

## 4.1 AESTHETICS

This section analyzes impacts relating to aesthetics. Potential light, glare, shade, and shadow effects are also evaluated.

### 4.1.1 Setting

**a. Visual Character of the Project Site and Vicinity.** The project site encompasses approximately 5.66 acres at the northeast corner of Alameda Street and 1<sup>st</sup> Street on the edge of the Little Tokyo community in downtown Los Angeles. The site vicinity is highly urbanized and characterized by a mix of uses and development densities. Figures 4.1-1 through 4.1-3 illustrate existing visual conditions on and around the project site.

As illustrated on photos 1-4 on Figure 4.1-1, the project site itself is characterized by a surface parking lot and a single office building. The majority of the 5.66-acre site is used for surface parking, which can be readily viewed from both surrounding streets, including 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Alameda Street, and Temple Street, and adjacent properties. The single on-site structure is a vacant, block building that lacks distinctive architectural characteristics. This structure, located in the northeastern portion of the property, is visible from adjacent properties to the south and west, but is most readily viewed from Temple Street. The new Little Tokyo/Arts District Metro Gold Line Station runs along the project site's western boundary on the east side of Alameda Street (see Photo 7 on Figure 4.1-2).

South of the project site along the 1<sup>st</sup> Street corridor is a mix of aging and new buildings of varying densities. Immediately south of the site at the southeast corner of 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Alameda Street is a newer five-story multiple family residential development (see Photo 1 on Figure 4.1-2). West of Alameda Street along both sides of 1<sup>st</sup> Street is a mix of newer and older commercial development within the Little Tokyo District (see Photo 6 on Figure 4.1-2 and Photo 12 on Figure 4.1-3). Farther west are the high rise buildings of downtown Los Angeles. To the east along 1<sup>st</sup> Street is primarily older commercial development of lower intensity (primarily one and two stories). A Buddhist Temple is located about 300 feet east of the site at the northwest corner of the 1<sup>st</sup> Street/Vignes Street intersection. The 1<sup>st</sup> Street corridor is undergoing a transition toward higher intensity development and, as such, is currently characterized by development of mixed character.

Land uses north and east of the project site across Temple Street are more industrial in character. City of Los Angeles Emergency Operations Center No. 4 (see Photo 10 on Figure 4.1-3) is located immediately adjacent to the northeast corner of the site and a Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) facility is located immediately to the north on the north side of Temple Street (see Photo 9 on Figure 4.1-3).

West and northwest of the project site along the west side of Alameda Street is newer office and institutional development of relatively high intensity. The multi-story Japanese American National Museum is located immediately to the west on the west side of Alameda Street (see Photo 8 on Figure 4.1-2). Immediately north of the museum is an older block building that houses the Museum of Contemporary Art. Farther north are newer office and institutional buildings ranging from five to more than twenty stories (see Photo 11 on Figure 4.1-3).



**Photo 1** - View looking southwest across the surface parking lot that encompasses most of the project site.



**Photo 2** - East side of project site looking south toward 1st Street.



**Photo 3** - Existing view of the project site from the south across 1st Street.



**Photo 4** - Vacant office building in the northeastern portion of the project site.

## Project Site Photographs

Figure 4.1-1  
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**Photo 5** - New 5-story multiple family residential development immediately south of the site across 1st Street.



**Photo 6** - Señor Fish restaurant and other uses southwest of the project site along the south side of 1st Street. Note the mid to high rise buildings in the background.



**Photo 7** - Little Tokyo Gold Line Station, immediately abutting the western site boundary.



**Photo 8** - Japanese American National Museum, to the west of the project site across Alameda Avenue.

## Project Site Photographs

Figure 4.1-2  
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**Photo 9** - LADWP Facility Located immediately north of the project site across Temple Street.



**Photo 10** - Fire Station No. 4, immediately east of the project site.



**Photo 11** - Views north and west of the project site from the central portion of the onsite parking lot.



**Photo 12** - View looking west along 1st Street toward downtown Los Angeles.

## Project Site Photographs

**Figure 4.1-3**  
*City of Los Angeles*



**b. Public and Private Views.** Public views are those that can be seen from vantage points that are publicly accessible, such as streets, freeways, parks, and vista points. These views are generally available to a greater number of persons than are private views. Private views are those that can be seen from vantage points located on private property. Changes to private views generally are not considered significant when views are interrupted by land uses on adjacent blocks, particularly if the development complies with the zoning and design guidelines applicable to the site.

