3.1 Aesthetics

This section addresses the potential impacts to aesthetic resources associated with the construction and implementation of the proposed Project. This section includes: a description of the existing aesthetic and visual resources in the proposed Project area; a summary of applicable regulations related to aesthetic resources; and an evaluation of the potential impacts of the proposed Project related to aesthetic resources in and around the proposed Project area. Impacts to visual resources, related to light and glare, are less than significant with implementation of Mitigation Measures AES-1: Shielded Fixtures and AES-2: Non-Glare Materials.

3.1.1 Environmental Setting

Regional Setting

The proposed Project would be located the Silver Lake neighborhood of the City of Los Angeles (City) within the Silver Lake Reservoir Complex (SLRC). Visual resources consist of natural landscapes and scenic views, including landforms, vegetation, and water features, as well as unique or historic elements of the built environment. Regional visual resources within the proposed Project vicinity include long range views of the San Gabriel Mountains, Verdugo Mountains, and local hillsides surrounding the reservoirs. Figure 3.1-1 provides some of these views with the reservoirs in the foreground and mountains in the distance.

Scenic Views and Vistas

Scenic views or vistas include panoramic public views of natural features, including views of the ocean, striking or unusual natural terrain, or unique urban or historic features (City of Los Angeles 2001). Scenic views and vistas within the proposed Project vicinity include views of the San Gabriel Mountains, Griffith Park, and local hillsides of Glendale and Eagle Rock. In addition, views across the SLRC with the reservoirs as foreground features of the long-range surrounding hillsides and distant mountains may be considered scenic views from public rights-of-way within and around the SLRC. These views are accessible to the public generally from park lands, privately and publicly owned sites, and public rights-of-way. Much of the proposed Project area is densely surrounded with residential hillsides, but there are some long-range scenic views of distant mountains and hillsides from the public areas within the SLRC. Recreational users and motorists traveling north along West Silver Lake Drive and Silver Lake Boulevard have partial views of the ridgelines along Griffith Park with the reservoirs in the foreground and San Gabriel Mountains in the background. Additionally, various viewpoints throughout the SLRC, particularly near the South Valley area looking north, provide views of the local hillsides of Glendale and Eagle Rock and San Gabriel Mountains in the background. Figure 3.1-2 provides some short-range views with the reservoirs from local streets and walkways.
Looking north at southeast corner of Silver Lake Reservoir

Looking north from Silver Lake Dam

Figure 3.1-1
Views of SLRC
Figure 3.1-2
Views of SLRC

Looking south on Silver Lake Drive

Looking northeast on Silver Lake Dam Pedestrian Path
3. Environmental Setting, Impact Analysis, and Mitigation Measures

3.1 Aesthetics

Scenic Resources within Adopted or Potentially Eligible Scenic Highways

Within Los Angeles County, there are two adopted state scenic highways: Angeles Crest Highway Route 2 (approximately 9.5 miles northeast of the proposed Project area); and the Topanga Canyon State Scenic Highway between the communities of Topanga and Pacific Palisades (approximately 18 miles west of the proposed Project area). In addition, the only National Scenic Byway located within Southern California is the Arroyo Seco Historic Parkway – Route 110 in Los Angeles County, this portion of the highway would be located approximately 2.2 miles southeast of the proposed Project area (Caltrans 2021). These scenic highways do not have the SLRC within their viewsheds.

The California Scenic Highway Mapping System identifies eight highway segments in Southern California that are potentially eligible for future designation as scenic highways (Caltrans 2021). The closest potentially eligible segment would be along Interstate (I) 210 from State Route (SR) 134 to SR-5 near Tunnel Station, which would be located approximately 7 miles northeast of the proposed Project area. These potentially eligible scenic highways do not have the SLRC within their viewsheds.

In the City, many iconic streets are designated as City scenic highways, including streets and corridors located within historic neighborhoods of the city, such as Downtown Los Angeles, Hollywood, and Griffith Park. As provided in the Mobility Plan 2035 and its predecessor plans, these City-designated scenic highways include those in fully developed areas, which are designated for purposes such as private recreational driving and/or enhancing public transit facilities. Within the immediate proposed Project area, Silver Lake Boulevard from Duane Street to Armstrong Avenue, which runs along the eastern side of the SLRC is identified as a scenic highway by the Silver Lake-Echo Park-Elysian Valley Community Plan and Mobility Plan 2035 (City of Los Angeles, 2016).

Existing Visual Character and Quality

The SLRC, hillside terrain and unique residential homes make up the existing visual character of the proposed Project area. The SLRC was built as part of a city-wide system of water storage and delivery and has become a focal point of the Silver Lake Community, serving as both a source of its identity and a valuable recreational asset (City of Los Angeles 2004). Over the years, residential neighborhoods developed around the SLRC with views oriented towards the reservoirs and surrounding hillsides (City of Los Angeles 2004). Residential neighborhoods surrounding the SLRC are known for their collection of Modernist homes and structures designed by renowned architects. Inspired by the landscape and its incorporation in design, the Modernist architects designed homes that conformed to the hilly terrain surrounding the proposed Project area (City of Los Angeles 2004).

