersed. Near Victory Boulevard and I-5, uses are primarily industrial and transportation-related including the Burbank Transit Center and the Burbank Metrolink Station. Northeast of the I-5, the LU includes Downtown Burbank where there is a mix of commercial retail, restaurants, and the Burbank Civic Center. Building mass throughout the LU is generally low-scale ranging from one- to two-story structures with some low-rise commercial office buildings (four to ten stories) concentrated in the southwestern portion of the LU in the Burbank Media District and in the Downtown Burbank area in the northeast portion of the LU.

Typical views in LU-2 include the Olive Avenue corridor, bordered by parking, sidewalks, street trees, commercial buildings, signs on both sides, and additional buildings visible in the background. Visual resources include historic properties such as the Mentzer House, Burbank City Hall, Burbank Post Office, and the Olive Avenue Recreation Center, all of which are visible from the roadway. In the eastbound direction, the San Gabriel Mountains are a visible and prevalent natural feature; in the southbound direction, the Santa Monica Mountains and Griffith Park are visible though distant from a majority of accessible views within the LU.

Visual resources within LU-2 consist of mature street trees, the Olive Avenue Recreation Center, and historic buildings visible from the roadway including the following:

- The Mentzer House (1015 Olive Avenue)
- The Burbank Post Office (125 Olive Avenue)
- The Burbank City Hall (275 Olive Avenue)

3.2.2.3 LU-3 West Glendale, Glenoaks Boulevard

LU-3 includes the Glenoaks Boulevard corridor from Olive Avenue in Burbank to Central Avenue in Glendale. There are no known historic properties within LU-3 though the development along the roadway is one of the oldest established communities within the City of Glendale. Glenoaks Boulevard is three lanes in each direction with a landscaped median running along the middle. The LU is developed with a mixture of commercial and residential development with multi-family residential development located along the northwest stretch of the LU; however, development immediately adjacent to Glenoaks Boulevard is predominately commercial. Commercial properties are generally low-density one- and two-story structures with storefronts and consist of a mix of local-serving restaurants and shops. Commercial development is mostly within strip malls with dedicated parking areas as well single-storefront developments with rear parking/alleyways. The eastern portion of the LU is more residential in the immediate surroundings of Glenoaks Boulevard and development consists of two- to three-story apartment and duplex structures. Major land uses within the LU include Kaiser Permanente Glendale, Thomas Jefferson Elementary School, and the Department of Motor Vehicles Glendale office. On-street parking and street trees along sidewalks are present throughout the LU and the City of Glendale is in the planning stages of improving the bicycle lanes along the Glenoaks Boulevard corridor.

Typical views in LU-3 include the Glenoaks Boulevard corridor bordered by parking, sidewalks, street trees, and commercial buildings. A majority of the LU includes a wide landscaped median with mature trees and other landscaping. Views of the San Gabriel Mountains to the north of Glenoaks Boulevard are accessible from the entire LU and views of the Santa Monica Mountains are available in the southwestern facing direction though the mountains are distant and obstructed by most buildings along Glenoaks Boulevard. The Downtown Glendale skyline can be seen in the distance for eastbound travels. The San Gabriel Mountains are present off the left-hand side of the frame; however, due to the natural slope of the area, the view from Glenoaks Boulevard is less dramatic than in other LUs.

Visual resources within LU-3 consist of urban streetscape elements such as mature street trees and the landscaped median along the center of Glenoaks Boulevard through the majority of the LU.

3.2.2.4 LU-4 South Glendale, Broadway and Colorado Street

LU-4 is entirely within the City of Glendale and includes Central Avenue between Glenoaks Boulevard and Colorado Street, Broadway between Central Avenue and Colorado Boulevard, and Colorado Street between Central Avenue and the City of Los Angeles. Central Avenue is two lanes in the southbound direction and three lanes in the northbound direction with a center/turn lane throughout and bicycle lanes along both sides of the street. Broadway is two lanes in both directions with a center/turn lane between Central Avenue and Louise Street where it narrows to only two lanes in each direction. Colorado Street is two lanes in each direction with a center/turn lane throughout. There are no bicycle lanes along Broadway or Colorado Street and on-street parking is provided intermittently on each street within the LU where right-turn lanes are not required.

