3.1 Aesthetics

This section describes the affected environment and regulatory setting for Aesthetics related to the Project Area and surrounding area. In addition, this section describes the potential impacts related to Aesthetics that would result from the implementation of the proposed Project. As noted in the analysis below, impacts associated with Aesthetics during construction or operation of the proposed Project would be less than significant and no mitigation measures are required.

The information in this section is based on the Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) prepared for the proposed Project (GPA Consulting, 2019), located in Appendix B.

3.1.1 Introduction

3.1.1.1 Defining Quality and Character of Visual Resources

Visual Character

Visual character is described by the topography, land use, form, color, line, texture, and natural resources depicted in the view. Assessment of visual character is intended to be descriptive rather than evaluative. Visual character is based on defined attributes, such as physical traits; pattern character traits; and the dominance, scale, and diversity or continuity of visual elements.

Visual Quality

Visual quality describes the aesthetics of a view. Determining visual quality can be subjective because it is partly based on the viewer’s idea of what constitutes a quality setting. To provide a more objective framework, this assessment combines the evaluative criteria (i.e., vividness, intactness, and unity) and qualitative rankings (i.e., low, medium, and high) presented in the Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA) Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects, along with the L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide criteria. Though FHWA’s guidelines are the accepted standard for evaluating the visual effects associated with highway and railroad projects, the guidelines also apply to a wide range of non-transportation projects.

The three criteria for evaluating visual quality include:

- **Vividness:** The visual power or memorability of landscape components as they combine in distinctive visual patterns.
- **Intactness:** The visual integrity of the natural and human-built landscape and its freedom from encroaching elements. Intactness can occur in well-kept urban and rural landscapes, as well as in natural settings.
- **Unity:** The visual coherence and compositional harmony of the landscape considered as a whole. It frequently attests to the careful design of individual human-made components in the landscape.
Views of high quality often have topographic relief, a variety of vegetation, rich colors, impressive scenery, and unique natural and/or built features. The FHWA evaluates visual quality based on an average of the ranking scales for vividness, intactness, and unity.

**Viewer Response**

Viewer response includes viewer exposure and viewer sensitivity. The assessment of these elements predicts how the public might react to visual changes brought about by a development project.

Viewer exposure measures the number of viewers exposed to the resource change, type of viewer activity, duration of their view, speed at which the viewer moves, and position of the viewer. In areas with high viewer exposure, early consideration of design, art, and architecture become more important. Depending on distance or intervening structures, viewers may experience varying degrees of visibility to and from a project.

Viewer sensitivity includes the viewer's concern for scenic quality and the viewer's response to changes in the visual resources that make up the view. Viewer sensitivity varies based on local values and goals. The perception of visual quality and the sensitivity of viewers to changes in visual quality varies based on the viewer's familiarity with the view, their sense of ownership of the view, and the nature of the viewer's activity while receiving the view. For example, residential viewers typically have a high sensitivity to visual quality and changes in visual quality because of their familiarity with the view over a period of time, investment in the area (e.g., homeowners or long-time residents), and sense of ownership of the view. In contrast, commuting motorists that travel for the purposes of getting from one place to another for work or errands would have an average level of sensitivity. However, motorists traveling for pleasure would be more sensitive to their surroundings. The level of sensitivity changes depending on the degree of familiarity the viewer has with the visual setting and the viewer's concern for scenic quality.

**Key Views**

Because analyzing all of the potential views of the proposed Project would be infeasible, key viewpoints were selected at five locations within the Project Area to represent the visual effects of the proposed Project. These key views also represent the primary viewer groups that could be affected by the proposed Project. For the purposes of this analysis, a view is considered a key view if at least one of the following circumstances applies:

- Visual resources are present, regardless of the quality of the view. The sensitivity of the affected viewer group is medium or high, and the duration of the view is long-term.
- The quality of the view is medium or high, regardless of whether visual resources are present. The sensitivity of the viewer group is medium or high, and the duration of the view is long-term.
- The view is distinct, clear, and unobstructed from the street to adjacent businesses, and is viewed regularly by a large number of commuters. In this case, the viewer sensitivity is medium, and the view is long-term.

For the purposes of this EIR, key observation points (KOPs) are the key views that are most representative of the visual character and quality of the Project Area. The five KOPs in the Project Area,
which were determined in the VIA prepared for the proposed Project, are described in more detail in Section 3.1.3.1.

3.1.2 Regulatory Setting

3.1.2.1 City of Los Angeles Municipal Code

The City of Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) includes regulations pertaining to aesthetics and visual quality. The following Municipal Code sections provide standards for the design, location, and arrangement of visual resources within a project area, including zoning and land uses, landscaping, street lighting systems, etc.

LAMC Chapter 1, Article 2, Section 12.04.05 – Open Space (OS) Zone

Open Space Zoning provides regulations for publicly owned land in order to implement the City’s adopted General Plan, including the Open Space, Conservation and Public Recreation Elements. Implementation of the General Plan serves to protect and preserve natural resources and natural features of the environment; provide outdoor recreation opportunities and advance the public health and welfare; enhance environmental quality; encourage the management of public lands in a manner which protects environmental characteristics; and encourage the maintenance of open space uses on all publicly owned park and recreation land.