Light and Glare

There are two primary anthropogenic sources of light: light emanating from building interiors passing through windows, and light originating from exterior sources (e.g., street lighting, building illumination, security lighting, parking lot lighting, landscape lighting, and signage).
Anthropogenic sources of light can be a nuisance to adjacent residential areas, diminish the view of the clear night sky, and if uncontrolled, can cause disturbances for motorists traveling in the area. Land uses such as residences and hotels are considered light sensitive, since occupants have expectations of privacy during evening hours and may be subject to disturbances by bright light sources.

Light that falls beyond the intended area is referred to as light trespass. Types of light trespass include spill light and glare. Nighttime lighting is necessary to provide and maintain safe, secure, and attractive environments; however, these lights have the potential to produce spill light and glare, and if designed incorrectly, could be considered unattractive. Spill light can adversely affect light sensitive uses at nighttime, especially residences. Light dissipates with increased distance from the source.

Glare is caused by the reflection of sunlight or artificial light by highly polished surfaces such as window glass or reflective materials and, to a lesser degree, from broad expanses of light-colored surfaces or vehicle headlights. Perceived glare is the unwanted and potentially objectionable sensation as observed by a person as they look directly into the light source of a luminaire. Daytime glare generation in urban areas is typically associated with buildings with exterior facades largely or entirely comprised of highly reflective glass. Glare can also be produced during evening and nighttime hours by the reflection of artificial light sources, such as automobile headlights. Glare generation is typically related to either moving vehicles or sun angles, although glare resulting from reflected sunlight can occur regularly at certain times of the year. Glare-sensitive uses include residences, and transportation corridors. Potentially affected viewers in the local viewshed include motorists, residents, and recreational visitors.

The majority of light and glare in the proposed Project area would be generated by residential uses, light commercial uses, and streets. Vehicle headlights, street lighting at intersections and along the streets, glare produced from building windows, and building lighting, would contribute to the existing light setting of the proposed Project area.

3.1.2 Regulatory Framework

Federal

National Scenic Byways Program

The National Scenic Byways Program is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. The program was established under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 and was reauthorized in 1998 under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century. Under the program, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation recognizes certain roads as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads based on their archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic qualities.
State

Caltrans State Scenic Highway Program

In 1963, the California legislature created the Scenic Highway Program to protect scenic highway corridors from changes that could diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to the highways. The state regulations and guidelines governing the Scenic Highway Program are found in the Streets and Highways Code, Section 260 et seq. A highway is designated under this program when a local jurisdiction adopts a scenic corridor protection program, applies to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for scenic highway approval, and receives notification from Caltrans that the highway has been designated as a Scenic Highway. When a city or county nominates an eligible scenic highway for official designation, it defines the scenic corridor, which is land generally adjacent to and visible to a motorist on the highway.

Local

City of Los Angeles

Municipal Code

Applicable lighting regulations in the Municipal Code include Section 93.0117(b), which limits the maximum amount of illuminance from an exterior light source at the property line of the nearest residentially-zoned property.

General Plan

Generally scenic resources within the City of Los Angeles consist of coastline, ridgelines, hillsides, and other visual resources. The City of Los Angeles General Plan, Conservation Element contains policies for aesthetics and scenic resources. The Land Form and Scenic Vistas Section, of the Conservation Element, encourages and/or requires all property owners to develop property in a manner that will, to the greatest extent possible, retain significant existing landforms and unique scenic features, and/or make possible public views or other access to unique features or scenic vistas (City of Los Angeles 2001). Relevant objectives and policies are listed below.

Objective: protect and reinforce natural and scenic vistas as irreplaceable resources and for the aesthetic enjoyment of present and future generations.

Policy: continue to encourage and/or require property owners to develop their properties in a manner that will, to the greatest extent practical, retain significant existing landforms (e.g., ridge lines, bluffs, unique geologic features) and unique scenic features (historic, ocean, mountains, unique natural features) and/or make possible public view or other access to unique features or scenic views.

Further, the General Plan’s Mobility Element contains policies for scenic highways within the city. The Scenic Highways Guidelines within the Mobility Element discusses the preservation an enhancement of scenic streets and their scenic resources within the City of Los Angeles (City of Los Angeles 2016) and is a component of the General Plan.

Silver Lake-Echo Park-Elysian Valley Community Plan

The Land Use Element of the Los Angeles General Plan is divided into 35 community plans. The proposed Project area is governed by the Community Plan, which sets forth goals, objectives,
policies, and implementation programs for the Community Plan Area. Broader issues, goals, objectives, and policies are provided by the Citywide General Plan Framework. The following issues, goals, objectives, and programs are relevant to scenic resources and highways within the proposed Project area.

Recreational and Park Facilities

**Goal 4**: Adequate recreation and park facilities which meet the needs of the residents in the plan area and create links to existing facilities to expand recreational opportunities citywide.

**Objective 4-1**: To conserve, maintain and better use existing recreation and park facilities.

4-1.4: Implement plans to develop a dedicated running path around the Silver Lake Reservoir and other open space and recreational uses per the Silver Lake Reservoir Master Plan dated November 1, 2000.