Public views in the vicinity of the project site are primarily from public roads such as 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Alameda Street, and Temple Street. None of these roadways has been designated as a scenic corridor and none offer views of any identified scenic resources. Portions of the site can be seen from the 101 Freeway (approximately 1,200 feet to the north); however, the site is within a highly urbanized setting and offers no important scenic features or points of reference that make it a distinguishing visual feature of the 101 Freeway viewshed. The existing surface parking lot and building onsite offer little aesthetic value to the adjacent or nearby public view corridors.

The project site is visible from a number of private properties, specifically those located along adjacent portions of 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Alameda Street, and Temple Street. The DWP facility and industrial uses to the north are not considered visually sensitive uses. The museum immediately to the west across Alameda Street and the multi-family residential use immediately to the south across 1<sup>st</sup> Street are more visually sensitive.

Current onsite development offers little aesthetic value with respect to views from these properties. No identified scenic resources are visible from adjacent properties, though mountain ridges can be viewed in the distance from the residences to the south across 1<sup>st</sup> Street looking north across the project site.

Views from private vantage points are not protected under CEQA or by the Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds. Life in an urbanized environment carries with it the fact that buildings interrupt views and become part of the viewshed. The planning and zoning regulations and procedures of the City of Los Angeles include height, massing, yards, and setbacks regulations, for aesthetic purposes in part, but potential impacts to the particular views of persons from private vantage points are not regulated or guaranteed and are not considered potentially significant environmental impacts pursuant to CEQA.

**c. Night Lighting.** Existing sources of nighttime illumination on the project site include security lighting in the onsite surface parking lot. Adjacent sources of light include streetlights on 1<sup>st</sup>, Alameda, and Temple streets, and security lighting on adjacent properties, including the Little Tokyo/ Arts District Metro Gold Line Station. The site vicinity is highly urbanized and generally receives substantial night “glow” from surrounding properties as well as direct spillover lighting from street lights, adjacent commercial uses, and vehicle headlights on surrounding roadways.

**d. Daytime Glare.** The primary sources of daytime glare on the project site are the existing pavement that covers nearly all of the site and cars parking in the existing surface parking lot. Other sources of daytime glare in the site vicinity include roadway pavement and transient vehicles.

**e. Existing Shadow Patterns.** The only source of shadows on the project site is the existing one-story building in the northeastern portion of the site along the south side of Temple Street. That building casts shadows onto the southern side of Temple Street during winter afternoons, but shadows do not extend across the street at any time of year. The area around the project site was surveyed for shadow sensitive uses in October 2009. There are no shadow-sensitive uses north of the site along Temple Street. The museum to the west across Alameda Street, the residential building to the south across 1<sup>st</sup> Street, and the temple to the east of the site along the north side of 1<sup>st</sup> Street are considered shadow sensitive.

**f. Regulatory Setting.** The following describes the primary regulatory mechanisms pertaining to aesthetics.

General Plan Framework. The City of Los Angeles General Plan Framework (Framework) provides direction as to the City's vision for future development. The Urban Form and Neighborhood Design section of the Framework encourages the development of centers in which scale and built form allow both daytime and nighttime use. According to Framework, Regional Centers should incorporate pedestrian oriented design elements and that pedestrian-oriented design as acknowledged in Policy 5.8.1 should be incorporated into the overall pattern of development. This urban design policy also acknowledges the need for the enhancement of pedestrian activity through the provision of well-lit exteriors to provide safety and comfort and the screening or location of parking out of public view.

The General Plan Framework also states that the livability of all neighborhoods would be improved by upgrading the quality of development and improving the quality of the public realm (Objective 5.5). Policies that support this objective include the planting of street trees that provide shade and give scale to sidewalks in all neighborhoods of the City (Policy 5.5.1) and the incorporation of street lights, bus shelters, benches, and other street furniture (Policy 5.5.4). Consistency of conceptual development with applicable urban form and neighborhood policies of the Framework is discussed under Impact AES-2, beginning on page 4.1-9.