LAMC Chapter 1, Article 2, Section 12.42E2

All planting shall be coordinated with all signs and lighting on a project site, both upon installation of the planting and upon the planting reaching its maximum designed size. All shall be designed such that one will not interfere with the other, nor require excessive maintenance.

LAMC Chapter 1, Article 2, Sec. 12.21A5(k)

All lights used to illuminate a parking area shall be designed, located and arranged so as to reflect the light away from any streets and any adjacent premises.

LAMC Chapter 1, Article 3, Section 13.17A – River Improvement Overlay District

The purpose of a River Improvement Overlay (RIO) District is to:

- Support the goals of the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan
- Contribute to the environmental and ecological health of the City’s watersheds
- Establish a positive interface between river adjacent property and river parks and/or greenways
- Promote pedestrian, bicycle and other multi-modal connection between the river and its surrounding neighborhoods
- Provide an aesthetically pleasing environment for pedestrians and bicyclists accessing the river area
- Provide safe, convenient access to and circulation along the river
- Promote the river identity of river adjacent communities
LAMC Chapter 1, Article 3, Section 13.17F – River Improvement Overlay District

A Project shall conform to all of the following RIO district development regulations:

- **Landscaping**
  - Landscaping shall conform to the following regulations: 75 percent of any Project’s newly landscaped area shall be planted with any combination of the following: native trees, plants and shrubs, or species defined as WatershedWise, or species listed in the Los Angeles County River Master Plan Landscaping Guidelines and Plant Palettes.

- **Screening/Fencing**
  - Electrical transformers, mechanical equipment, water meters and other equipment shall be screened from public view. The screening may be opaque or perforated, provided that not more than 50 percent of the face is open. The screen shall be at least 6 inches taller than the equipment and not more than 2 feet taller than the equipment.

- With the exception of single-family homes, all projects facing a street that cross the river or terminate at the river or a river frontage road shall have all fences within the front or side yards visible from said street consistent with the fence designs identified in the Los Angeles County River Master Plan Landscape Guidelines Exterior Site Lighting.
  - All site and building mounted lighting shall be designed such that it produces a maximum initial luminance value no greater than 0.20 horizontal and vertical foot candles at the site boundary, and no greater than 0.01 horizontal foot candles 15 feet beyond the site. No more than 5.0 percent of the total initial designed lumens shall be emitted at an angle of 90 degrees or higher from nadir (i.e., straight down).
  - All low-pressure sodium, high pressure sodium, metal halide, fluorescent, quartz, incandescent greater than 60 watts, mercury vapor, and halogen fixtures shall be fully shielded.

- **Projects located partially or wholly within the Inner Core shall also conform to the following regulations**
  - Landscape Buffer. All Projects shall provide a 10-foot landscape buffer as measured from the Project’s property line adjacent to the river except where a roadway is located within that 10 feet. New building structures or parking shall not be permitted within the 10-foot landscape buffer.
  - Fence. All fences located within 10 feet of the river corridor or a river frontage road street or any adjacent street shall be consistent with the fence designs identified in the Los Angeles County River Master Plan Landscape Guidelines. With the exception of single-family homes, all Projects shall be required to maintain a visual connection between the river corridor and/or frontage road and the abutting property.
  - Fence Height. All fences located less than 10 feet from the river shall be no higher than 6 feet in height. All fences located at the 10-foot landscape buffer setback line shall not exceed 10 feet in height.
o Gates. All gates or fences located within 10 feet of the river or a river frontage road shall be consistent with the gate designs identified in the Los Angeles County River Master Plan Landscape Guidelines. The gate height shall be consistent with the adjacent fence height and the gate shall be designed so as not to encroach into either the river, street or public right-of-way when opened.

o River Access. With the exception of single-family homes, all river adjacent projects that partially or wholly abut the river shall have Americans with Disabilities Act compliant access gates from their property to the river. The gates shall also be accessible for bicycle entry. Access may be controlled and limited to residents, employees and/or visitors of the project.

o Riverfront Door. All projects located either adjacent to the river corridor or frontage road shall include a riverfront door visible to, and accessible from, the river corridor or frontage road.

**LAMC Chapter 1, Article 7, Sec. 17.08C**

Plans for street lighting system shall be submitted to and approved by the Bureau of Street Lighting.

**LAMC Chapter 9, Article 3, Section 93.0117**

No person shall construct, establish, create, or maintain any stationary exterior light source that may cause the following locations to be either illuminated by more than two foot-candles (21.5 lx) of lighting intensity or receive direct glare from the light source. Direct glare, as used in this subsection is a glare resulting from high luminance or insufficiently shielded light sources that is in the field of view.

- Any ground surface intended for use but not limited to recreation, barbecue, or lawn areas on any other property containing a residential unit or units

### 3.1.2.2 City of Los Angeles General Plan

As required by the State of California, the City's General Plan addresses goals, policies, and standards related to land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety (City of Los Angeles, 2017). To address goals that meet the unique needs of the City, the General Plan also includes elements related to health and wellness, air quality, historic preservation and cultural resources, and public facilities and services. Several of the General Plan elements are currently being updated. The General Plan elements that pertain to Aesthetics are described in more detail in the following sections.

