4.4 Visual and Aesthetic Impacts

This section summarizes the existing visual and aesthetic environment within the project area and evaluates the potential for visual and aesthetic impacts resulting from construction and operation of the proposed Regional Connector Transit Corridor alternatives. Potential visual impacts to historic resources are summarized in Section 4.12.1 Historic Resources - Built Environment. Information in this section is based on the Visual and Aesthetic Impacts Technical Memorandum prepared for the project contained in Appendix P of this EIS/EIR.

This section has been updated since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR to address comments received on the Draft EIS/EIR, as indicated in the Responses to Comments, Volumes F-2 and F-3, of this Final EIS/EIR, and based on refinements to the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). A vertical line in the margin is used to show where revisions have occurred to this section since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR, excluding minor edits for consistency and correction of formatting and minor typographical errors.

Refinements to the LPA since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR include the designation of the Mangrove property (formerly the Nikkei development) for construction staging and Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) insertion, and information about the possible use of antennas as part of the LRT communication system. Since designation of an LPA, mitigation measures have been refined and confirmed for the LPA, which are listed in Section 4.4.4.2 below, based on input received during the Draft EIS/EIR public review period. Mitigation measures listed for the LPA in this section have been carried forward and included in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for the LPA, Chapter 8, of this Final EIS/EIR. No changes to the NEPA impact findings or CEQA impact determinations were identified as a result of refinements to the LPA, responses to comments, or other developments since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR.

The analysis of visual and aesthetic consequences associated with the LPA is detailed below in Section 4.4.3.5.

4.4.1 Regulatory Framework

Guidance for assessing potential visual impacts of the Regional Connector Transit Corridor project was found in the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and CEQA, and was used to evaluate potential visual and aesthetic effects under NEPA.

Multiple federal agencies have developed analytical frameworks for visual resource management, including:

- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service (USFS 1974, 1995)
- United States Department of Interior (USDOI), Bureau of Land Management (BLM 1978)
- United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA 1981)

The methodology and assumptions used to assess visual and aesthetic impacts of the Regional Connector Transit Corridor project alternatives build on the guidance developed by these federal agencies and the extensive work of Lawrence Headley of LH&A for the Port of Los Angeles and other Los Angeles projects (Headley 2008, 2006, and 2005). Analyzing potential visual impacts includes evaluating the following effects:

- Conflicts with or compliments the existing visual character
- Changes in visual quality
- Intrudes on or blocks sensitive views (emphasizes views protected by local jurisdictions)
- Creates shadows
- Creates new light or glare sources

More information regarding the regulatory and analytical framework is available in Appendix P, Visual and Aesthetic Impacts Technical Memorandum.

4.4.2 Affected Environment

The area of potential effects (APE) for the visual impact analysis consists of the area one city block adjacent to each side of the proposed alignments.

4.4.2.1 Visual Resources

The build alternatives' existing visual and aesthetic environment is characterized by an established urban landscape. Research was completed to locate previously identified visual and aesthetic resources. These resources include, but are not limited to, structures of architectural or historic significance or visual prominence; public plazas, art, and gardens; heritage oaks or other trees or plants protected by the City of Los Angeles; consistent design elements (such as setbacks, massing, height, and signage) along a street or district; pedestrian amenities; and landscaped medians or park areas. Based on site reviews, the predominant visual resources within the APE are recognized historic buildings. Figures 4.4-6 through 4.4-8 show the visual resources identified within the APE.

4.4.2.2 Scenic Vistas

The City of Los Angeles General Plan and the Scenic Highways Plan within the *General Plan's Circulation Element* were reviewed to determine whether the project would affect scenic vistas.

Based on this review, it was determined that there are no scenic highways in downtown Los Angeles. Although Objective 11 of the *General Plan's Circulation Element* is to "preserve and enhance access to scenic resources and regional open space," there are no such features adjacent to the TSM or build alternatives.

4.4.2.3 Scenic Resources

The following buildings, which are recognized as historic resources in Section 4.12.1, Cultural Resources – Built Environment, and open spaces have been identified as scenic resources along the proposed alignment corridors for the TSM and build alternatives. Figures 4.4-1 through 4.4-5 illustrate some of the existing visual conditions in the project area.

Financial District:

- Fine Arts Building
- 818 Building
- Roosevelt Lofts
- Pegasus
- 811 Wilshire Boulevard
- Engine Company No. 28
- The Standard Hotel
- The California Club
- Los Angeles Central Library and Maguire Gardens
- City National Plaza
- Citigroup Center Plaza

Bunker Hill:

- Walt Disney Concert Hall
- 2nd Street Tunnel
- Grassy Open Space at General Thaddeus Kosciuszko Way

Historic Core:

- Los Angeles Law Center
- Times Annex
- Times Building
- Higgins Building

- St. Vibiana Cathedral
- Redwing Shoes

Figure 4.4-1. Financial District/Flower Street Corridor

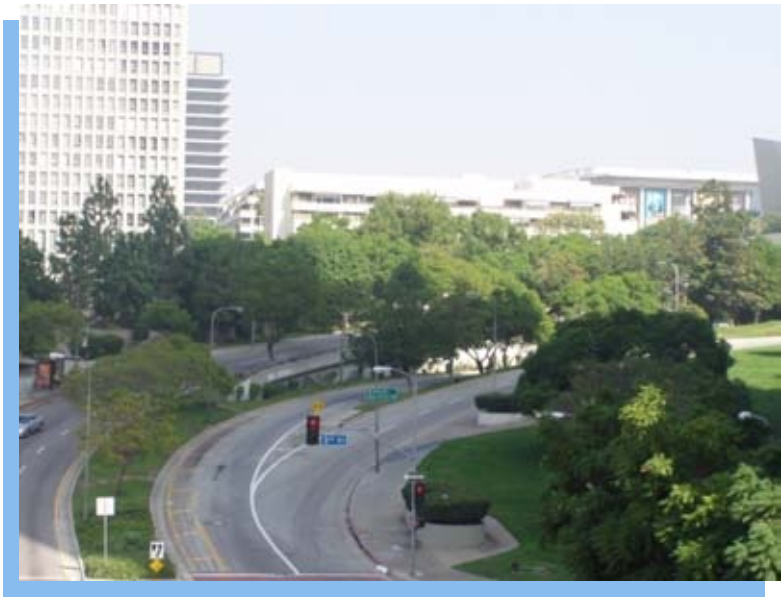

Figure 4.4-2. Open Space at West End of 2nd and 3rd Street Tunnels

Figure 4.4-3. 1st Street Corridor and the Los Angeles Times Building

Civic Center:

- Civic Center Historic District
- City Hall South
- Los Angeles City Hall
- U.S. Courthouse
- Fletcher Bowron Square
- Parker Center
- Tinker Toy Parking Structure

Figure 4.4-4. Los Angeles City Hall

Little Tokyo:

- Little Tokyo Historic District
- Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Temple
- Union Center Arts

More information regarding the existing visual and aesthetic environment within the project area is available in Appendix P, Visual and Aesthetic Impacts Technical Memorandum.

Figure 4.4-5. Japanese Village Plaza with "Friendship Knot" at San Pedro & 2nd Streets

4.4.3 Environmental Impacts/Environmental Consequences

Potential impacts to historic resources are evaluated in Section 4.12.1 Historic Resources - Built Environment. Scenic byways, scenic vistas, and protected public view corridors are not located within the project area. Therefore, the project would neither impede views from any nationally recognized scenic highways, designated scenic routes, corridors, or parkways nor would it affect any otherwise recognized or valued public viewing locations.

Impact conclusions for all of the alternatives are based on the thresholds identified above in Section 4.4.1. Table 4.4-1 summarizes visual and aesthetic impacts associated with each of the five alternatives. Further information regarding visual and aesthetic impacts is provided in Appendix P, Visual and Aesthetic Impacts Technical Memorandum.

4.4.3.1 No Build Alternative

New transit projects would not be constructed or begin operation in the project area under this alternative. Therefore, direct or indirect visual impacts would not occur to scenic vistas, scenic resources, nighttime lighting, and shading and shadowing. The No Build Alternative would not result in visual impacts to these resources.

4.4.3.1.1 NEPA Finding

The No Build Alternative would have no effects with respect to visual and aesthetic conditions.

4.4.3.1.2 CEQA Determination

The No Build Alternative would have no impact with respect to visual and aesthetic conditions.