Central City North Community Plan. The project site is at the western edge of the Central City North Community Plan area. The Community Plan guides development in a 2005-acre area adjacent to downtown Los Angeles and bounded by the Los Angeles River to the east, the City of Vernon to the south, Alameda Street, Cesar Chavez Avenue, Sunset Boulevard, and Marview Avenue to the west, and Stadium Way, Lilac Terrace, and North Broadway to the north.

The Urban Design chapter of the Community Plan includes design policies for individual commercial and multiple family residential projects, as well as community design and landscaping. Overarching goals of the Urban Design chapter are to: (1) maintain visual continuity and create an environment that encourages pedestrian and economic activity in commercial corridors; and (2) promote architectural design that enhances quality of life, living conditions, and neighborhood pride in residential areas. Consistency of conceptual development on the project site with individual Community Plan policies is discussed under Impact AES-2, beginning on page 4.1-9.

Municipal Code. The Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) specifies that outdoor light standards must be designed to reflect the light away from any adjacent street or property.

Exterior lighting may not generate direct glare or a light intensity greater than two foot-candles onto specified habitable and/or recreational uses. Pursuant to Section 14.4.4.E of the LAMC, no sign shall be arranged and 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.

#### **4.1.2 Impact Analysis**

**a. Methodology and Significance Thresholds.** The environmental impacts of the onsite development with respect to aesthetics are determined based on visits to the project site, which included the recording of the current visual aspects of the site and surrounding area. Both written notes and photographs were taken in order to assess the existing and proposed land uses and their potential impacts to the visual environment.

In accordance with Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines*, onsite development would have a significant aesthetic impact if it would cause any of the following:

- (a) *A substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista*
- (b) *Substantial damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway*
- (c) *Substantial degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings*
- (d) *Creation of a new source of substantial light or glare that would affect day or nighttime views in the area*

To determine whether a proposed project would have a significant impact to the aesthetic character of the project area, the *City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide* provides the following thresholds guidance.

**Aesthetics.** The determination of significance for general aesthetic impacts shall be made on a case-by-case basis, considering the following factors:

- a) *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*
- b) *The amount of natural open space to be graded or developed*
- c) *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.*
- d) *The degree of contrast between proposed features and existing features that represent the area's valued aesthetic image*
- e) *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*
- f) *The degree to which the project would contribute to the area's aesthetic value*
- g) *Applicable guidelines and regulations*

**Obstruction of Views.** The determination of significance for obstruction of views shall be made on a case-by-case basis, considering the following factors:



- a) *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)*
- b) *Whether the project affects views from a designated scenic highway, corridor, or parkway*
- c) *The extent of obstruction (e.g., total blockage, partial interruption, or minor diminishment)*
- d) *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*

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

- a) *The change in ambient illumination levels as a result of project sources*
- b) *The extent to which project lighting would spill off the project site and effect adjacent light-sensitive areas*

Shading. Onsite development would have a significant shading impact if it would shade shadow-sensitive uses more than three hours between the hours of 9:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M. Pacific Standard Time (PST), between late October and early April or more than four hours between the hours of 9:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. Pacific Daylight Time (PDT) between early April and late October.

#### **b. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

**Impact AES-1**    **The project site is on a flat site that does not contain any identified scenic resources. Moreover, though site development would be visible from both public rights-of-way and public properties, it would not adversely affect or block views of any scenic resources. Therefore, impacts to views would be *less than significant*.**

The 5.66-acre project site is flat and currently developed with a surface parking lot and a vacant one-story building. The site lacks distinctive visual features such as historic buildings or natural features.

The project site is not visible from a state scenic highway. None of the abutting streets to the project site are designated scenic highways or corridors. However, the project site is visible from public rights-of-way, notably 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Alameda Street, and Temple Street. It is also visible from adjacent private properties, notably a five-story multiple family residential development to the south across 1<sup>st</sup> Street and the Japanese American National Museum and the Museum of Contemporary Art to the west across Alameda Street.