**Open Space Element**

The Open Space Element of the City's General Plan provides information to guide decision makers and interested citizens regarding the identification, preservation, conservation, and acquisition of open space in the City (Los Angeles Department of City Planning, 1973). The Element aims to ensure that the City has sufficient open space to meet its recreational, environmental, health, and safety needs. In addition, the Element aims to conserve and preserve the City's environmental resources, as well as provide open spaces that contribute to the City's identity, form, and visual framework. Specific policies pertaining to Aesthetics include (a) consideration of aesthetics in grading plans, and (b) the establishment of scenic corridors. The following Open Space goals, objectives, and policies pertaining to aesthetics are applicable to the proposed Project:
Goals:

- Provide an open space system which provides identity, form, and a visual framework to the City.

Objectives:

- Identify the need and methods of providing for open space in proposed centers and impacted areas of the City. Impacted areas are generally characterized by factors including low incomes, high incidence of crime, and low educational achievement.

Policies:

- The amount of earth moved in grading operations within desirable open space areas should be limited and closely controlled. Aesthetic consideration should be incorporated into the City's approval of grading plans in these areas.

- Scenic corridors should be established where designated. Each corridor should be specifically "tailored" to the needs of the area and the scenic values to be preserved. Specific studies including implementing ordinances should be prepared for each scenic corridor.

Central City North Community Plan

The Central City North Community Plan summarizes the most significant land use issues and opportunities that the community faces (City of Los Angeles, 2000). Among these issues, the Community Plan includes goals, objectives, and policies related to provide park facilities and open space for the purposes of serving the recreational, environmental, and health needs of the community, as well as protecting environmental and aesthetic resources. The Central City North Community Plan is being updated, but the update is not anticipated to be complete before the public comment period for the Draft EIR. Specific policies pertaining to Aesthetics within the Community Plan include: (a) ensuring that parks are adequately illuminated for safe use at night, and (b) providing a visual balance between open space and urban development within the Community Plan area. The following aesthetics-related planning goals, objectives, and policies are presented in the community plan:

Recreation and Parks Facilities

Goals:

- 4: Adequate recreation and park facilities which meet the needs of the residents in the Plan Area.

Objectives:

- 4-1: Conserve, maintain and better utilize existing recreation and park facilities which promote the recreational needs of the community.

Policies:

- 4-1.1: Preserve the existing recreational facilities and park space.
Open Space

Goals:

- 5: A community with sufficient open space in balance with development to serve the recreational, environmental and health needs of the community and to protect environmental and aesthetic resources.

Objectives:

- 5-1: Preserve existing open space resources and where possible develop new open space.
- 5-2: Ensure the accessibility, security and safety of parks by their users, particularly families with children and senior citizens.

Policies:

- 5-1.1: Encourage the retention of passive and visual open space which provides a balance to the urban development of the Plan Area.
- 5-2.1: Ensure that parks are adequately illuminated for safe use at night where appropriate.

Boyle Heights Community Plan

The Boyle Heights Community Plan sets forth goals, objectives, policies, and implementation programs that pertain to Boyle Heights. The Boyle Heights Community Plan is being updated, but the update is not anticipated to be complete before the public comment period for the Draft EIR. The following aesthetics-related planning goals, objectives, and policies are presented in the community plan (City of Los Angeles, 1998):

Objectives:

- Provide adequate recreation and park facilities which meet the needs of the residents in the community.
- Conserve, maintain, and better utilize existing recreation and park facilities which promote the recreational experience.

Policies:

- Preserve and improve the existing recreation and park facilities and park space.

The Boyle Heights Community Plan is currently being updated, with a Draft Boyle Heights Community Plan released in 2017.

3.1.2.3 Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan

The Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan (LARRMP) includes plans to construct a continuous river greenway, providing habitat restoration, open spaces, and pedestrian and bicycle paths along the Los Angeles River (City of Los Angeles, 2007). The Plan includes a 32-mile long and 1-mile wide planning area, with goals that include, but are not limited to, establishing guidelines for land use and development around the LA River; enhancing and improving communities adjacent to the river; improving public access to the river; and providing recreation and open space. The LARRMP includes requirements for landscaped areas, guidelines for improvements to the visibility of the LA River, and guidelines for
introducing art. The following goals and recommendations within the LARRMP are applicable to the visual quality and character of the Sixth Street PARC Project:

**Goal 1: Create a continuous river greenway**
- Establish a River Buffer area within, and adjacent to, the Los Angeles River that meets riparian or upland habitat requirements.
- Extend open space, bike paths, and multi-use trails into the tributaries.

**Goal 2: Connect neighborhoods to the river**
- Provide green arterial connections to the Los Angeles River. Where suitable, landscaped areas should be designed to meet upland habitat requirements.
- Create safe, non-motorized routes between the Los Angeles River and cultural institutions, parks, civic institutions, transit-oriented development, schools, transit hubs, and commercial and employment centers within one mile of the Los Angeles River.
- Increase direct pedestrian and visual access to the Los Angeles River.

**Goal 3: Extend open space and water quality features into neighborhoods**
- Increase open space throughout the Los Angeles River Corridor. Where suitable, landscaped areas should be designed to meet upland habitat requirements.
- Provide a diverse system of interconnected parks, recreational fields, and outdoor classrooms.
- Incorporate best management practices in streetscapes and all public landscapes.