**Program**: Re-designate Silver Lake Boulevard as an Avenue II allowing for a roadway with only one travel lane in each direction to accommodate the proposed 6-foot landscape buffer and 8-foot pedestrian path while preserving the parking lane on the east side of the street and existing commuter bike lanes. Retain the scenic highway designation for the segment of Silver Lake Boulevard from Duane Street to Armstrong Avenue.

Neighborhood Character

**Issues**: Promotion of design in hillside neighborhoods that is sensitive to topography and substandard hillside streets, compatible with existing development and protects scenic vistas.

Open Space

**Issues**: Preservation of physical and scenic resources including topographic features and ridge protection.

5-1.4: Recognize the Plan area’s considerable urban forest, in both the public and private realms, as a feature which greatly contributes to its character and the quality of life enjoyed by residents by encouraging streetscape, greenways and the incorporation of green space within the urban form, as feasible.

**Program**: Work with other City departments and private developers to promote parkways, landscaped medians, sidewalks with landscape buffers, community gateways and other elements that maintain and enhance these defining neighborhood features.

Chapter 5, Urban Design of the Community Plan identifies broad, general policies for projects and community design elements. Specifically, this Chapter establishes public open space standards to guide the design of new public plazas and open spaces and refers to the Silver Lake Reservoir Master Plan design guidelines:

1. Install and maintain a landscape buffer between the public street and a planned continuous running/walking path should consist of low shrubs and street trees to maintain views and whenever possible use drought tolerant species such as those suggested in the Silver Lake Reservoir Master Plan.
2. Establish gateways to the open space resources around the reservoir that provide seating options, interpretive information and drinking fountains.

3. While still being used for water operations, use hardware such as the gates that control access to the limited-access grounds of the reservoir to reinforce community history and identity by inviting local artists to create designs that tie in unifying themes in design elements around the reservoir.

4. Encourage regular maintenance of fences as well as trimming and pruning of overgrown shrubs and trees to preserve views.

5. To further preserve views, encourage the use of smaller native trees and shrubs and space larger trees to prevent the formation of a solid wall of foliage and use species that are more narrow and columnar in character and do not create a hedge effect.

6. Preserve, as prescribed by the Master Plan, existing trees in the eucalyptus grove, the Recreation and Parks area, the olive grove and the knoll.

7. Tree plantings in parkways should consist of low plantings that are dense, evergreen and low maintenance.

8. Implement Master Plan recommendations including the planting of canopy street trees along commercial streets with single story buildings. Generally encourage streetscape enhancements that includes street trees, paved surfaces, street furniture banner programs and light fixtures as recommended by the plan.

9. Implement recommendations for each of Silver Lake’s distinct commercial districts as envisioned by the Plan, the identified Rowena District, Silver Lake Village District and the Glendale Boulevard District and their respective gateways as identified in the Community Context, Cultural Resource and Urban Design chapter (Section VII of the Master Plan) and illustrated in the “Community Connections/Context” drawing in Section X of the Master Plan (11” x 17” Drawings and Diagrams).

10. Develop and enhance gateways to the community such as the bridge overpass at Sunset and Silver Lake Boulevards and other entry points to the community.

11. Ensure that streetscape and other design improvements comply with Silver Lake Boulevard’s Scenic Highway designation, including the prohibitions on signs and the undergrounding or screening of utilities.

12. Sustainable design practices should be employed whenever possible including the use of drought-tolerant plantings, use of recycled materials and use of lighting with low-energy requirements.

### 3.1.3 Significance Thresholds and Criteria

The significance criteria used to evaluate the proposed Project impacts to aesthetics are based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the proposed Project would have a significant impact if it would:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. (Refer to Impact 3.1-1)
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway. (Refer to Impact 3.1-2)
- Conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality? (Refer to Impact 3.1-3)
3. Environmental Setting, Impact Analysis, and Mitigation Measures

3.1 Aesthetics

- Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area. (Refer to Impact 3.1-4)

In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines, the analysis focuses on public views rather than private views.¹

The L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide holds that the determination of significance shall be made on a case-by-case basis after considering the following factors:

- Effects on a scenic vista (Refer to Impact 3.1-1).
  - The amount or relative proportion of existing features or elements that substantially contribute to the valued visual character or image of a neighborhood, community, or localized area, which would be removed, altered, or demolished;
  - The amount of natural open space to be graded or developed;
  - The degree to which proposed structures in natural open space areas would be effectively integrated into the aesthetics of the site, through appropriate design, etc.;
  - The degree of contrast between proposed features and existing features that represent the area's valued aesthetic image;
  - The degree to which a proposed zone change would result in buildings that would detract from the existing style or image of the area due to density, height, bulk, setbacks, signage, or other physical elements;
  - The degree to which the project would contribute to the area's aesthetic value; and
  - Applicable guidelines and regulations.

- Scenic resources within a state scenic highway (Refer to Impact 3.1-2).
  - The nature and quality of recognized or valued views (such as natural topography, settings, man-made or natural features of visual interest, and resources such as mountains or the ocean);
  - Whether the project affects views from a designated scenic highway, corridor, or parkway;
  - The extent of obstruction (e.g., total blockage, partial interruption, or minor diminishment); and
  - The extent to which the project affects recognized views available from a length of a public roadway, bike path, or trail, as opposed to a single, fixed vantage point.