Onsite development would be visible from both adjacent public rights-of-way and nearby private properties and would alter views from these locations. With up to 1.2 million square feet of development (a floor-to-area ratio [FAR] of approximately 5:1) and a maximum height of 16 stories, the development would be the most intense development in the immediate site



vicinity. It would not directly affect or block views of any scenic resources located along adjacent roadways as the primary viewshed consists of existing commercial, institutional, and industrial development. Onsite development would be highly visible from both the Japanese American National Museum and the Museum of Contemporary Art, but would not block views of any significant visual features. Development would block existing views of distant mountains from both the segment of 1<sup>st</sup> Street along the southern site boundary and the residences to the south across 1<sup>st</sup> Street. However, these mountains represent a secondary feature of the viewshed from both locations and have not been identified as a significant visual feature from the highly urbanized 1<sup>st</sup> Street corridor.

Site development would also be visible from portions of the 101 Freeway, located about 1,200 feet to the north. This would incrementally alter views from the freeway, but within the highly urbanized context of the site vicinity, would not represent a substantial change. Moreover, site development would not block views of any resources to the south as the viewshed from the freeway consists largely of a highly urbanized flat plain.

In summary, although onsite development would alter views from immediately adjacent rights-of-way and private properties, it would not directly affect any identified scenic resources or block views of identified important visual features. As such, impacts related to obstruction of views would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures.** Impacts to scenic vistas would be less than significant. As such, no mitigation measures are required.

**Impact AES-2** Onsite development would generally improve the visual character of the project site and would require site plan approval by the City Planning Commission. However, the development height and massing would be larger than that of adjacent developments and, depending on the final design, site development could potentially conflict with certain urban design policies of the Central City North Community Plan. Therefore, impacts to the existing visual character and quality of the site and its surroundings would be *significant but mitigable*.

This discussion addresses changes in the site's physical visual character, including compatibility with adjacent uses, and consistency with adopted urban design policies of the General Plan Framework and the Central City North Community Plan.

**Visual Character.** As discussed in Section 4.3, no identified California Points of Historical Interest (PHI), California Historical Landmarks (CHL), California Register of Historic Places (CRHP), National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), California State Historical Resources Inventory (HRI), or City of Los Angeles Cultural Monuments listings are present on or adjacent to the project site. In addition, the project site is completely paved and located within a highly urbanized area lacking rock-outcroppings or other major geologic or topographic features.

Onsite development would replace the existing surface parking lot and vacant one-story building with a new mixed use development that would generally improve the visual character of the site and, as discussed below, implement many applicable urban design policies. Moreover, it would not affect any designated open space or other features that contribute to the area's visual image. The proposed mix of residential and non-residential uses would generally enhance the pedestrian character of the 1<sup>st</sup> Street corridor. The increased intensity of use on the site would also be more in keeping with the highly urbanized nature of the site vicinity and with the ongoing intensification of land use along both the 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Alameda Street corridors.

The intensity of use onsite (up to a maximum FAR of approximately 5:1 and maximum height of 16 stories) would, however, exceed that of neighboring properties. The multi-family residential development immediately to the south is a maximum of 5 stories in height, while the Japanese American National Museum is 3-4 stories and the Museum of Contemporary Art is 2 stories. Uses farther east and west along both sides of the 1<sup>st</sup> Street corridor are primarily 1-2 stories in height. Multi-story buildings are located to the northwest of the site, though the DWP facility and other industrial properties immediately north across Temple Street are developed at relatively low intensity, with primarily 1-2 story buildings.

At a maximum of 16 stories, onsite development could be more than three times the height of buildings on adjoining properties, including new developments as such as the multi-family residential property immediately south. The increased height and intensity of development would not create any significant visual conflicts with the industrial uses to the north because those uses generally are not visually sensitive. However, although the 1<sup>st</sup> Street corridor is undergoing general intensification, the height of onsite development could be considered out of scale with the character of the corridor. This potential deviation from the established scale of development along the 1<sup>st</sup> Street corridor is considered a significant aesthetic impact. Mitigation Measure AES-2(d) would address this impact by requiring building setbacks for buildings constructed along 1<sup>st</sup> Street.

Aesthetic impacts could also result from onsite development due to signage in excess of that allowed under the Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 91.6205 as well as graffiti and accumulation of rubbish and debris along the walls adjacent to public rights-of-way. These potentially significant impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level with implementation of mitigation measures AES-2(a) and (b).