**Goal 4: Enhance river identity**
- Identify physical opportunities to improve the visibility of the Los Angeles River Corridor.
- Identify opportunities to improve public perception of the Los Angeles River Corridor.
- Encourage local and diverse character within the Los Angeles River Corridor.

**Goal 5: Incorporate public art along the river**
- Identify physical opportunities to introduce art along the Los Angeles River.
- Create a River arts program that reflects and celebrates the history of the Los Angeles River and the diverse cultures of its surrounding neighborhoods.

### 3.1.2.4 Bureau of Street Lighting Design Standards and Guidelines

The Bureau of Street Lighting *Design Standards and Guidelines* manual provides standards for engineers with regards to designing street lighting systems (Bureau of Street Lighting, 2007). The manual provides approval requirements; illumination standards for various areas, roadways, and pedestrian walkways; design considerations; and equipment selection standards.
3.1.2.5 LA River Design Guidebook

The LA River Design Guidebook provides design recommendations that complement the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan and the design guidelines associated with the RIO district (City of Los Angeles, 2016). The Guidebook is intended for use by the communities of Boyle Heights, Arts District, Lincoln Heights, and Chinatown East, and incorporates the input of residents, stakeholders, and representatives from these communities. The LA River Design Guidebook provides recommendations for improving and unifying the aesthetic quality of the LA River and surrounding communities.

3.1.2.6 Los Angeles County: LA River Master Plan

The Los Angeles County LA River Master Plan was originally published in 1996 to provide for the optimization and enhancement of aesthetic, recreational, flood control, and environmental values by creating a community resource, enriching the quality of life for residents, and recognizing the river's primary purpose for flood control (Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, 1996). The plan encompasses all 51-miles of the river, in addition to the Tujunga Wash, which is 9 miles long. The river touches 13 cities and 9 Los Angeles City Council Districts, all of which are addressed in the Master Plan document. The LA River Master Plan goals aim to:

- Ensure flood control and public safety needs are met.
- Improve the appearance of the river and the pride of local communities in it.
- Promote the river as an economic asset to the surrounding communities.
- Preserve, enhance, and restore environmental resources in and along the river.
- Consider stormwater management alternatives.
- Ensure public involvement and coordinate Master Plan development and implementation among jurisdictions.
- Provide a safe environment and a variety of recreational opportunities along the river.
- Ensure safe access to and compatibility between the river and other activity centers.

The LA River Master Plan is currently undergoing a comprehensive update that covers all 51 miles of the river. The update will not be complete prior to this project’s Draft EIR being made available to the public.

3.1.3 Environmental Setting

The visual setting for the proposed Project is defined below in terms of (a) key views; (b) existing visual character and quality; (c) scenic resources, scenic vistas, and other visual resources.

3.1.3.1 Key Views

The Project Area includes three segments: West Park, Arts Plaza and River Gateway, and East Park. All Key Observation Points (KOP) have been assessed from the viewpoint of each segment. A KOP identifies key views that document the visual character and quality of the proposed Project in highly representative ways. The analysis identified five such specific views that would be altered to some degree by the
proposed Project. The following KOPs were chosen to represent the clearest display of visual effects of the Project Area at representative locations within its setting (See Figure 3.1-1, KOPs):

- **KOP 1**: Mateo Street and East Sixth Street (West Park) (See Figure 3.1-2, KOP 1 [View East from Mateo Street])
- **KOP 2**: Santa Fe Avenue and Mesquit Street (Arts Plaza and River Gateway) (See Figure 3.1-3, KOP 2 [View East from Santa Fe Avenue])
- **KOP 3**: East Sixth Street and South Mission Road (East Park) (See Figure 3.1-4, KOP 3 [View West from Mission Road])
- **KOP 4**: Anderson Street, between Sixth Street and Jesse Street (East Park) (See Figure 3.1-5, KOP 4 [View West from Anderson Street])
- **KOP 5**: Clarence Street, between Sixth Street and Jesse Street (East Park) (See Figure 3.1-6, KOP 5 [View West from Clarence Street] and Figure 3.1-7, KOP 5 Towards U.S. 101 Freeway [View East from Clarence Street])

### 3.1.3.2 Existing Visual Character and Quality

For all five KOPs, the existing visual character is the current construction site for the Viaduct Replacement Project, which is located in a heavily industrialized area of low visual quality, and low vividness and unity.
Figure 3.1-1: KOPs
Figure 3.1-2: KOP 1 (View East from Mateo Street)

Source: (GPA Consulting, 2019)

Figure 3.1-3: KOP 2 (View East from Santa Fe Avenue)

Source: (GPA Consulting, 2019)
Figure 3.1-4: KOP 3 (View West from Mission Road)

Source: (GPA Consulting, 2019)

Figure 3.1-5: KOP 4 (View West from Anderson Street)

Source: (GPA Consulting, 2019)
Figure 3.1-6: KOP 5 (View West from Clarence Street)

Source: (GPA Consulting, 2019)

Figure 3.1-7: KOP 5 Towards U.S. 101 Freeway (View East from Clarence Street)

Source: (GPA Consulting, 2019)
**West Park**

**KOP 1: Mateo Street and Sixth Street Bridge**

KOP 1 is located at the intersection of Mateo Street and East Sixth Street (at the western extent of the former Viaduct). This industrialized area was the location of the former Viaduct, which was demolished in 2016, and was also occupied by multiple warehouses and commercial storage facilities that were acquired as part of the Viaduct Replacement Project. The existing view from KOP 1 to the east is the construction site for the Viaduct Replacement Project, which includes fencing around an area of bare ground with staged construction equipment and materials (See Figure 3.1-2). KOP 1 includes views of neighboring industrial and commercial buildings to the west, north, and south, including stores, warehouses, and a gym.