¹ Note that the analysis addresses public views and not private views, since obstruction of private views is not generally regarded as a significant environmental impact. (See Citizens for Responsible and Open Government v. City of Grand Terrace [2008] 160 Cal.App.4th 1323, 1337-38; Mira Mar Mobile Community v. City of Oceanside (2004) 119 Cal.App.4th 477, 492-93). CEQA case law has established that protection of public views is the appropriate EIR analysis. For example, in Association for Protection etc. Values v. City of Ukiah (1991) 2 Cal.App.4th 720 [3 Cal. Rptr.2d 488], the Court held that “we must differentiate between adverse impacts upon particular persons and adverse impacts upon the environment of persons in general.” As recognized by the court in Topanga Beach Renters Assn. v. Department of General Services (1976) 58 Cal.App.3d 188 [129 Cal.Rptr. 739]: “[A]ll government activity has some direct or indirect adverse effect on some persons. The issue is not whether [the Project] will adversely affect particular persons, but whether [the Project] will adversely affect the environment of persons in general.”
• New sources of light or glare and existing day and nighttime views (Refer to Impact 3.1-4).
  – The change in ambient illumination levels as a result of project sources; and
  – The extent to which project lighting would spill off the project site and effect adjacent light-sensitive areas.

Therefore, each impact analysis is evaluated under both Appendix G and the 2006 LA City CEQA Thresholds Guide.

3.1.4 Project Design Features

No specific project design features are proposed with regard to aesthetics.

3.1.5 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

**Scenic Vistas**

**Impact 3.1-1: Would the proposed Project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?**

Scenic views and vistas within the proposed Project vicinity include long-range views of the San Gabriel Mountains, Griffith Park, and local hillsides of Glendale and Eagle Rock. In addition, views across the SLRC with the reservoirs as foreground features of the long-range surrounding hillsides and distant mountains may be considered scenic views from public rights-of-way within and around the SLRC. The current view of the foreground is obscured by the chain-link fence that circumnavigates and encloses the SLRC, preventing public access. The open water is enclosed by the asphalt and concrete reservoir sides. Although much of the proposed Project area is surrounded with residential uses, long-range scenic views and vistas of the San Gabriel Mountains, Griffith Park, and local hillsides of neighboring communities with the reservoirs in the foreground can be seen by recreational users/pedestrians and motorists traveling along both West Silver Lake Drive and Silver Lake Boulevard. **Figures 3.1-3** shows a key viewpoint map and **Figures 3.1-4 through 3.1-9** present before and after comparisons of various views across the reservoirs, using artistic renderings of the Project site. These renderings are used to evaluate the effects of the proposed Project on long-range and short-range views and scenic vistas.
Figure 3.1-3
Viewpoint Key Map
Figure 3.1-4 Looking Southwest across the Meadow

SOURCE: Hargreaves Jones Landscape Architects, 2020
Figure 3.1-5 Looking South on Eastern Edge of Reservoir

SOURCE: Hargreaves Jones Landscape Architects, 2020
Figure 3.1-6 Looking North on Eastern Edge of Reservoir
Figure 3.1-7 Looking Northeast across Ivanhoe Reservoir
Figure 3.1-8 Looking North across Reservoir
Figure 3.1-9 Looking Northwest across Reservoir

SOURCE: Hargreaves Jones Landscape Architects, 2020
Construction

Construction of the proposed Project would include the use of construction equipment and staging of equipment and materials that could temporarily alter views of the SLRC and San Gabriel Mountains and local hillsides. For example, tall construction equipment including cranes that could be up to 40 feet tall could temporarily block or change scenic vistas when viewed from public vantage points within and adjacent to the proposed Project area. As a result, site disturbance and the presence of construction equipment and materials during construction of the proposed Project could temporarily introduce contrasting elements into scenic views and vistas. The effect to the SLRC would occur over five years or longer, depending on the final construction schedule. Some components would be completed while other areas would remain affected by construction, resulting in a prolonged effect while the project is under construction. During construction, some areas would exhibit exposed dirt and construction vehicles operating or parked within the viewshed. Although these construction site views would contrast with the scenic qualities of the area temporarily introducing contrasting elements into the scenic vistas, none of the equipment or activities would block views of scenic vistas entirely. Long-range views would remain visible from the walking paths and city streets. As project elements are completed, the impact would diminish. As a result, construction impacts on scenic views and vistas would be considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measures:

None Required

Significance Determination:

Less than Significant Impact

Operation

The proposed Project would include a contemporary design of park zones with hybrid infrastructure that blends vegetated areas with public spaces. Proposed Project components would include landscaping improvements, walking paths and recreational facilities, seated terraces, education center, and floating wetlands. The new landscaping and re-vegetation would be designed to soften the views of the reservoir sides and surroundings, converting the industrial features of the SLRC to a more publicly accessible open space park appearance, while maintaining the infrastructure necessary for safe operation of the facility. As a result, the landscaping improvements would increase the scenic value of the short-range views as well as the foreground of the longer-range views. Figures 3.1-4 through 3.1-9 provide artist renderings of the short-range and long-range views before and after the proposed Project is implemented.