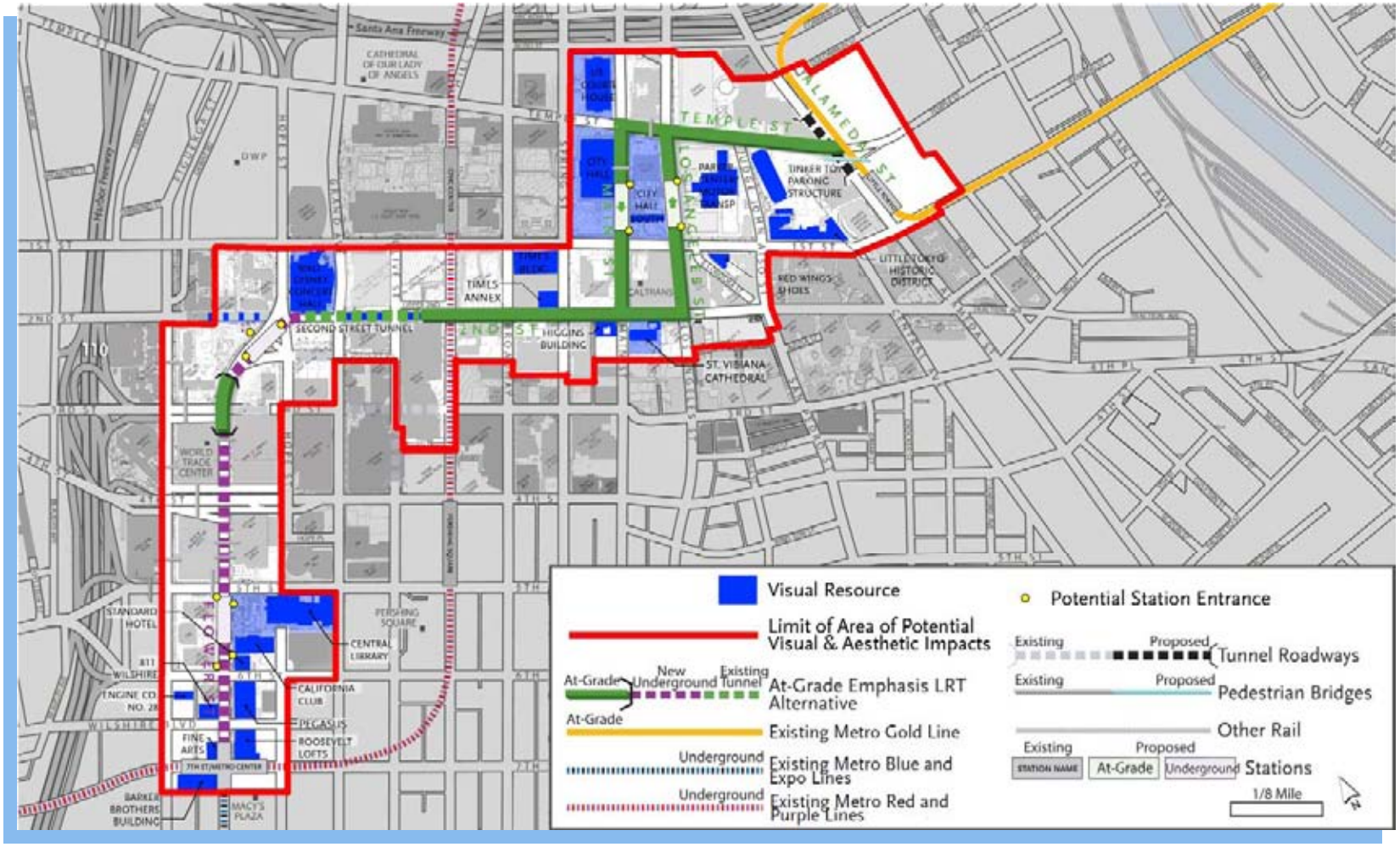

Figure 4.4-6. Visual Resources Associated with the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative

** Light blue areas are plazas, open space, and courtyards identified as visual resources*

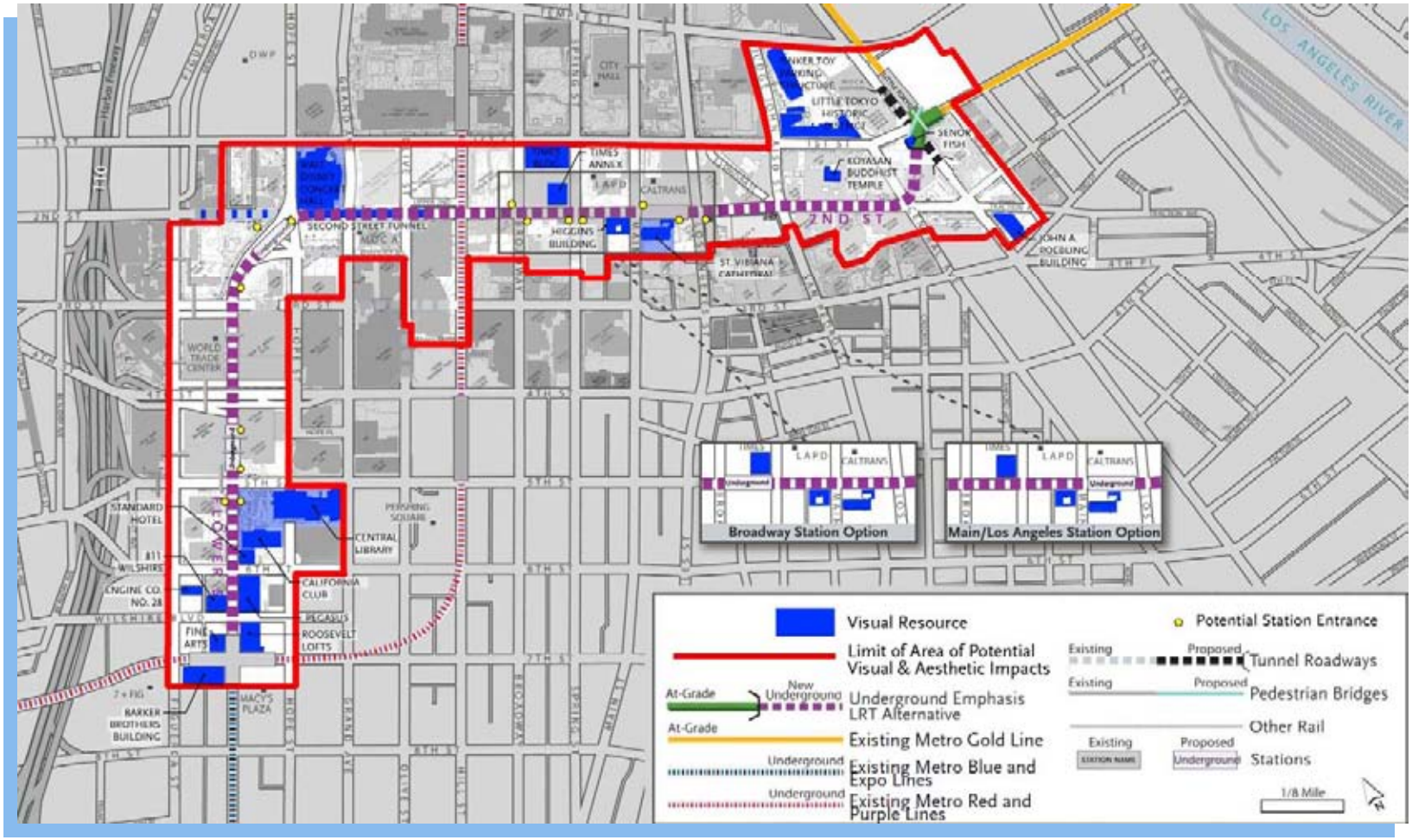

Figure 4.4-7. Visual Resources Associated with the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative

** Light blue areas are plazas, open space, and courtyards identified as visual resources*

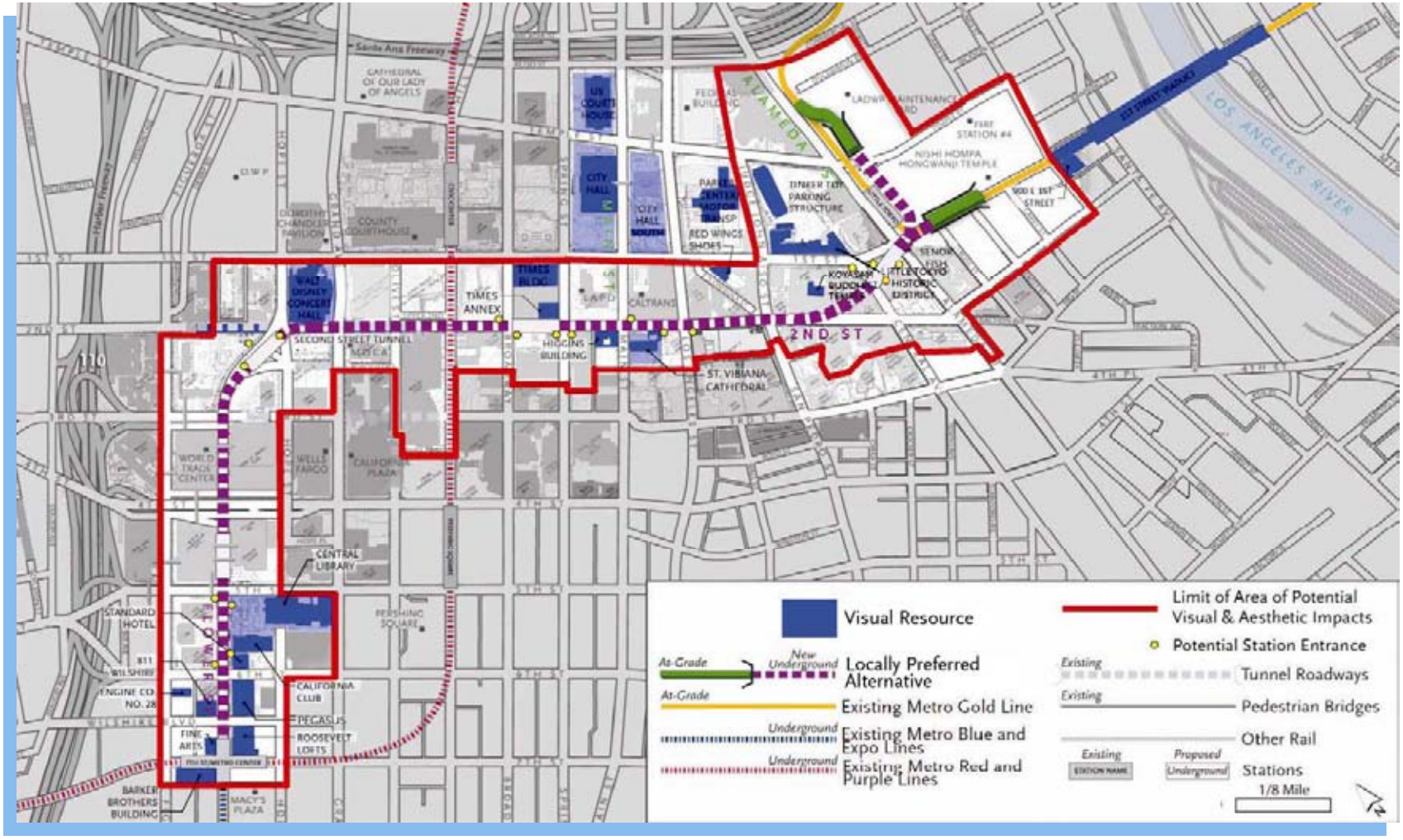

Figure 4.4-8. Visual Resources Associated with the Locally Preferred Alternative

** Light blue areas are plazas, open space, and courtyards identified as visual resources*

4.4.3.2 TSM Alternative

The TSM Alternative would result in minor visual modifications to the existing environment due to construction of enhanced bus stops. Examples of how these improvements might appear are shown in Figures 4.4-9a and 4.4-9b. Direct or indirect construction or operation impacts would not occur to scenic vistas, scenic resources, nighttime lighting, and shading and shadowing under the TSM Alternative because there would not be any new major construction or new light rail operation.

4.4.3.2.1 NEPA Finding

The TSM Alternative would not have adverse effects on the visual and aesthetic conditions in the project area.

4.4.3.2.2 CEQA Determination

The TSM Alternative would not have a significant impact on the visual and aesthetic conditions in the project area. The visual character of the corridor would not change with either construction or operation of the TSM Alternative.

Figure 4.4-9a and Figure 4.4-9b. Enhanced Bus Stop

4.4.3.3 At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative

4.4.3.3.1 Construction

Construction of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would involve both at-grade and underground construction activities. At-grade construction would include installing tracks and guideway structures and constructing station platforms and ancillary facilities along roadways in the Historic Core, Civic Center, and Little Tokyo areas of downtown Los Angeles. At-grade construction activities would also include streetscape improvements along the entire alignment.

For aboveground construction, activities, equipment, and staging locations would be visible to nearby land uses and passersby. Proposed construction staging locations for the at-grade portion of this alternative include the Main/1st Street station, the Los Angeles/1st Street station, and the Temple and Alameda junction. At each of these three staging locations, construction equipment, worker vehicles, and construction trailers would be visible to nearby land uses and passersby for a period of two to three years.

For underground construction activities, cut and cover construction would be conducted primarily below ground along approximately 1,600 feet of Flower Street north of the existing 7th Street/Metro Center Station and extend to the proposed 2nd/Hope Street station. At any given time, two to three blocks would be closed during cut and cover construction activities. Aboveground activities associated with cut and cover construction would be visible to nearby land uses and passersby; however, the bulk of construction would occur below ground and, therefore, would not obstruct views or substantially alter the visual character of the Flower Street corridor in the Financial District.