**Arts Plaza and River Gateway**

**KOP 2: Santa Fe Avenue and Mesquit Street**

KOP 2 is located at the intersection of Santa Fe Avenue and Mesquit Street. This industrialized area was the location of the former Viaduct and was also occupied by multiple warehouses and commercial storage facilities that were acquired as part of the Viaduct Replacement Project. The existing view from KOP 2 includes the construction site for the Viaduct Replacement Project to the west and east, which includes fencing around an area of bare ground with staged construction equipment and materials (See Figure 3.1-3). To the northeast, a fenced construction site for a Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) maintenance facility is visible. KOP 2 also includes views of neighboring industrial and commercial buildings to north and south, including a gallery and warehouses. To the southeast, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power River Switching Station, including power lines and transformers, is visible. There are several railway tracks further east, but their visibility is limited from KOP 2.

**East Park**

**KOP 3: Sixth Street and South Mission Road**

KOP 3 is located at the intersection of East Sixth Street and South Mission Road. This area was previously occupied by commercial warehouses and truck yards, as well as an empty space underneath the former Viaduct, which surrounding businesses used to park their vehicles. The existing view from KOP 3 consists of a construction site for the Viaduct Replacement Project to the west, east, and south, which includes fencing around an area of bare ground with staged construction equipment and materials (See Figure 3.1-4). Visible vertical elements include power poles and the support structures for the Viaduct Replacement Project. KOP 3 also features views of neighboring industrial and commercial buildings to the north and south, including several warehouses and commercial storage facilities. There are several railway tracks further west, but their visibility is limited from KOP 3.

**KOP 4: Anderson Street, between Sixth Street and Jesse Street**

KOP 4 is located at Anderson Street between East Sixth Street and Jesse Street. This area was previously occupied by commercial warehouses, industrial facilities, and on-street parking, as well as an empty space underneath the former Viaduct that was used by the surrounding businesses to park their personal vehicles. The existing view from KOP 4 includes the construction site for the Viaduct Replacement
Project, which includes fencing around an area of bare ground with staged construction equipment and materials (See Figure 3.1-5). KOP 4 also includes views of neighboring industrial and commercial buildings to the north and south, including several warehouses and commercial storage facilities. The Downtown LA skyline is visible to the west. A berm vegetated with shrubs, grasses, and palm trees adjacent to U.S. 101 is visible to the east.

KOP 5: Clarence Street, between Sixth Street and Jesse Street

KOP 5 is located at Clarence Street between East Sixth Street and Jesse Street (at the eastern extent of the former Viaduct). This area was previously occupied by commercial warehouses, industrial facilities, and on-street parking, as well as an empty space underneath the former Viaduct that was used by the surrounding businesses to park their personal vehicles. The existing view from KOP 5 includes the construction site for the Viaduct Replacement Project to the west and east, which includes fencing around an area of bare ground with staged construction equipment and materials (See Figure 3.1-6 and Figure 3.1-7). KOP 5 also includes views of neighboring industrial and commercial structures to the north and south, including several various warehouses and commercial storage facilities. A berm vegetated with shrubs, grasses, and palm trees adjacent to U.S. 101 is visible to the east.

3.1.3.3 Scenic Resources, Scenic Vistas, and Other Visual Resources

There are no officially designated scenic vistas, resources, or highways that are within the Project Area or visible from the Project Area. Looking west, views of the Downtown LA skyline are visible from several of the KOPs within the Project Area. The Downtown LA skyline could be considered a valued landscape by residents, pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists of the Central City North and Boyle Heights neighborhoods. The skyline consists of numerous buildings and skyscrapers of visual prominence, including the U.S. Bank Tower, the Wilshire Grand Center, the Wells Fargo Tower, the Aon Center, and the Gas Company Tower, and other structures in Downtown Los Angeles. No officially designated scenic resources, vistas, or corridors have been identified in the Project Area, or are visible from the Project Area.

3.1.4 Environmental Impact Analysis

3.1.4.1 Methodology

Screening criteria pertaining to aesthetics, existing features in the visual setting, effects on scenic resources, and obstruction of views from the L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide (City of Los Angeles, 2006) and State CEQA Statute (Public Resources Code 21000-21189) and Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Sections 15000-15387) provide the key analytical framework for this section, and guide the process for the proposed Project. This is augmented by the methodology developed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), which has become the industry standard for performing visual impact assessments for local, non-highway related projects. The FHWA methodology calls for analysis of a project’s viewshed (i.e., those areas that can be easily seen within a project’s setting), using the criteria vividness, intactness, and visual unity captured in key views to assess the level of visual quality present, both before and after a project is implemented. A viewshed comprises all of the surface areas visible from an observer’s viewpoint. The viewshed also accounts for the locations of viewers likely to be affected by visual changes brought about by the proposed Project. Within the evaluative framework,
changes to the quality and character of visual resources in the viewshed are assessed with respect to viewer response, as discussed in the following sections.