With respect to the amount or relative proportion of the existing features to be altered or graded, the proposed Project would modify approximately 75 percent of the total SLRC acreage, not including the open water. Walking paths and communal areas would be added to some areas, and the path circumnavigating the reservoirs would remain. The addition of public access to some areas of the SLRC that has been closed to the public would modify the views with park amenities. These improvements would soften the short-range views compared to existing conditions. In addition, the chain-link fence that currently obscures the views of the open water would be
removed. Removing the fence would increase the value of the short-range scenic views of the reservoirs, backed by hillsides and distant mountains.

With respect to the degree to which the proposed Project would integrate into the aesthetics at the site or contrast with the surrounding area, Figures 3.1-4 through 3.1-9 illustrate the intentions of the proposed designs to integrate and improve views of the open space facility. Seated terraces that blend into the existing landscape/grading would be implemented throughout the proposed Project area. The proposed shade pavilions would be located at the top of the Knoll and at the Ivanhoe Overlook. The proposed shade pavilions would be designed to provide views of the Silver Lake and Ivanhoe Reservoirs.

The proposed Project would build new structures and buildings including seated terraces, two shade pavilions, a new Education Center, and a new Multi-Purpose Facility. These proposed structures and buildings would vary in size, with the largest building being the proposed Multi-Purpose Facility which would be approximately 5,800 square feet in size (Figure 2-13) and would be constructed adjacent to the existing Recreation Center building. These facilities would be designed to blend in with the natural landscape and re-vegetation as shown in the visual simulations (Figure 2-13). These facilities would be consistent with the current zoning requirements. No changes in zoning are proposed.

The proposed Project would construct a new Multi-Purpose Facility adjacent to the existing Recreation Center and playground along the South Valley. The exterior of the Recreation Center would be preserved to the extent possible and repainted. The proposed Multi-Purpose Facility’s architecture would be designed to be compatible with the existing Recreation Center and would be similar in scale to the surrounding structures.

The proposed Education Center would be located at the Knoll and would be built into the side of the existing hillside with sliding glass panels that open to allow the classrooms to extend out into the landscape (Figure 2-7). The proposed shade pavilions and new Education Center would be designed to relate in form of the proposed habitat islands and mid-century modern architecture of the Silver Lake community. Their architectural design would be low profile and rely on materials to blend into the surrounding landscape.

The floating habitat islands and landscaped reservoir perimeter would soften the views of the reservoirs compared to existing conditions. The wetlands would attract wildlife and promote a more natural appearance.

While the proposed structures and buildings may be visible from public vantage points, they would be implemented within areas already containing similar structures and buildings within an area surrounded by residential development. The proposed Project structures and buildings would not significantly exceed the scale and massing of other structures within and adjacent to the SLRC. In addition, the proposed structures and buildings would not obstruct distant views of the San Gabriel Mountains or local hillsides.

The Project would modify the existing views by creating more park space and natural vegetation as well as provide for greater public access to the reservoir shorelines. The perimeter fence would
be removed softening the views from the current industrial nature, to more of a park, open space experience for the visitor. As illustrated in the proposed project renderings, the objective of the project would be to enhance views with nature-based themes and design. As a result, impacts to scenic views and vistas would be modified toward a more natural view to improve the existing condition. This impact to scenic vistas would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures:**
None Required

**Significance Determination:**
Less than Significant Impact

**Scenic Resources**

**Impact 3.1-2: Would the proposed Project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?**

**Construction**

As described above in Section 3.1.1, *Environmental Setting*, there are no designated or eligible state scenic highways in the proposed Project vicinity. No impacts to scenic resources including trees, outcroppings, or historic buildings would occur within a state-designated scenic highway during construction. No impact would occur.

**Mitigation Measures:**
None Required

**Significance Determination:**
No Impact

**Operation**

As described above in Section 3.1.1, *Environmental Setting*, there are no designated or eligible state scenic highways in the proposed Project vicinity. The SLRC is not visible from a State-designated Scenic highway and therefore the proposed Project would have no impact to State-designated scenic highways.

Although the City identifies Silver Lake Boulevard from Duane Street to Armstrong Avenue as a Local Scenic highway in the Silver Lake-Echo Park-Elysian Valley Community Plan, it is not a state-designated scenic highway. The proposed Project would modify the views from Silver Lake Boulevard, removing non-native trees, increasing native vegetation, and reducing the industrial nature of the existing view. The proposed Project would not substantially damage scenic resources, including trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway corridor. No impacts would occur within a state designated scenic highway.

**Mitigation Measures:**
None Required
Significance Determination:

No Impact

Consistency with Regulations Governing Scenic Quality and Visual Character/Quality

Impact 3.1-3: Would the proposed Project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

Construction

Construction activities associated with the proposed Project would require the use of construction equipment and storage of materials onsite, thus introducing contrasting features into the visual landscape that would affect the visual character or quality of the proposed Project area. Contrasting features would include excavated areas, stockpiled soils and other materials generated and stored onsite during construction. These features would occur over the duration of the five-year construction period. These visual effects would not conflict with zoning or regulations. Impacts would be considered less than significant.