The LU includes Downtown Glendale which is a mix of high-density residential development along Central Avenue and regional activity centers, including the Glendale Galleria along Central Avenue, Broadway, and Colorado Street, and the Americana along Central Avenue and Colorado Street. The Central Avenue portion of the LU is a mix of large-scale commercial development and office buildings and high density residential; however, Central Avenue forms the “backside” of Downtown Glendale which is developed around Brand Boulevard two blocks to the east of Central Avenue. From Central Avenue, the LU follows the Broadway corridor which, beyond Brand Boulevard, is a mostly small-scale commercial corridor that also includes public/civic land uses including the Glendale Post Office, Glendale Police Department, Glendale City Hall, and Glendale High School. Much of the development along Broadway between Brand Boulevard and Glendale Avenue is older than other portions of the LU, with City Hall and the Post Office being constructed in the 1930s along with the historic streetlights lining portions of Broadway. East of Glendale Boulevard land uses along Broadway remain commercial but consist of newer strip mall developments. The eastern portion of the LU in the vicinity of Glendale High School is more residential with two story apartment buildings fronting the roadway east of Chevy Chase Drive. The Colorado Street portion of the LU is similarly commercial with one- and two-story structures lining the entire corridor.

Typical views in LU-4 include the Central Avenue, Broadway, and Colorado Street corridors which are all bordered by sidewalks, street trees, and commercial and residential buildings. The Central Avenue portion of the LU includes street trees and the historic streetlights mentioned previously; however, the streetscape elements are not dominant features within this portion of the LU due to relatively narrow sidewalks and large buildings lining the street. In this regard, Central Avenue is geared toward travel to and from major shopping areas including the Americana and the Glendale Galleria. In contrast, the Broadway portion of the LU includes several streetscape elements that add to the visual character of the LU, including street trees, decorative and historic streetlights, and decorative sidewalk and crosswalk pavement. In particular, portions of Broadway have sidewalks that consist of a red brick paving material which matches many of the buildings lining the street which results in a designed feel and memorable viewer experience. Colorado Street is similar to Central Avenue, as it has relatively few street trees other than within intermittent curb extensions that are landscaped with small shrubs and palm trees, which are dispersed east of Glendale Avenue. Architectural elements along Colorado Street vary widely and the corridor is catered to local commercial activity. The San Gabriel Mountains are visible to north facing views and portions of the San Rafael Hills can be seen from east facing views along Broadway, though these natural features are generally obscured by buildings in the foreground.

Visual resources within LU-4 consist of urban streetscape elements such as mature street trees, decorative street treatments particularly along Broadway, the potentially historic streetlights along Broadway and Central Avenue, and historic buildings visible from the roadway including the following:

- The Security Trust and Savings Bank (100 North Brand Boulevard)
- The Hotel Glendale (701 East Broadway)
- The Glendale City Hall (613 East Broadway)

3.2.2.5 LU-5 Eagle Rock, Colorado Boulevard

LU-5 is entirely within the Eagle Rock neighborhood of the City of Los Angeles and consists of Colorado Boulevard from the Glendale city limit on the west to Figueroa Street on the east. Colorado Boulevard is two lanes in each direction with a center/turn lane between the City limit and Caspar Avenue. East of Caspar Avenue there is a landscaped median along the center of the roadway. Parking and bicycle lanes run along both sides of the street throughout the LU. Street elements along Colorado Boulevard include on-street parking, bicycle lanes and intermittent street trees along sidewalks.

Colorado Boulevard is an entirely commercial corridor within the self-contained community of Eagle Rock. Land uses along the corridor include small scale commercial uses consisting of restaurants, shops, and some neighborhood serving businesses (i.e., liquor stores, groceries, etc.). Residential land uses within the LU are located to the north and south of Colorado Boulevard, behind commercial buildings and extending up and down arterials perpendicular to Colorado Boulevard. The portion of the LU to the west of Eagle Rock Boulevard is less neighborhood-oriented with transitory land uses that cater to a more regional population such as

Eagle Rock Plaza, motels, and car washes. In addition, this portion of the LU is less pedestrian oriented as evidenced by the lack of streetscape features and relative distance between land uses. East of Eagle Rock Boulevard, the LU becomes more neighborhood-oriented with pedestrian-friendly streetscape treatments and commercial uses spaced more closely together. Within this portion of the LU, commercial buildings are of a consistent height and scale with similar facades. The landscaped median extends from Caspar Avenue on the west to Townsend Avenue on the east and consists of an approximately 16-foot wide median with trees scattered throughout and simple landscaping (i.e., grass and small shrubs). There are multiple gaps along the length of the median to provide pockets for left turns at each intersection. In addition to the median, mature street trees line the south side of Colorado Boulevard and are dispersed intermittently along the north side of the street. East of Townsend Avenue, development within the LU becomes less dense as the topography of the area is more varied and pedestrian circulation is less convenient.