### 3.1.4.2 Screening Analysis

Several impacts and corresponding thresholds of significance in the following section were eliminated from further analysis in this EIR. Topics were eliminated if the IS for the proposed Project concluded there would be “No Impact,” or if impacts were identified to be “Less Than Significant... and will not be discussed further in the EIR.” Therefore, only the topics described in the section below were determined to require further analysis in this EIR. A copy of the Initial Study, which contains the eliminated topics, is provided in Appendix A.

### 3.1.4.3 Thresholds of Significance

According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and the *L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide*, the proposed Project would have a significant impact on Aesthetics if it would:

**I(a)** Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

**I(c)** Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, conflicts with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

**I(d)** Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

*4.4 Nighttime Illumination.* The determination of significance shall be made on a case-by-case basis, considering the following factors:

- 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 affect adjacent light sensitive areas.

### 3.1.4.4 Construction Impacts

**I(a): Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.**

There are no officially designated scenic vistas, resources, or highways that are within the Project Area or visible from the Project Area. However, the Downtown LA skyline could be considered a valued viewshed by residents, pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists of the Central City North and Boyle Heights neighborhoods.

Construction equipment (e.g., grading excavators, scrapers, dozers, tractors, loaders, backhoes, forklifts, and portable generators) would be temporarily present in the Project Area for a period extending up to approximately two years for Phase I and six months for Phase II. Construction activities would be short-term and would not have permanent effects on the Downtown LA skyline. In addition, construction equipment would not introduce new vertical elements because construction equipment is already present in the Project Area as part of the existing construction site for the Viaduct Replacement Project.
Therefore, views to the Downtown LA skyline would not change substantially when compared to existing conditions. Impacts would be less than significant and no mitigation is required.

I(c): Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

The Project Area is in an urbanized area that includes the following land use designations: Limited Industrial (zoned M1), Light Industrial (zoned M2), Heavy Industrial (zoned M3), Open Space (zoned OS) within the LA River, and Public Facilities (zoned PF). In addition, the entire Project Area west of U.S. 101 is zoned RIO. Los Angeles zoning code and regulations would not prohibit any of the proposed construction activities. Staging during construction of the proposed Project would be coordinated with the construction of the Viaduct Replacement Project; therefore, the proposed Project would not require the additional use or acquisition of public space for equipment and vehicles.

Short-term construction impacts to the existing scenic quality of the Project Site and its surrounding area would be temporary in nature and all construction equipment and machinery would be removed upon completion of the project. The construction area would be fenced to obscure views of construction activities, materials, and staged equipment. In addition, the Project Area currently contains equipment and machinery that are being used for the construction of the Viaduct Replacement Project. Therefore, construction of the proposed Project would not result in substantial visual changes that would conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. Impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Construction of the proposed Project would require the use of construction vehicles that would include cranes and drill rig trucks, among other vehicles and equipment, that may exceed 60 feet in height above ground elevation. However, shading from construction vehicles would be temporary due to the constant mobility of the vehicles throughout the Project Site. Therefore, construction equipment and vehicles related to the proposed Project would not result in a significant impact on shading in the project area, during the construction of the proposed Project. Impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

I(d): Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

The proposed Project is in an urban area with many sources of ambient illumination, including light emitted from commercial and industrial properties and lampposts lining the streets surrounding the construction site, as well as from the headlights of vehicles traveling through the Project Area. The nearest sensitive receptors are residences near the intersection of South Clarence Street and Inez Street, located approximately 0.6 miles north of the nearest construction activities. The areas directly surrounding the proposed park are primarily vacant or occupied by industrial or commercial properties that would not be sensitive to spillover light. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Construction of the proposed Project would not create a substantial source of light or glare that would adversely affect daytime views in the area; however, nighttime views may be affected. During
construction of the proposed Project, perimeter lighting may be required on the construction site for security and safety purposes during nighttime. If nighttime lighting at the construction site is required, lighting would be directed downward, on-site, and away from surrounding land uses. Spillover light would be minimized to the greatest extent feasible so that it would not interfere with functions of adjacent properties including vision, sleep, privacy, and general enjoyment of the natural nighttime condition. Because the proposed Project would comply with the provisions in the City’s Municipal Code, including: LAMC Chapter 1, Article 2, Sec. 12.21A5(k); LAMC Chapter 1, Article 7, Sec. 17.08C; and LAMC Chapter 9, Article 3, Section 93.0117, it is not expected to result in new sources of substantial light or glare.

3.1.4.5 Operational Impacts

I(a): Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

There are no officially designated scenic vistas, resources, or highways that are within the Project Area or visible from the Project Area. However, the Downtown LA skyline could be considered a valued viewshed by residents, pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists of the Central City North and Boyle Heights neighborhoods.