During construction some mature trees would be removed from the proposed Project site. Appendix D, Figures 7a through 7c identify areas where existing mature trees would be removed. (Impacts related to tree removal are discussed further in Section 3.4, Biological Resources.) Some of these trees are mature trees that provide shade and ornamentation circumnavigating the reservoirs. Although these trees would be removed during construction, the proposed Project is intended to improve the future aesthetic of the SLRC with re-designed plantings resulting in a more natural landscaping. As described in the Section 3.4, tree removals would be subject to City of Los Angeles Tree and Shrub Ordinance that requires replanting protected trees. See also consistency with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality below in Operational Impacts. As a result, construction would not conflict with zoning or other regulations and impacts would be considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measures:

None Required

Significance Determination:

Less than Significant Impact

Operation

The Silver Lake community primarily consists of residential uses, with some smaller commercial areas and some existing public access in and around the SLRC that allows park uses. The SLRC is a focal point in the City of Los Angeles, known for its views of the open water and recreational amenities. The area supports park activities, a dog park, walking paths, and a recreational center. It is an important amenity to the local neighborhood and to the entire City of Los Angeles. The proposed Project provides for a re-design of the park amenities to improve public access and enjoyment as outlined in the Silver Lake Master Plan included in Appendix B. As noted in the Silver Lake Reservoir Complex Master Plan of 2020 (page 31), the intent of the proposed Project is to update the goals of the Silver Lake Master Plan of 2000. The proposed Project builds on the
vision of the 2000 Master Plan regarding community-based designs, increased access to open space, and commitment to public engagement. The proposed Project would not alter the land use designation or zoning in a way that would promote uses that could be incompatible with the existing character. The entirety of the proposed Project area is zoned as Open Space (OS) and consists of the existing LADWP facilities, reservoirs, and some recreational areas. The proposed Project includes the addition and expansion of existing natural areas, recreational facilities, and structures/buildings, all of which are existing uses within the proposed Project area. The proposed Project park zones would be implemented within the already-developed SLRC in an urban area and would be consistent with existing and allowable uses for the area. The proposed Project would modify the visual and recreational quality of the proposed Project area, remaining consistent with goals and objectives of the Silver Lake-Echo Park-Elysian Valley Community Plan. The proposed Project park zones would feature more natural/vegetated areas such as the proposed floating wetlands.

The 2000 Plan was part of a mitigation document for a proposed Water Quality Treatment Facility at that time. Now, the reservoirs are no longer part of the City’s drinking water supply making the vast majority of the SLRC, including both water bodies, available for public use. A number of projects identified in the 2000 Master Plan have been implemented, including the installation of numerous paths, native gardens and meadows, and other improvements. Table 3.1-1 includes the type of applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality within the Project area.

As set forth above, the proposed Project is consistent with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. As a result, the proposed Project would result in a less than significant impact.

Furthermore, even though the proposed Project is entirely within an urbanized area (the City of Los Angles) the proposed Project natural landscapes and habitat improvements within the Open Space designated park would add to the overall visual quality and character of the proposed Project area. See analysis above in Impact 3.1-1 relating to effect on a scenic vista. Therefore, the proposed Project would also result in a less than significant impact to the visual character and quality of the area.

**Table 3.1-1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal or Objective</th>
<th>Consistency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zoning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entirety of proposed Project – Open Space (OS)</td>
<td>Consistent. The proposed Project includes the addition and expansion of existing natural areas, recreational facilities, and structures/buildings, all of which are existing uses within the proposed Project area. The proposed Project park zones would be implemented within the already-developed SLRC in an urban area and would be consistent with existing and allowable uses for the area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Environmental Setting, Impact Analysis, and Mitigation Measures