Consistency with Urban Design Policies. Tables 4.1-1 and 4.1-2 discuss consistency of conceptual site development with applicable urban design policies of the City of Los Angeles General Plan Framework and Central City North Community Plan. As indicated in Table 4.1-1, onsite development would be expected to implement applicable goals, objectives, and policies of the General Plan Framework. As discussed in Table 4.1-2, onsite development would also generally be consistent with many of the policies of the Central City North Community Plan. However, it could be found to be in conflict with policies pertaining to maintenance of pedestrian-scaled massing. This is a potentially significant impact that can be addressed by Mitigation Measure AES-2(d).

**Table 4.1-1  
Consistency with General Plan Framework Urban Form  
and Neighborhood Design Goals, Objectives, and Policies**

<b>Goal, Objective, Policy</b>	<b>Analysis of Consistency</b>
<b>Goal 3L:</b> Districts that promote pedestrian activity and provide a quality experience for the City's residents.	<b>Consistent.</b> Onsite development would provide a mix of uses, potentially including street-front retail development with display windows, sidewalk amenities, street trees and landscaping. Site development would increase pedestrian activity in the site vicinity by adding new residential and commercial development, which would promote further pedestrian activity.
<b>Objective 5.1.</b> Translate the Framework's intent with respect to citywide urban form and neighborhood design to the community and neighborhood levels through locally prepared plans that build on each neighborhood's attributes, emphasize quality of development, and provide or advocate "proactive" implementation programs.	<b>Consistent.</b> This objective is directed at the City rather than individual development projects and is related to a community planning standard. However, onsite development would support this policy insofar as it would provide activity, diversity, and density in the community. Onsite development would increase pedestrian activity in the area, particularly along 1 <sup>st</sup> Street, and take advantage of the adjacent Little Tokyo/Arts District Metro Gold Line station to encourage alternative transit use.
<b>Objective 5.2</b> Encourage future development in centers and in nodes along corridors that are served by transit and are already functioning as centers for the surrounding neighborhoods, the community, or the region.	<b>Consistent.</b> The project site is located along 1 <sup>st</sup> Street and Alameda Street, two major corridors that serve as centers of activity for the Central City North and Little Tokyo communities. The site is also immediately adjacent to the Little Tokyo/Arts District Metro Gold Line station and is within about 1,200 feet of the 101 Freeway. As such, onsite development would be located in an area that is well served by local and regional transit.
<b>Policy 5.2.2.c:</b> Regional Centers should contain pedestrian oriented areas.	<b>Consistent.</b> Onsite development would include a mix of residential and non-residential uses and is expected to be designed to encourage pedestrian activity both internally and between the project site and nearby uses. Development would be expected to include enhanced sidewalks and landscaping along street frontages in order to facilitate pedestrian activity.
<b>Objective 5.5:</b> Enhance the livability of all neighborhoods by upgrading the quality of development and improving the quality of the public realm.	<b>Consistent.</b> Onsite development would be expected to generally enhance the livability of the community by replacing a vacant building and surface parking lot with a mixed use development that would provide street-level amenities including open space, landscaping, ground floor commercial, display windows, building articulation and other amenities. As noted above, it is anticipated that site development would involve enhancements to adjacent sidewalks and other elements of the public realm.