Also associated with underground construction would be construction staging areas proposed at the Flower/6th/5th Street station site and the 2nd/Hope Street station site. Construction staging locations would be visible to nearby land uses and passersby; however, the construction sites themselves would be sheltered from direct public view by temporary construction walls.

Table 4.4-2 summarizes construction impacts on scenic resources associated with construction of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative.

Both above and below ground construction activities—including installation of tracks and poles, station construction, and pedestrian and train portal construction—would temporarily disrupt the visual character and views along the corridors. However as shown in Figures 4.4-1 to 4.4-5, the project would be constructed in a heavily urbanized environment consisting of high- and mid-rise buildings where construction activities are not uncommon. Construction of the project would not noticeably reduce visual quality or alter viewing context. Therefore, temporary construction impacts would be less than significant.

During construction, nighttime lighting would predominantly consist of security lighting, and light would be directed on-site. As such, nighttime lighting impacts would be less than significant during construction. Heights of construction-related facilities and equipment located aboveground would be limited; as such, the potential for construction activities to result in shading and shadows beyond those currently created by the high- and mid-rise buildings along the alignment's corridors would be minimal. Therefore, no shade or shadow impacts would result.

4.4.3.3.2 Operations

Scenic Resources:

Views of scenic resources could be minimally disrupted during project operations due to the presence of overhead contact wire and catenary poles, at-grade stations, pedestrian portals and train portals. However, buildings within these districts that are scenic resources are much greater in scale than the components of the LRT system that the LRT system would not degrade

any views. Open space and plazas would experience low visual impacts. In addition, the LRT facilities would be consistent with the historical context of many of the structures and reminiscent of the historic system of trolleys and street cars. Therefore, visual resource impacts would not be adverse or significant. Other buildings within the APE for the visual impact analysis do not have a direct line of sight of the project or are located too far from the at-grade portions of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative alignment to be visually affected. These include the Times Building, St. Vibiana Cathedral, and Union Arts Center. Therefore, no visual impacts to these buildings would occur.

Visual Character:

The At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would be located in a heavily urbanized environment (as shown in Figures 4.4-1 to 4.4-5) and adding a fixed guideway, whether at-grade or underground, would not noticeably reduce visual quality or alter the viewing context in the Financial District, Bunker Hill, Historic Core, Civic Center, or Little Tokyo areas of downtown Los Angeles. The introduction and operation of these improvements would contribute to the existing urban character and high-density, pedestrian-friendly environment that already exists in downtown Los Angeles. There would not be a significant effect on the visual character of the historic districts because potential impacts to historic buildings that contribute to the historic districts would be less than significant. Therefore, visual character impacts associated with the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would be less than significant.

Nighttime Lighting/Shade and Shadow:

Nighttime lighting associated with the alternative would primarily consist of security lighting, which would be similar to the existing lighting located throughout downtown Los Angeles. Aboveground structures, including station platforms and catenary structures (which include poles and wires), would be limited to approximately two stories in height; therefore, the potential for the project to result in increased shading and shadows beyond those currently created by the high- and mid-rise buildings along the alignment corridors would be minimal and no shade or shadow impacts would result.

4.4.3.3.3 NEPA Finding

The At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would result in minor changes in visual character, however, they would not be considered adverse when potential mitigation measures are implemented.

4.4.3.3.4 CEQA Determination

The At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative would not have a significant impact with respect to visual and aesthetic conditions with implementation of proposed mitigation measures.

4.4.3.4 Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative

4.4.3.4.1 Construction

Scenic Resources:

The Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would involve primarily underground construction due to the proposed configuration of the alignment, except for cut and cover construction at

station locations, construction staging areas, and potential TBM insertion sites. However, most construction would occur below ground, and temporary construction walls would prevent direct public view of construction staging and TBM insertion sites. TBM operation would be entirely below ground and not visible to nearby land uses or passersby in the Historic Core and Little Tokyo areas of downtown Los Angeles. Therefore, potential impacts on scenic resources associated with construction of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would not be adverse or significant.

Visual Character:

Construction activities, including cut and cover construction, installation of the tracks and poles in the at-grade segment of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative, and station and pedestrian portal construction, would temporarily alter the existing visual character and views along the corridors. However as shown in Figures 4.4-1 to 4.4-5, the project would be constructed in a heavily urbanized environment consisting of high- and mid-rise buildings where construction activities are not uncommon. Construction of the project would not noticeably reduce visual quality or alter viewing context. Therefore, temporary construction impacts would be less than significant.

Nighttime Lighting/Shade and Shadow:

During construction, nighttime lighting would predominantly consist of security lighting, and light would be directed on-site. As such, nighttime lighting impacts would not be adverse or significant during construction. As with the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative, shade and shadow impacts associated with construction-related facilities and equipment located aboveground would be minimal compared to those currently created by the high- and mid-rise buildings along the alignment's corridors. Therefore, no shade or shadow impacts would result.

4.4.3.4.2 Operations

Scenic Resources:

The Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would operate primarily underground, with a short at-grade segment in Little Tokyo near the existing Little Tokyo/Arts District Station and, therefore, would result in only minimal potential visual impacts to scenic resources. At-grade overhead contact systems, catenary poles, and trackway (standard features required for a light rail system to operate) would be located only at the easternmost end of the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative alignment. The block bordered by Alameda Street, 2nd Street, 1st Street, and Central Avenue is the only block that would have exposed overhead contact wires, catenary poles, and track.

Older buildings on this block include the Señor Fish and John A. Roebling structures. The Cultural Resources – Built Environment (Updated), Appendix X, describes these buildings and potential project impacts. The portal area structures and surrounding streetscape and landscaping would incorporate historical and visual references to the surrounding Little Tokyo and Arts District neighborhoods, complementing these important communities. Given that most features associated with the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would be located below ground, and that only one city block would experience potential visual changes associated with the aboveground operations of this alternative, no adverse visual impacts to scenic

resources would occur. Therefore, any potential impacts to visual resources would be less than significant.