3.1 Aesthetics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal or Objective</th>
<th>Consistency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Silver Lake-Echo Park-Elysian Valley Community Plan</strong></td>
<td>Generally Consistent. The dedicated path around the Silver Lake Reservoir and other recreational uses specified in the 2000 Master Plan have already been implemented. In addition, the project includes an option to add parking on the west side of Silver Lake Boulevard which is currently designated as an Avenue II and is designed with one travel lane in each direction. The proposed Project would consist of seven park zones connected by a tree-lined promenade. The promenade would be a 2.5-mile continuous walking/running loop connecting all the park zones to one another and the reservoirs. The promenade is envisioned as both place and connector, consistent with Objective 4-1.4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 4-1.4 Implement plans to develop a dedicated running path around the Silver Lake Reservoir and other open space and recreational uses per the Silver Lake Reservoir Master Plan dated November 1, 2000. Program: Re-designate Silver Lake Boulevard as an Avenue II allowing for a roadway with only one travel lane in each direction to accommodate the proposed 6-foot landscape buffer and 8-foot pedestrian path while preserving the parking lane on the east side of the street and existing commuter bike lanes. Retain the scenic highway designation for the segment of Silver Lake Boulevard from Duane Street to Armstrong Avenue. Program: Retain the designation of West Silver Lake Drive as a collector street, reduce the width of the roadway to a standard collector and retain all remaining right-of-way for the proposed 8-foot running path and 6-foot landscape buffer that will separate recreationists from the street. Implementation of the Silver Lake Reservoir Master Plan will only affect the segment of West Silver Lake Drive from Tesla Avenue to Van Pelt Place. Program: Chapter V Urban Design of this Plan incorporates the design and streetscape elements for the Silver Lake Reservoir and adjacent rights-of-way, as outlined in the Silver Lake Reservoir Master Plan. (This is further expanded on pages V-16 and V-17 of the Community Plan.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 16-1 Ensure that the community’s historically significant resources are protected, preserved and/or enhanced. Program: Endorse the implementation of the Silver Lake Reservoir Master Plan, recognizing the Silver Lake Reservoir as not only a functional resource but also as a cultural, aesthetic and recreational asset in the community.</td>
<td>Consistent. The complex’s footprint and shape will remain intact; its significant landscape features (Knoll and the Eucalyptus Grove) will be preserved; and no significant view sheds will be detrimentally affected as a result of the proposed Project’s new construction or alterations. While there will be some changes to the grading and orientation of these open spaces, the overall footprint, feeling, and setting will remain intact. These spaces will remain green open spaces for passive recreation. The existing mature trees and plants will remain, and the overall footprint of these open spaces will not change. Further, the open water views of both Reservoirs will remain intact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Design and Landscaping Guidelines Street Trees 1. Select species which: a. Enhance the pedestrian character, and convey a distinctive high quality visual image for the streets. b. Are drought-and smog tolerant, fire resistant, and complement existing street trees. c. Do not damage existing infrastructure. 2. Establish a hierarchy for street trees which shall include: a. Major Accent Trees These trees should be located at entry locations, intersections, and activity centers. b. Street Trees Select specific species to be the common tree for the street frontages. A single flowering species may be selected for all residential neighborhoods and commercial districts or different species selected to distinguish one neighborhood, district,</td>
<td>Consistent. The proposed Project would consist of seven park zones connected by a tree-lined promenade. The promenade would be a 2.5-mile continuous walking/running loop connecting all the park zones to one another and the reservoirs. The proposed West Narrows would include seating terraces embedded into the embankment and a path lined with trees along the promenade to provide shade and shelter. The planting design for the proposed Project would be aligned with the City’s New Green Deal goals of increasing tree canopy and protecting native biodiversity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Silver Lake Reservoir Complex Master Plan Project Draft Environmental Impact Report 3.1-23 October 2022
### Goal or Objective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consistency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>or street from another. In residential neighborhoods, the trees should be full to provide shade and color. In commercial districts, the trees should provide shade, but be more transparent to promote views of store fronts and signs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent. The proposed Project would include offsite improvements along areas surrounding the SLRC including the addition of 90-degree parking along the north side of West Silver Lake Drive, east of Redesdale Avenue along the grassy area adjacent to the Silver Lake Recreation Center. The proposed addition of parking and/or bike lanes along Silver Lake Boulevard would require at a minimum restriping along the area between Armstrong Avenue and Duane Street. Design improvements including the addition of a bike lane and street trees are proposed. At the north end of the Eucalyptus Grove, a 7-foot bioswale planting strip and trees would buffer pedestrians from the street. Although the proposed Project would modify the views from Silver Lake Boulevard, views would generally be improved by removing non-native trees, increasing native vegetation, and reducing the industrial nature of the existing view. The proposed Project would implement project design feature PDF-BIO-6 to ensure landscaping near protected trees will be drought-tolerant only unless trees are already accustomed to current landscape irrigation (to be confirmed by arborist). Wall opening along the sanitary wall that surrounds the SLRC would be required in order to allow for access points into the proposed Project site. The placement of three strategic wall openings along the western side of the reservoir would be located in areas where neighborhood streets terminate at the reservoir. On the eastern side of the reservoir openings would be created every 100 feet along a 3,000-foot area that between Armstrong Avenue and Duane Street, to allow more entry points into the park. The routine operations and maintenance of the proposed Project would be guided by the Operations and Maintenance Plan prepared for the project, which would include the routine cleaning and maintenance of parking spaces and park facilities, clearing paths and walkways, trash removal, graffiti removal, and cleaning of park facilities such as the proposed Education Center, Multi-Purpose Facility, and restrooms as outlined in the Project-specific Operations and Maintenance Plan to be prepared by the City with guidance from RAP.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3. Environmental Setting, Impact Analysis, and Mitigation Measures

#### 3.1 Aesthetics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal or Objective</th>
<th>Consistency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. Ensure that streetscape and other design improvements comply with Silver Lake Boulevard’s Scenic Highway designation, including the prohibitions on signs and the undergrounding or screening of utilities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Sustainable design practices should be employed whenever possible including the use of drought-tolerant plantings, use of recycled materials and use of lighting with low-energy requirements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mitigation Measures:**
None Required

**Significance Determination:**
No Impact

**Light or Glare**

**Impact 3.1-4:** Would the proposed Project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area?

**Construction**

Proposed Project construction would not include nighttime construction and would not include lighting with the potential to adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area. Therefore, construction activities would not introduce new sources of light into the proposed Project area. No impact would occur.