Visual resources in LU-5 include streetscape elements such as mature street trees, the landscaped median along Colorado Boulevard, and the following historic buildings:

- The Arts Center Eagle Rock (2225 Colorado Boulevard)
- The Los Angeles City Council office (2035 Colorado Boulevard)
- The Women's 20th Century Club building (5105 Hermosa Avenue)

In addition to these historic and cultural monuments, the Eagle Rock, a major granite monolith that is important to the community and a notable visual resource, is not visible from the LU.

3.2.2.6 LU-6 Pasadena, Colorado Boulevard

LU-6 is entirely within the City of Pasadena and consists of the Proposed Project route along Colorado Boulevard, Raymond Avenue, and Walnut Street as well as the route option that utilizes Green Street and Union Street. A majority of the Proposed Project route through LU-6 utilizes Colorado Boulevard but a short stretch from between the SR-134 would follow Fair Oaks Avenue to Raymond Avenue via Walnut Street. Colorado Boulevard is two lanes in each direction with a center/left-turn lane throughout the LU. Both sides of the roadway also include the "blue stripe" which demarcates the boundary for the annual Rose Parade route through the City of Pasadena as well as on-street parking. Both Green Street and Union Street are one-way streets (Green Street is eastbound and Union Street is westbound) with lane configurations that range from two lanes to four lanes depending on the location. There are no bicycle lanes along either Green Street or Union Street.

From SR-134 to Colorado Boulevard, the LU consists of a portion of Fair Oaks Avenue, Walnut Street, and Raymond Avenue, all of which are two lanes in each direction with a center/left-turn lane. This short segment includes Memorial Park, which is a NRHP designated historic property. In addition to its historic value, the park also has several visual resources including a variety of exotic plants, a Romanesque stone building constructed in 1890, an art deco band shell, and a civil war memorial statue. Other than Memorial Park, this portion of the LU is defined by architectural elements which are consistent with Pasadena's Central District and Old Pasadena

Historic District. Buildings are two- to four-stories with consistent façade treatments and adaptive re-use historic-period structures.

Colorado Boulevard, a part of the original Route 66, makes up the majority of the LU and traverses Pasadena's major activity centers popularly known as Old Pasadena, the Civic Center, and the Playhouse District. Colorado Boulevard is an important scenic corridor in the City of Pasadena for its focused views east and west through the City's Central District and adjacent neighborhoods. Colorado Boulevard showcases historic commercial architecture in Old Pasadena and provides views of major cultural institutions such as Pasadena City College. Visually, the corridor ties together a long sequence of neighborhoods. Due to its prominence in the City's hierarchy of streets, it is also commonly used for wayfinding by motorists, pedestrians, and others. Land uses along Colorado Boulevard are primarily commercial with activity-oriented businesses such as restaurants and shops within the Central District, transitioning to more office uses and destination shopping and businesses such as office supply and department stores to the east. Buildings in the Central District are generally of a similar scale and mass, and façade treatments depict a consistent theme of restoration and reuse of historic buildings as determined by the design guidelines of the Central District Specific Plan. Landforms including the San Gabriel Mountains to the north and the San Rafael Hills to the west are visible from the LU and serve as the backdrop for the urban setting of the LU.

Visual resources within LU-6 consist of urban streetscape elements such as mature street trees, decorative street treatments such as decorative streetlights consistent with historic district design guidelines, and numerous historic buildings which consist primarily of the Old Pasadena National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) District, the Pasadena Civic Center NRHP District and the Pasadena Playhouse NRHP District, with contributing and individual resources interspersed throughout the LU. The following historic sites are located within the LU:

Old Pasadena NRHP District

- The Pasadena Civic Center NRHP District
- The Pasadena Playhouse NRHP District
- Memorial Park (85 East Holly Street)
- All Saints Episcopal Church (132 North Euclid Ave)
- Castle Green/Green Hotel Apartments (50 East Green Street)
- Pasadena City Hall (100 Garfield Ave)
- Civic Auditorium (300 East Green Street)