The proposed Project would not introduce vertical elements tall enough to obstruct views of the Downtown Los Angeles skyline. Approximately 5.8 acres of the 13-acres PARC would be under the Viaduct. The proposed Project would include design components that would occur primarily at ground level or underneath the Viaduct, including the addition of pedestrian walking trails, bike paths, sports fields and courts, performance lawns and stages, public seating areas, open grass areas and landscaping, and pet play areas. The addition of vertical structures, such as large vegetation, trees, public art pieces, and general site and sports field lighting would also be included; however, none of the proposed elements would have the potential to block any scenic vistas. The art pieces would be located within the West Park and potentially East Park and would be up to 30 feet tall. The art pieces would not be directly under the Viaduct and could therefore cause shade within the boundaries of the parks. However, the shade would be limited to the immediate vicinity of the art pieces and would not affect adjacent properties. In addition, the art pieces would not be tall enough to block views of the DTLA skyline, which would still be visible from other viewpoints. The skyline would continue to be visible to all motorists, residents, visitors, and pedestrians. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

I(c): Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

As discussed in Section 3.1.4.4, the Project Area is in an urbanized area that includes the following land use designations: Limited Industrial (zoned M1), Light Industrial (zoned M2), Heavy Industrial (zoned M3), Open Space (zoned OS) within the LA River, and Public Facilities (zoned PF). In addition, the entire Project Area west of U.S. 101 is zoned RIO. Once the necessary approvals are obtained, the proposed Project would be consistent with the zoning code and regulations governing the Project Area (see Section 3.10, Land Use and Planning, for additional information). The City’s Bureau of Engineering (BOE) would work with the Los Angeles Department of City Planning to ensure that the proposed Project is consistent with any future zoning changes within the Project Area. The proposed Project was designed to be
consistent with the design guidelines established for the RIO District, which include the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan and LA River Design Guidebook. In addition, lighting would be consistent with the regulations outlined in the LAMC and the Bureau of Street Lighting Design Standards.

The proposed Project would substantially improve the scenic quality of the Project Site with the addition of the West Park, Arts Plaza and River Gateway, and East Park in the neighborhoods of Central City North and Boyle Heights. Figure 3.1-8 through Figure 3.1-15 (see pages 3.1-21 through 3.1-24) demonstrate simulated operational views from KOPs within the Project Area.

Key components of the proposed Project would include sports fields, open grass areas, multipurpose sports courts, pedestrian and bicycle paths, performance stages, pet play areas, art pieces and associated interpretive exhibits. These proposed Project elements would result in a substantial aesthetic improvement from the existing construction site.

The proposed Project would increase the number of trees and provide new vegetation in the form of gardens, meadows, and lawns. The proposed Project would also include reinforced concrete planted terraces on the west and east banks of the LA River. These new elements would provide shade throughout the Project Site and would add a greater variation in natural texture, color, and landscape to the area, thereby improving the scenic quality of the area. Landscaping would be consistent with the design guidelines established for the RIO District.

When facing west, views of the Downtown Los Angeles skyline would continue to be visible from the Project Area. The proposed Project, with its series of natural landscaping, open space, and social and recreational areas, would be more vivid in appearance than the existing construction site and the industrialized portions of Central City North and Boyle Heights within the Project Area. The effects on the visual intactness and unity of the view would generally be positive and are expected to improve the scenic quality of the area.

Residents, pedestrians, local business employees, and commuters within and in proximity to the Project Area would have clear views of the new park and would most likely notice changes to the visual environment caused by the proposed Project from all of the KOPs. However, awareness of the changed area would diminish over time as the new facility becomes a familiar component within the overall viewshed. Therefore, the scenic quality of the Project Area is expected to improve as a result of the proposed Project. As such, the proposed Project would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Additionally, the proposed Project would not include any light-blocking structures that would exceed 60 feet in height above the ground elevation. Therefore, structures to the proposed Project would not result in a significant impact on shading in the project area, during operation of the proposed Project. Impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

I(d): Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

The proposed Project is in an urban area with many sources of ambient illumination, including light emitted from commercial and industrial properties and lampposts lining the streets surrounding the construction site, as well as from the headlights of vehicles traveling through the Project Area. Because
the proposed Project is in an industrial area, there are few receptors in the Project Area, such as residences, that would be sensitive to spillover light. The nearest sensitive receptors are residences near the intersection of South Clarence Street and Inez Street, located approximately 0.6 mile north of the nearest lighting features. The areas directly surrounding the proposed park are primarily vacant or occupied by industrial or commercial properties that would not be sensitive to spillover light.

The proposed Project would introduce new lighting along the sidewalks, playgrounds, performance stages, and sports areas to increase public safety and visibility. Areas within the proposed Project Site that demonstrate a high need for nighttime lighting include the LA River Access Tunnel, restrooms, and the sports fields and performance areas.

Lighting for security would be installed throughout the Project Site to protect people and property and illuminated in accordance with the Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) standards, IES RP-33-14 Lighting for Exterior Environments and IES G-1-03 Security Lighting for People, Property and Public Spaces, as updated by IES G-1-16 Guide for Security Lighting for People, Property and Critical Infrastructure. Luminaires with shielded optics would be used, and the proposed Project would be designed to infill lighting in areas where architectural and bridge elements could impede the flow of light. Security lighting would not adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area.

The sports fields and performance areas would feature switchable and dimmable lights to reduce lighting when these facilities are not in use. Lighting would be directed on-site, and spillover light would be minimized to the greatest extent feasible so that it would not interfere with functions of adjacent properties including vision, sleep, privacy, and general enjoyment of the natural nighttime condition. Light levels would be gradually reduced when moving away from the high illuminance sports fields. In addition, the use of outdoor lighting for recreational activities would be limited to the proposed operating hours, between 5:00 a.m. and 10:30 p.m. in accordance with LAMC Sec. 63.44. In addition, the proposed Project would not include surfaces that would produce glare. Therefore, the proposed Project would not create new sources of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area.