**Mitigation Measures:**
None Required

**Significance Determination:**
No Impact

**Operation**

The proposed Project would include an array of nighttime lighting to illuminate the public areas during the evenings. The proposed lighting would be added for operational and security purposes, consistent with City of Los Angeles park lighting policies. As shown on Figure 2-8, the proposed Project lighting design would include a hierarchy of lighted spaces and connective paths. High level lighting (+2 foot candles (fc)) would be included in active recreation areas in the South Valley; medium level lighting (0.5 fc) would be implemented along the promenade areas, on select primary paths and within the seating terraces near the reservoirs’ edges; and low level lighting (0.25-0.50 fc) would be implemented along many of the primary and secondary paths to provide circulation to and between the surrounding neighborhood and proposed Project areas such as the proposed lawns and picnic grove. Lighting would not be included along secondary pathways within habitat areas. Light spill over would occur in close proximity to the lighted areas including sidewalks and streets. However, these areas would be lighted with less intensity than street lights on Silver Lake Boulevard and other major streets in the neighborhood. The timing of
the lighting would be similar to other street lighting in the neighborhood. Within the natural habitat areas, no lighting would be installed to minimize disruption to wildlife.

The existing condition includes nighttime lighting of streets and LADWP facilities. Furthermore, the SLRC is located in an urban area with street lighting and automobile lights throughout the nighttime hours. The new lighting would operate in compliance with Los Angeles City Recreation and Parks (RAP) illuminance level standards for outdoor recreational facilities. RAP illuminance level standards are measured in horizontal foot candles, which refer to the amount of light being received on a horizontal surface. The foot-candle standard accounts for light spill over and the proposed lighting plan shown in Figure 2-8 estimates the intended lighted area using foot-candle intensities.

The proposed Project would adhere to the City’s Design Standards and Guidelines, the City’s RAP illuminance standard levels, and the provisions in the City’s Municipal Code, Chapter 9, Article 3, Section 93.0117. However, the proposed additional lighting and reflective surfacing of new structures could adversely affect nighttime views in the area. Implementation of Mitigation Measure AES-1 would require any permanent exterior lighting to be shielded and directed downward to avoid light intrusion onto surrounding land uses such as residential areas and the nursery school at the north end of the SLRC, and other sensitive uses. Further, implementation of Mitigation Measure AES-2 would ensure that all proposed structures and buildings would be designed to minimize glare or reflection. With implementation of Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2, impacts associated with light and glare during operation would be considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measures:

**AES-1: Shielded Fixtures.** All new permanent exterior lighting shall be shielded and directed downward to avoid any light spill onto surrounding land uses including natural habitat areas, open water, residential areas, or into the night skies.

**AES-2: Non-Glare Materials.** All new structures and buildings shall be designed to include non-glare exterior materials and coatings to minimize glare or reflection.

Significance Determination:

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated

Cumulative

Impact 3.1-5: Would the proposed Project construction and operation, when considered with related projects in the geographic scope, result in a cumulatively considerable impact to aesthetics?

Table 3-2 in Chapter 3, Environmental Setting, Impact Analysis, and Mitigation Measures identifies thirteen related projects that are planned or are under construction within the Project area. The cumulative study area for Aesthetics impacts includes the locations that have clear sightlines to the proposed Project. The proposed development projects listed in Table 3-2 which include mixed-use developments, a childcare facility, infrastructure projects, and commercial uses would not have a clear sightline to the proposed Project. The proposed Project is designed to
3. Environmental Setting, Impact Analysis, and Mitigation Measures

3.1 Aesthetics

Silver Lake Reservoir Complex Master Plan Project 3.1-27 October 2022
Draft Environmental Impact Report

complement and improve the aesthetics of the existing Project area. All development projects would be evaluated on whether they are consistent with the City’s design guidelines, policies, and development standards. Since the proposed Project would not block or substantially alter scenic vistas or views and would be designed to enhance the visual character of the SLRC, it would not contribute considerably to any potentially adverse effect to scenic vistas, scenic views, or visual character resulting from the related projects. Furthermore, the related projects would be commercial or mixed-use (commercial with apartments) and would be located within a high ambient lighting area. The related projects would be consistent with existing ambient conditions, and, as with the Project, would be required to comply with LAMC Section 91.6205 M that requires that no sign shall be illuminated in such a manner as to produce a light intensity of greater than three-foot candles above ambient lighting, as measured at the property line of the nearest residentially zoned property. The related projects would also be spread over several blocks and would not form a high intensity, combined light source. Therefore, the Project’s contribution to cumulative impacts would not be cumulatively considerable. As such, cumulative impacts regarding aesthetics would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures:

None Required

Level of Significance After Mitigation:

Less than Significant Impact

3.1.6 Summary of Impacts

Table 3.1-2 Summarizes the impact significance determinations and lists mitigation measures related to Aesthetic resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Mitigation Measure</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1-1: Scenic Vistas</td>
<td>None Required</td>
<td>LTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1-2: Scenic Resources</td>
<td>None Required</td>
<td>NI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1-3: Visual Character/Quality</td>
<td>None Required</td>
<td>NI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1-4: Light or Glare</td>
<td>Mitigation Measures AES-1 and AES-2</td>
<td>LTSM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1-5: Cumulative</td>
<td>None Required</td>
<td>LTS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES:

NI = No Impact, no mitigation proposed
LTS = Less than Significant, no mitigation proposed
LTSM = Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated
SU = Significant and Unavoidable
3.1.7 References


Personal communication, City of Los Angeles Planning Department, August 2022.