Colorado Boulevard

- Pasadena Public Library (285 East Walnut Street)
- Pasadena Playhouse (39 South El Molino Avenue)
- St. Andrews Catholic Church (311 North Raymond Avenue)
- Holliston Community Church (1305 East Colorado Boulevard)

3.2.3 Significance Thresholds and Methodology

3.2.3.1 Significance Thresholds

In accordance with Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, the Proposed Project would have a significant impact related to aesthetics if it would:

- a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway;
- c) 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; and/or
- d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

3.2.3.2 Methodology

The following steps were used to assess the existing visual setting of the Project corridor:

- The existing visual resources, character and quality were identified;
- Maps were prepared and photographs were taken to illustrate existing visual character and quality;
- Existing viewers, viewer exposure, and viewer response were evaluated; and
- An assessment of the potential impacts on visual resources was conducted using architectural renderings and visual simulations.

Background research was conducted to identify the regulatory and planning context for visual resources in the Project Area. Existing land use and aerial maps, as well as other available background information, were reviewed to identify the general visual setting and context of the Project, including major geographical features, vegetated areas, water features, and patterns of development. Field surveys were performed of the Project Area on February 19, 2020, and March 5, 2020, to identify distinct landscape units and to describe associated landform, visual resources, vegetation patterns, and manmade development.

Views from representative viewpoints were digitally photographed to depict the Project Area and for potential use in creating visual simulations. Adjacent property types and associated uses were also catalogued in order to identify users/viewers and their exposure to the Project. After identifying existing viewsheds and visual resources, maps were created using Geographic Information Systems to convey the location and spatial distribution of these resources in the Project Area.

Photo-realistic visual simulations were created to illustrate potential impacts that could result from the Proposed Project (see Section 3.2.4). For each LU, visual simulations were created, with exception to LU-6 in the City of Pasadena because physical improvements within the LU would be limited.

3.2.4 Impact Analysis

The following section includes the impact analysis, mitigation measures (if necessary), and significance after mitigation measures (if applicable).

Impact 3.2-1) Would the Proposed Project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

While there are no formal or designated scenic vistas within the Project Area, scenic viewing areas are available at higher elevations in the San Gabriel Mountains and Santa Monica Mountains. These vistas generally provide views of the Los Angeles Basin and are not formally intended for viewing the Project Area or individual components contained within it. In this regard, views from vista points at high elevations would be unaffected by the Proposed Project as structures associated with the Project are relatively small and unobtrusive as compared to urban development throughout the Project Area and would likely not be visible from vista points in the San Gabriel Mountains or Santa Monica Mountains. This discussion focuses on vistas within the Project Area.

Scenic vistas in the Project Area include views of the surrounding mountains, which are visible from various locations and include the Santa Monica Mountains/Hollywood Hills to the south, the Verdugo Mountains to the north and east, the San Gabriel Mountains to the north, and the San Rafael Hills to the north and east. Views of surrounding mountains are visible in each of the LUs. In some LUs, the surrounding mountains are minimally visible due to the orientation of the subject roadway and intervening land uses and development, such as in LU-3 and LU-5. In some LUs the surrounding mountains are a visually dominant feature in the background, such as in LU-1 and LU-6.

Drivers, transit riders, people on bicycles, and pedestrians would be expected to have more fleeting views of scenic vistas because they are moving along the Project corridor, while residents, pedestrians, employees/students, and visitors would be expected to have longer views.

Construction

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The presence of construction vehicles, equipment, visual signs of construction, construction staging and laydown of materials, and personnel would present visually disruptive elements in each of the LUs but would be temporary. Construction activities would introduce heavy equipment to the area (i.e., bulldozers, scrapers, and trucks), security fencing, barricade materials, stockpiled building materials, and safety and directional signage into the Project Area, which would result in some obstructed views of visual elements in the foreground such as buildings and landscape elements; however, views of surrounding mountains and

landscapes would remain unaffected from view corridors of public streets, sidewalks, and properties where construction would occur. It is not anticipated that cranes or other tall construction equipment would be required to construct the Proposed Project and thus no obstruction of the physical landscape surrounding the Project Area would occur. Construction activities along sidewalks would restrict visual access to the pedestrian viewer group, which would be most affected by construction activities given their exposure and sensitivity. Impacts to scenic vistas would be temporary and not significant given the nature of construction activities and general lack of high-quality vistas within the Project Area. Therefore, the Proposed Project would result in a less-than-significant impact related to construction activities.