Visual Character:

The Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative is located in a heavily urbanized environment (as shown in Figures 4.4-1 to 4.4-5), and adding primarily underground structures and a limited fixed guideway would not noticeably reduce visual quality or alter the viewing context in the Financial District, Bunker Hill, Historic Core, and Little Tokyo areas of downtown Los Angeles. Construction and operation of these features would contribute to the existing urban character and high-density, pedestrian-friendly environment that already exists in downtown Los Angeles. Therefore, potential visual character impacts associated with the Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would not be adverse or significant.

Nighttime Lighting/Shade and Shadow:

Nighttime lighting associated with the alternative would predominantly consist of security lighting at pedestrian portal locations, and would be directed on-site. Therefore, no nighttime lighting impacts would occur during operation. Aboveground structures, including pedestrian portals and one block with at-grade light rail system, would be limited to no more than two stories in height; therefore, the potential for the project to result in increased shading and shadows beyond those currently created by the high- and mid-rise buildings along the alignment corridors would be minimal and no shade or shadow impacts would result.

4.4.3.4.3 NEPA Finding

The Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would not have adverse effects on the visual and aesthetic character of the project area.

4.4.3.4.4 CEQA Determination

The Underground Emphasis LRT Alternative would not have a significant impact on the visual and aesthetic character of the project area.

4.4.3.5 Locally Preferred Alternative

4.4.3.5.1 Construction

Construction of the LPA would require mostly underground construction due to the proposed configuration of the alignment. Cut and cover, open cut, or sequential excavation method (SEM) construction could occur at station sites and cut and cover construction would occur along the southern portion of Flower Street just north of the 7th Street/Metro Center Station. Construction staging locations would include the Mangrove property (formerly the Nikkei development), which would be used as the TBM insertion site, as well as the 1st/Central Avenue, 2nd/Broadway, and the 2nd/Hope Street station sites.

The LPA would include a center platform station constructed under the northern portion of the block bounded by 1st, 2nd, and Alameda Streets, and Central Avenue, with tracks to the north and east proceeding at the same grade. The tracks leaving this block would split into two different directions. One set of tracks would head east within 1st Street, where it would rise up through a portal to an at-grade elevation and join the Metro Gold Line to I-605 about one and a half blocks

east of Alameda Street. The other set of tracks would head northerly east of and parallel to Alameda Street, rising through a second portal, and joining the Metro Gold Line to Montclair and heading north to Union Station.

Scenic Resources:

Most construction would occur below ground, and temporary construction walls would prevent direct public view of construction staging and TBM insertion sites. Construction staging areas and associated temporary construction walls would be located on the northern portion of the block bounded by 1st, 2nd, and Alameda Streets, and Central Avenue. Additionally, the Mangrove property would be used as a construction staging location as well as for TBM insertion. These areas would not be visible to anyone but those in the vicinity of this block. There would be no impact to scenic resources in this vicinity because there are no nearby resources.

In the vicinity of the portal where the train would transition to at-grade, the Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Temple, an important community resource, is located at 815 East 1st Street. Construction of the portal within 1st Street would involve cut and cover methods and occur in the vicinity of the temple, which could have moderate potential visual impacts. Nonetheless, potential impacts on scenic resources associated with construction of the LPA would not be adverse or significant.

Construction of the LPA would not result in significant impacts to scenic resources. Therefore, construction of this alternative would not contribute to a cumulative scenic resource impact.

Visual Character:

During construction, activities occurring aboveground in roadways and along sidewalks would temporarily alter the existing visual character and views along the corridors. Construction staging locations would be visible to nearby land uses and passersby; however, the construction sites themselves would be sheltered from direct public view by temporary construction walls. The project would be constructed in a heavily urbanized environment consisting of high- and mid-rise buildings where construction activities are not uncommon. Project construction would not noticeably reduce visual quality or alter viewing context. Furthermore, temporary construction impacts on visual character would be less than significant. Mitigation has been incorporated to further reduce less than significant impacts.

Construction of the LPA would not result in a significant impact to the existing visual character. Therefore, construction of this alternative would not contribute to a cumulative visual character impact.

Table 4.4-1. Summary of Potential Visual and Aesthetic Impacts

Impacts	No Build	TSM		At-Grade Emphasis LRT		Underground Emphasis LRT		Locally Preferred Alternative	
		Construction	Operation	Construction	Operation	Construction	Operation	Construction	Operation
Scenic Vistas	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Scenic Resources	NO	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
Visual Character	NO	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS	LTS
Nighttime Illumination	NO	NO	NO	LTS	NO	LTS	NO	LTS	NO
Shade and Shadows	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Indirect Impacts	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Direct Impacts	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Cumulative Impacts	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO

Notes:
[1] Scenic vistas were not located in the project area; therefore, an analysis of impacts was not included.
NO = No impact
LTS = Less than significant impact

Table 4.4-2. Scenic Resources Potentially Affected by Construction of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative

Resources	Cut and Cover for Guideway	Construction Staging	Stations and Portals	Tunnel Boring
Financial District				
Fine Arts Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
818 Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
Roosevelt Lofts	NO	NO	NO	NO
Pegasus	LTS	NO	NO	NO
811 Wilshire Blvd	LTS	NO	NO	NO
Engine Co. No. 28	LTS	NO	NO	NO
Standard Hotel	LTS	NO	NO	NO
The California Club	LTS	NO	NO	NO
LA Central Library & Maguire Gardens	LTS	LTS	LTS	NO
City National Plaza	LTS	LTS	LTS	NO
Citigroup Center Plaza	LTS	LTS	LTS	NO
Bunker Hill				
Walt Disney Concert Hall	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
2nd Street Tunnel	LTS	LTS	LTS	NO
Grassy Open Space at General Thaddeus Kosciuszko Way	LTS	LTS	LTS	NO
Historic Core				
LA Law Center	NO	NO	NO	NO
Times Annex	NO	NO	NO	NO
Times Building	NO	NO	NO	NO
Higgins Building	NO	NO	NO	NO

Table 4.4-2. Scenic Resources Potentially Affected by Construction of the At-Grade Emphasis LRT Alternative (continued)

Resources	Cut and Cover for Guideway	Construction Staging	Stations and Portals	Tunnel Boring
St. Vibiana Cathedral	NO	NO	NO	NO
Redwing Shoes	NO	NO	NO	NO
Civic Center				
Civic Center Historic District	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
City Hall South	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
Los Angeles City Hall	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
U.S. Courthouse	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
Fletcher Bowron Square	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
Parker Center	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
Tinker Toy Parking Structure	NO	LTS	LTS	NO
Little Tokyo				
Little Tokyo Historic District	NO	LTS	NO	NO
Union Center Arts	NO	LTS	NO	NO
Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Temple	NO	LTS	NO	NO

Notes:
NO = No impact
LTS = Less than significant impact

Nighttime Lighting/Shade and Shadow:

During construction, nighttime lighting would predominantly consist of security lighting, and light would be directed on-site. As such, nighttime lighting impacts would not be adverse or significant during construction. Shade and shadow impacts associated with construction-related facilities and equipment located aboveground would be minimal compared to those currently created by the high- and mid-rise buildings along the alignment's corridors. Therefore, no shade or shadow impacts would result.

Construction of the LPA would not result in nighttime lighting or shade and shadow impacts. Therefore, this alternative would not contribute to cumulative nighttime lighting or shade and shadow impacts.

4.4.3.5.2 Operations

Scenic Resources:

Operation of the LPA would result in only minimal potential visual impacts to scenic resources. Other than pedestrian access and egress through pedestrian portals, and some ancillary facilities (which could include ventilation shafts, fare collection machines, station markers, bike racks, etc.) at the proposed underground stations, most operational activities would occur underground, with no degradation of views of historic buildings and little or no contrasting visual conditions (refer to Chapter 2 of this Final EIS/EIR for a more detailed list of potential ancillary facilities). The Broad Art Foundation Museum, which is currently under construction, is projected to include a plaza above General Thaddeus Kosciuszko Way connecting to Upper Grand Avenue. In order to provide access from the 2nd/Hope Street station to Upper Grand Avenue, an elevator from the station entrance to the plaza would be built as part of the LPA if one is not already provided. If the plaza is not built, a pedestrian connection (such as a pedestrian bridge) would be constructed as part of the LPA from the elevator to Upper Grand Avenue; the pedestrian connection would be designed in a manner that would not degrade views of historic buildings and would be compatible with surrounding uses. Roadway and lane reconfigurations would be needed around the 2nd/Hope Street station. The roadway and lane reconfigurations would not degrade views of historic buildings or contrast with visual conditions.

There would be no visual impacts as a result of the new trackway and systems appurtenances, which would be located underground, except where the trackway returns to grade in 1st Street and at the Alameda Street train portal. As illustrated in Figures 4.4-10 and 4.4-11, portions of the proposed alignment in the vicinity of Little Tokyo, along Alameda Street and east of Alameda Street would have prominent, visible street-level features, including pedestrian entrances to an underground station, and tunnel portals on 1st Street and northeast of Temple and Alameda Streets. As shown in Figures 4.4-10 and 4.4-11, implementation and operation of the LPA would contribute to the existing urban character and high-density, pedestrian-friendly environment that already exists in downtown Los Angeles. Typical underground station entrance and underground alignment renderings are shown in Chapter 2 as Figures 2-5 through 2-7. The LPA would add primarily underground structures and a limited fixed guideway which would not impact scenic resources in the heavily urbanized areas of Little Tokyo or the Arts District.

Operation of LPA would not result in significant impacts to scenic resources. Therefore, operation of the LPA would not contribute to cumulative scenic resource impacts.

Visual Character:

The LPA would add primarily underground structures and a limited fixed guideway which would not impact scenic resources, noticeably reduce visual quality, or alter the viewing context in the heavily urbanized areas of Little Tokyo or the Arts District. Additionally, the LPA would include streetscape enhancements on the sidewalk of Flower Street between 7th and 4th Streets to facilitate improved pedestrian access to the existing 7th Street/Metro Center Station. As indicated above, the Broad Art Foundation Museum, which is currently under construction, is projected to include a plaza above General Thaddeus Kosciuszko Way connecting to Upper Grand Avenue. If the plaza is not built, a pedestrian connection (such as a pedestrian bridge)

would be constructed as part of the LPA from the elevator to Upper Grand Avenue in a manner that would not degrade views of historic buildings and would be compatible with existing uses. Roadway and lane reconfigurations associated with the 2nd/Hope Street station would not alter the existing visual character, views along the corridors, or intrude on the visual quality of the surrounding neighborhood. Therefore, potential visual character impacts associated with the LPA would not be adverse or significant.