The new walkway lighting would be compliant with all regulations set forth by the City's Bureau of Street Lighting Design Standards and Guidelines to ensure that the area receives lighting that meets national illumination standards for vehicular and pedestrian traffic, does not emit light pollution, and produces little glare (Bureau of Street Lighting, 2007). In addition, the lighting for the proposed sports fields and courts would operate in compliance with Los Angeles City Recreation and Parks (RAP) illuminance level standards for outdoor sports and 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. Los Angeles City RAP standards for the proposed Project would include illumination levels of 30-foot candles average over the entire area of basketball courts and 30-foot candles average over soccer fields. With adherence to the City's Design Standards and Guidelines, the City's RAP illuminance standard levels, and the provisions in the City's Municipal Code, including LAMC Chapter 1, Article 2, Sec. 12.21A5(k); LAMC Chapter 1, Article 7, Sec. 17.08C; and LAMC Chapter 9, Article 3, Section 93.0117, the proposed Project would not result in substantial light or glare effects. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.
Figure 3.1-8: KOP 1 (West Park – View West from Sloped Walkway)

Source: (Hargreaves Associates, 2019)

Figure 3.1-9: KOP 1 (West Park – View East from Mateo Street)

Source: (Hargreaves Associates, 2019)
Figure 3.1-10: KOP 2 (Art Plaza – View East from Berm)

Source: (Hargreaves Associates, 2019)

Figure 3.1-11: KOP 2 (Arts Plaza – View West from Upper Walkway)

Source: (Hargreaves Associates, 2019)
Figure 3.1-12: KOP 3 (East Park – View West towards East Ramp)

Source: (Hargreaves Associates, 2019)

Figure 3.1-13: KOP 3 (East Park – View West towards Soccer Fields)

Source: (Hargreaves Associates, 2019)
Figure 3.1-14: KOP 4 (East Park – View East towards Children’s Play and Plaza)

Source: (Hargreaves Associates, 2019)

Figure 3.1-15: KOP 5 (East Park – View East towards Dog Park)

Source: (Hargreaves Associates, 2019)
3.1.5 Best Management Practices

BMP-AES-1: Construction Lighting

If nighttime lighting at the construction site is required, lighting shall be directed downward, on-site, and away from surrounding land uses.

BMP-AES-2: Construction Staging and Construction Staging Area

Construction staging shall be coordinated with the construction of the Viaduct Replacement Project; therefore, additional use or acquisition of public space for equipment and vehicles will not be required. The construction area shall be fenced to obscure views of construction activities, materials, and staged equipment.

BMP-AES-3: Operational Lighting

Outdoor lighting for recreational activities shall be limited to the proposed operating hours.

BMP-AES-4: Regulatory Requirements for Lighting

• Proposed Project illumination shall comply with the provisions in the City's Municipal Code, including LAMC Chapter 1, Article 2, Sec. 12.21A5(k); LAMC Chapter 1, Article 7, Sec. 17.08C; and LAMC Chapter 9, Article 3, Section 93.0117.

• The new walkway lighting shall be compliant with all regulations set forth by the City’s Bureau of Street Lighting Design Standards and Guidelines to ensure that the area receives lighting that meets national illumination standards for vehicular and pedestrian traffic, does not emit light pollution, and produces little glare.

• Lighting for sports fields and courts shall operate in compliance with Los Angeles City Recreation and Parks (RAP) illuminance level standards for outdoor sports and recreational facilities.

• Lighting for security shall be illuminated in accordance with the Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) standards, IES RP-33-14 Lighting for Exterior Environments and IES G-1-03 Security Lighting for People, Property and Public Spaces, as updated by IES G-1-16 Guide for Security Lighting for People, Property and Critical Infrastructure.

3.1.6 Mitigation Measures

Impacts related to Aesthetics would be less than significant; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

3.1.7 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

There are no significant unavoidable adverse impacts on Aesthetics resulting from construction and operation of the proposed Project.

3.1.8 Cumulative Impacts

The cumulative study area for Aesthetics impacts includes the locations that have clear sightlines to the proposed Project. Of the projects included in Table 1-1, the only projects with clear sightlines to the
The proposed Project are the Viaduct Replacement Project, 670 Mesquite Project, and Metro Arts District Rail Yard. The proposed Project is designed to complement the aesthetics of the Viaduct Replacement Project. The 670 Mesquite Project design approach is intended to complement the industrial character of the Arts District. The proposed building materials would include concrete, steel, and glass, reflecting materials prevalent in the neighborhood. The Metro Art District Rail Yard would involve the construction of a new Metro line that would include visual changes consistent with the existing setting and surrounding environment. All development projects would be evaluated on whether they are consistent with the City’s design guidelines, policies, and development standards. Therefore, these projects are not expected to adversely affect visual character and quality or result in effects that are potentially cumulatively significant.

The proposed Project would be designed in compliance with the City’s design guidelines, policies, and development standards and would result in less than significant impacts related to Aesthetics. Therefore, the proposed Project is not expected to contribute to significant cumulative impacts related to Aesthetics.