Operations

Less-Than-Significant Impact. There are no formal scenic vistas in the Project Area and views of surrounding landscapes and topography are available but generally low quality and not the primary focus of affected viewer groups. The primary visual elements of the Proposed Project include the addition of BRT vehicles, changes to existing parking and vehicle lanes, bus stations and platforms, curb and sidewalk modifications, and changes to street configurations including bus-only lanes, new or relocated bus stops, and modifications to existing medians. The addition of buses in any of the proposed configurations would not be expected to substantially affect existing views in the Project Area. Stations would include canopies, potential monument signs, and other vertical features which could limit views for viewers directly adjacent to or underneath the canopies; however, views in the Project Area as a whole would not be substantially affected. Therefore, the Proposed Project would result in a less-than-significant impact related to operational activities.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance of Impacts after Mitigation

Less than significant.

Impact 3.2-2) Would the Proposed Project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

There are no designated state scenic highways within the Project Area. Scenic resources include existing landscaping elements, including rows of mature trees along the medians in LU-1, LU-3, and LU-5, and historic properties.

Construction

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Construction activities are not anticipated to result in damage to any scenic resources. Certain construction activities associated with modifications to the medians along Glenoaks Boulevard and Colorado Boulevard as well as placing stations along sidewalks may require trimming of existing street trees and temporary removal of streetscape features (i.e., decorative street lights and paving), but such resources would be replaced or

maintained where feasible. Permanent removal of historic resources, street trees and other landscape elements as well as historic properties are addressed in the following operational discussion. Therefore, the Proposed Project would result in a less-than-significant impact related to construction activities.

Operations

Less-Than-Significant Impact with Mitigation. The Proposed Project would result in permanent alterations to the street where bus lanes are proposed and along sidewalks and medians where station platforms are proposed. Such modifications would not result in substantial effects on visual resources which, in the Project Area, consist mainly of typical street trees and streetscape amenities such as decorative paving. Certain station locations may conflict with existing street trees but further design refinement during the Preliminary Engineering phase would avoid most conflicts with existing street trees located within sidewalks. Station footprints in LU-4 may affect decorative brick paving at the proposed Broadway/Brand Boulevard Station and Broadway/Glendale Avenue Station; however, the impact would be less than significant as a majority of the existing brick would be unaffected by the proposed station and during Preliminary Engineering and Final Design, Metro would coordinate station design with the City of Glendale to ensure stations are incorporated into the streetscape in a manner that does not substantially alter the visual quality of the LU. Additionally, the Project will integrate site-specific public art during final design. The aesthetic design of stations and related transit facilities will promote a sense of place and minimize adverse visual impacts on surrounding neighborhoods.

The Proposed Project may require the demolition or relocation of the Central Avenue and Broadway Streetlights in LU-4, which are historic resources. There is some speculation as to whether all of the affected street lights are historic or reproductions; however, as visual resources they contribute to the visual character of the LU regardless of their designation as historic properties because the reproductions are indiscernible from their historic counterparts. Based on current concept engineering plans station, platforms conflict with approximately three historic streetlights on Central Avenue and approximately three on Broadway. The final platform locations are subject to refinement during the Preliminary Engineering phase to meet site-specific conditions. Metro is developing a standard “kit of parts” for station features, which would be further refined in the Preliminary Engineering phase. The selection of specific station features as well as final platform locations are also subject to refinement during the Preliminary Engineering phase to meet site-specific conditions. As discussed, during Preliminary Engineering and Final Design, Metro would coordinate station design with the City of Glendale to ensure stations are incorporated into the streetscape in a manner that does not substantially alter the visual quality of the LU. Such design incorporation may include but is not limited to relocating historic streetlights in close proximity to their existing locations, paving the station areas with similar brick treatments, or inclusion of additional streetscape features to offset losses in streetscape amenities. Refer to Section 3.5, Cultural Resources of the Draft EIR for additional information related to historic resources. Regarding other historic properties, no potential conflicts have been identified between stations or roadway modifications and existing historic resources that may result in damage or destruction.

The landscaped medians along Glenoaks Boulevard in LU-3 would undergo modifications as a result of the Proposed Project. In LU-3, portions of the median along Glenoaks Boulevard would be removed to allow for station platforms and transition lanes for BRT station approaches as well as left turn pockets. Some trees within the landscaped median as well as existing landscaping would be removed as a result; however, the majority of the median and associated landscaping would remain unaffected by the Project. In addition, the Proposed Project would install additional landscaping and median extension/jersey barriers at left-turn approaches to ensure safety but also to compensate for the loss of portions of the median. Therefore, impacts related to existing landscaped medians would be less than significant.