The visual character of the corridor would slightly change with the LPA. The principal features visible aboveground would be station entrances, some ancillary facilities at stations (which could include ventilation shafts, fare collection machines, station markers, bike racks, etc.), streetscape enhancements along Flower Street between 7th and 4th Streets, visual alterations in the vicinity of the proposed 1st/Central Avenue station, and the train portals in 1st Street and just east of Alameda Street between Temple and Commercial Streets (refer to Chapter 2 of this Final EIS/EIR for a more detailed list of potential ancillary facilities). Also within the LPA, antennas may be used as part of the LRT communication system. Metro will be completing studies to confirm the location of antennas during preliminary and final design. There would be a maximum of one antenna per station to be located on Metro or other publicly-owned property, buildings, or on existing street lights or antennas. In order to not intrude on the surrounding neighborhoods, which include dense high-rise urban environments, mid-rise residential, commercial, and industrial areas, antennas and ancillary facilities would be integrated into station design in the following ways: to be in context to visual qualities of the surrounding communities and neighborhood; and incorporated as part of the station architecture or urban design, which would include new street and pedestrian lights along adjacent streets and on the station plaza, station canopies, new street trees, and other design features. In addition, antennas would be integrated into station design to be similar in height of existing street lights (maximum of 35 feet).

Antennas would be metallic and could be painted or designed to hide their form, similar to cell phone towers designed to look like palm trees. Antennas may also be designed as an attachment to existing station area structures as part of the station architecture. The antennas would also be strategically located using existing or new infrastructure or foliage so they are not visible from any historic resource. Antennas would not be visible from any historic resource and would not intrude on the visual quality of the surrounding neighborhood.

Operation of LPA would not result in significant impacts to the visual character of the surrounding area. Therefore, operation of the LPA would not contribute to cumulative visual character impacts.

Nighttime Lighting/Shade and Shadow:

Nighttime lighting associated with the LPA would predominantly consist of security lighting at pedestrian portal locations, and would be directed on-site. Therefore, no nighttime lighting impacts would occur during operation. Aboveground structures, including pedestrian portals and one block with at-grade light rail system, would be limited to no more than two stories in height; therefore, the potential for the project to result in increased shading and shadows beyond those currently created by the high- and mid-rise buildings along the alignment corridors would be minimal and no shade or shadow impacts would result.

The LPA would not result in nighttime lighting or shade and shadow impacts from operation. Therefore, this alternative would not contribute to cumulative nighttime lighting or shade and shadow impacts.

4.4.3.5.3 NEPA Finding

The LPA would not have adverse effects on the visual and aesthetic character of the project area. Since the LPA would not have adverse effects on the visual and aesthetic character of the project area, construction and operation of the LPA would not result in a considerable contribution to a cumulative visual or aesthetic effect.

4.4.3.5.4 CEQA Determination

The LPA would not have significant impacts on the visual and aesthetic character of the project area. Since the LPA would not have significant impacts on the visual and aesthetic character of the project area, construction and operation of the LPA would not result in a considerable contribution to a cumulative visual or aesthetic impact.

4.4.4 Mitigation Measures

4.4.4.1 Updates to the Candidate Mitigation Measures from the Draft EIS/EIR

The Draft EIS/EIR included candidate mitigation measures for review and comment by the public, agencies, and other stakeholders. Since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR, Metro has added specificity to the candidate mitigation measures for visual and aesthetic impacts presented in the Draft EIS/EIR. The final LPA mitigation measures, shown in Section 4.4.4.2 below, are included in the MMRP for the LPA, Chapter 8, of this Final EIS/EIR, and supersede candidate mitigation measures identified in the Draft EIS/EIR. Updates to the mitigation measures made since publication of the Draft EIS/EIR include:

- Revisions based on comments on the Draft EIS/EIR.
- Mitigation measures to further reduce less than significant impacts associated with construction of the LPA.

4.4.4.2 Final Mitigation Measures for the Locally Preferred Alternative

Mitigation measures listed for the LPA in this section have been carried forward and included in the MMRP for the LPA, Chapter 8, of this Final EIS/EIR. They are the final committed mitigation measures for the LPA. MMRP index numbers are shown in parenthesis after each mitigation measure.

4.4.4.2.1 Final Construction-Related Mitigation Measures for the Locally Preferred Alternative

While no significant impacts to the Historic Core, Civic Center, or Little Tokyo communities would result from construction of the LPA, the following mitigation measures will further reduce less than significant impacts.

- Metro shall shield temporary lighting during construction to reduce spillover lighting. (VA-3)
- Metro shall locate stockpile areas (storage areas for construction equipment, supplies, and excavated soil) primarily in less visually sensitive locations, where they are not visible from the road or to businesses or residents. (VA-4)
- Temporary construction sheds and barricades shall be located so as to avoid obscuring significant views of historic properties. (VA-5)

4.4.4.2.2 Final Operation-Related Mitigation Measures for the Locally Preferred Alternative

While no significant impacts to the Historic Core, Civic Center, or Little Tokyo communities would result from operation of the LPA, the following mitigation measures will further reduce less than significant impacts.

- Metro shall coordinate with the station area communities to obtain input on the urban design of the project within the community. (VA-1)
- Urban design measures shall be developed to integrate the LRT facilities (stations, portals, entrances, etc.) into each community as appropriate. Designs might address elements such as materials and colors. This process has already begun with community urban design workshops, and Metro shall continue to involve communities in this process. Metro shall coordinate with the City of Los Angeles Department of Planning staff during the design process and regarding urban design elements. (VA-2)

Figure 4.4-10. Locally Preferred Alternative – Aerial View at 1st and Alameda Streets Facing North without Existing Tracks

**Conceptual Joint Development project is shown*

Figure 4.4-11. Locally Preferred Alternative – Aerial View at 1st and Alameda Streets Facing East without Existing Tracks

**Conceptual Joint Development project is shown; Existing Metro Gold Line tracks to Pasadena are not shown*