Due to the potential removal or relocation of the potentially historic Central Avenue and Broadway streetlights, without mitigation, the Proposed Project would result in a significant impact related to operational activities. Implementation of Mitigation Measure **CUL-1** would reduce this impact to less than significant.

Colorado Street (Route Option E2)

The Colorado Street route option would avoid all impacts to the potentially historic streetlights on Broadway; however, the Central Avenue streetlights would still potentially be affected by the proposed station platform at Central Avenue and Lexington Drive. While fewer streetlights would be affected, without mitigation, the Proposed Project with the Colorado Street route option would result in a significant impact related to operational activities. Implementation of Mitigation Measure **CUL-1** would reduce this impact to less than significant.

SR-134 (Route Option E3)

The SR-134 route option would avoid all construction-related impacts to the Central Avenue and Broadway streetlights. Therefore, the Proposed Project with the SR-134 route option (Route Option E3) would result in no impact related to operational activities.

Colorado Boulevard Hybrid Side-and-Center Running Configuration Option (Route Option F1)

The Colorado Boulevard Hybrid Side-and-Center Running Configuration Option in the Eagle Rock community would replace the existing median with the proposed center-running bus lanes and associated station platforms at Caspar Avenue and Townsend Avenue. While the existing median and associated landscaping would be removed as a result of the Configuration Option, new median and center lane landscaping amenities would be installed throughout the LU for safety purposes, as part of the Project, but would also offset some of the loss in visual resources within LU-5. Given the Eagle Rock community's expressed sensitivity to the loss of the median and associated visual resources and the substantial degree to which visual resources in LU-5 would be affected, without mitigation, the Proposed Project with the Colorado Boulevard Hybrid Side-and-Center Running Configuration Option (Route Option F1) would result in a potentially significant impact related to operational activities. As discussed, the Project will integrate site-specific public art during final design. The aesthetic design of stations and related transit facilities will promote a sense of place and minimize adverse visual impacts

on surrounding neighborhoods. Mitigation Measures **VIS-1** and **VIS-2** are recommended to reduce this impact to less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

VIS-1: Plant material removed from center medians and sidewalks shall be replaced within the existing street/curb right-of-way based on the following requirements:

- Plant one new tree and/or shrub for every street tree removed (1:1 tree replacement ratio). Replacement tree species should be the same as that removed or to the satisfaction of the affected jurisdiction's Bureau of Street Services and located within the street right-of-way along station approaches or within the sidewalk.
- Plant groundcover using similar replacement species or to the satisfaction of the affected jurisdiction's Bureau of Street Services.
- A Landscape Replacement Study shall be prepared by a licensed landscape architect during final design. The study shall identify the location, species, and landscape design elements for all replacement landscaping associated with the Proposed Project and subject to local jurisdiction review.

VIS-2: Replacement median, barriers, or other divider shall be enhanced with patterns or decorative features in accordance with the local jurisdiction's streetscape design guidelines and approved by local jurisdiction Street Services bureau or similar entity.

CUL-1: Please refer to Section 3.5, Cultural Resources of the Draft EIR.

Significance of Impacts after Mitigation

Mitigation Measures **VIS-1** and **VIS-2** would reduce potential visual impacts by requiring landscaping and streetscape beautification. Mitigation Measure **CUL-1** would reduce potential visual impacts by ensuring that the Proposed Project design would be consistent with Rehabilitation Standards for historic resources damaged or relocated within the Project Area. Therefore, with mitigation, the Proposed Project would result in a less-than-significant impact related to impacts to visual resources.

Impact 3.2-3) In non-urbanized areas, would the Proposed Project 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?

The Proposed Project is located in an urbanized area. The following analysis focuses on potential impacts related to conflicts with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. Refer to the Aesthetics Technical Report, included as Appendix C to the Draft EIR, for additional information related to visual character and quality of views.

Construction

No Impact. None of the jurisdictions in the Project Area have policies or plans that govern visual quality during construction activities as visual quality is typically a permanent condition that cities regulate. Adherence to South Coast Air Quality Management District Rules 401 and 403 would reduce the amount of visible Project-related emissions that are released into the air (Rule 401) and the amount of Project-related fugitive dust that are entrained into the air (Rule 403). Project-related construction activities would be required to comply with these rules. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in a significant impact related to related to construction activities.

Operations

Less-Than-Significant Impact. While each jurisdiction in the Project Area has a zoning ordinance that regulates the scenic quality of development projects, the zoning ordinances do not directly regulate the design of transportation infrastructure elements including bus facilities such as stations. Limited property acquisitions are anticipated, and Proposed Project elements would primarily be located within the street right-of-way such that no changes to existing land uses are anticipated. As such, the Proposed Project would be consistent with zoning requirements.

The Proposed Project would follow Metro's Transit Service Policies & Standards, Public Art Policy, Systemwide Station Design Standards, and Standard/Directive Drawings. The Metro Transit Service Policies & Standards identifies policies, principles and requirements that will be used by Metro staff in the design or modification of the transit network. The Metro Public Art Policy mandates the inclusion of art in the design of its transit systems; the Systemwide Station Design Standards Policy provides a consistent, streamlined systemwide design approach for Metro stations that include sustainable design features and sustainable landscaping.

In locations where there are specific design guidelines or ordinances, including the North Hollywood Redevelopment Project Commercial Core Urban Design Guidelines, Glendale Downtown Specific Plan, Glendale Town Center Specific Plan, Glendale Comprehensive Design Guidelines, Pasadena Citywide Design Principles and Design Guidelines, or Pasadena Central District Specific Plan, the Project would comply with applicable design requirements including undergoing mandated design review. Metro has been coordinating and continues to coordinate with the affected jurisdictions regarding Project design to ensure the Project is consistent with all applicable local jurisdiction zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. As discussed, the Project will integrate site-specific public art during final design. The aesthetic design of stations and related transit facilities will promote a sense of place and minimize adverse visual impacts on surrounding neighborhoods. Therefore, the Proposed Project would result in a less-than-significant impact related to operational activities.

Although visual character is not required to be assessed in the Draft EIR, illustrations have been developed to visually show how the Proposed Project would be incorporated into the communities. These illustrations are shown in **Figure 3.2-2** through **Figures 3.2-12**.

Figure 3.2-2 - Illustrative View of LU-1 Pre-Project



SOURCE: Kilograph, 2020

Figure 3.2-3 - Illustrative View of LU-1 Post-Project



SOURCE: Kilograph, 2020

Figure 3.2-4 - Illustrative View of LU-2 Pre-Project



SOURCE: Kilograph, 2020

Figure 3.2-5 - Illustrative View of LU-2 Post-Project



SOURCE: Kilograph, 2020

Figure 3.2-6 - Illustrative View of LU-3 Pre-Project



SOURCE: Kilograph, 2020

Figure 3.2-7 - Illustrative View of LU-3 Post-Project



SOURCE: Kilograph, 2020

Figure 3.2-8 - Illustrative View of LU-4 Pre-Project



SOURCE: Kilograph, 2020

Figure 3.2-9 - Illustrative View of LU-4 Post-Project



SOURCE: Kilograph, 2020

Figure 3.2-10 - Illustrative View of LU-5 Pre-Project



SOURCE: Kilograph, 2020

Figure 3.2-11 - Illustrative View of LU-5 Post-Project



SOURCE: Kilograph, 2020

Figure 3.2-12 - Illustrative View of LU-5, Post Center Running Configuration Option (F2)



SOURCE: Kilograph, 2020

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance of Impacts after Mitigation

Less than significant.

Impact 3.2-4) Would the Proposed Project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Construction

No Impact. Most construction activities would occur during daytime hours; however, if necessary, nighttime illumination during construction activities would be temporary and would not result in permanent effects to nighttime views in the Project Area. No construction equipment or activities have been identified that would result in a substantial source of light or glare during daytime hours. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in a significant impact related to related to construction activities.

Operations

No Impact. Because the Proposed Project is located in a developed, urban area, there is a substantial amount of existing lighting and glare. Current lighting and glare sources in the Project Area include streetlights, buildings and other structures, vehicles, and other various sources. Shading sources include buildings, other structures, utilities, and vegetation. The primary elements of the Proposed Project that could result in lighting, glare, and shading are the station upgrades and additional buses. These elements would not be expected to result in a substantial change in existing lighting, glare, or shading. Shading related to the bus station canopies would be a beneficial change for station users and would not result in impacts on adjacent land uses, as canopies would be relatively low profile compared to surrounding development. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in a significant impact related to related to operational activities.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Significance of Impacts after Mitigation

No impact.