**Table 4.1-2  
Consistency with Central City North Community Plan  
Urban Design Goals, Objectives, and Policies**

<b>Goal, Objective, Policy</b>	<b>Analysis of Consistency</b>
<p><b><u>Commercial Site Planning</u></b></p> <p>Structures shall be oriented toward the main commercial street where a parcel is located and shall avoid pedestrian/vehicular conflicts by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Locating surface parking to the rear of structures</li> <li>b) Minimizing the number of widths of driveways providing sole access to the rear of commercial lots</li> <li>c) Maximizing retail and commercial service areas along frontages of commercial developments</li> <li>d) Providing front pedestrian entrances for businesses fronting on main commercial streets</li> <li>e) Providing through arcades from the front of buildings to rear parking for projects within wide frontages</li> <li>f) Providing landscaping strips between driveways and walkways accessing the rear properties</li> <li>g) Providing speed bumps for driveways paralleling walkways of more than 50 feet</li> <li>h) Requiring site plans which include ancillary structures, service areas, pedestrian walkways, vehicular paths, loading areas, drop off and landscaped areas</li> <li>i) Providing where feasible, the under grounding of new utility service</li> </ul>	<p><b>Consistent.</b> Although a specific site plan has not been developed at this time, it is anticipated that the mixed use development onsite would generally comply with applicable commercial site planning principles. It is anticipated that onsite parking would be primarily subterranean and that retail and commercial service areas would front on commercial streets, including 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Alameda Street. Pedestrian walkways, vehicular paths, loading and drop off areas would be provided as appropriate and site development would be required to comply with applicable landscape standards and undergrounding utilities.</p>
<p><b><u>Commercial Height and Building Design</u></b></p> <p>The mass, proportion, and scale of all new buildings and remodels shall be at a pedestrian scale in order to ensure that a project avoids large sterile expanses of building walls, is designed in harmony with the surrounding neighborhood, and creates a stable environment with a pleasant and desirable character. Accordingly, the following policies are proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Requiring the use of articulation, recesses, surface perforations, and porticoes to break up long, flat building facades</li> <li>b) Providing accenting, complementary building materials to building facades</li> <li>c) Maximizing the application of architectural features or articulations to building facades</li> <li>d) Screening of mechanical and electrical equipment from public view</li> <li>e) Requiring the enclosure of trash areas for all projects</li> <li>f) Requiring freestanding walls to use articulation, recesses, surface perforations, porticoes to break up long freestanding walls</li> </ul>	<p><b>Inconsistent.</b> It is anticipated that site development would generally be consistent with the policies relating to architectural features, building materials, articulation, and screening of equipment and trash areas. The mixed use development would also generally be expected to improve the pedestrian character of the site as compared to existing conditions. However, as discussed above, the scale of the development (up to 16 stories in height) could be considered out of character with the 1<sup>st</sup> Street corridor, which is characterized largely by 1-2-story commercial development. The site vicinity is undergoing a transition toward greater development intensity and height; however, even newer more intensive development (such as the 5-story multi-family residential development immediately south of the project site) is all less than 10 stories in height. The potential inconsistency with the neighborhood scale could be considered an inconsistency with this policy. Mitigation Measure AES-2(d) addresses this potential inconsistency.</p>
<p><b><u>Commercial Parking Structures</u></b></p> <p>Parking structures shall be integrated with the design of the buildings they serve through:</p>	<p><b>Consistent.</b> It is anticipated that onsite parking would be primarily subterranean. As such, these requirements do not apply. Surface parking would incorporate</p>



**Table 4.1-2  
Consistency with Central City North Community Plan  
Urban Design Goals, Objectives, and Policies**

<b>Goal, Objective, Policy</b>	<b>Analysis of Consistency</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Designing parking structure exteriors to match the style, materials and colors of the main building</li> <li>b) Maximizing commercial uses, if appropriate, on the ground floor</li> <li>c) Landscaping to screen structures not architecturally integrated with the main building</li> <li>d) Utilizing decorative walls and landscaping to buffer residential uses from parking structures</li> </ul>	landscaping as appropriate.
<p><b><u>Commercial Surface Parking Landscaping</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Devoting at minimum 7% of total surface area of surface parking lots to landscaping</li> <li>b) Providing a landscaped buffer along public streets adjoining residential uses, and between residential uses and parking lots</li> </ul>	<b>Consistent.</b> Onsite parking is anticipated to be primarily subterranean. However, it is anticipated that any surface parking onsite would comply with these requirements. Mitigation Measure AES-2(f) would ensure consistency.
<p><b><u>Commercial Light and Glare</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Installing on-site lighting along all pedestrian walkways and vehicular access ways</li> <li>b) Shielding and directing of on-site lighting onto driveways and walkways, directed away from adjacent residential uses</li> </ul>	<b>Consistent.</b> Onsite lighting would comply with applicable lighting requirements of Section 19.20.100 of the Municipal Code. It is anticipated that compliance with Code requirements would achieve consistency with these policies. Mitigation Measures AES-3(a) and (b) would ensure consistency.
<p><b><u>Commercial Mixed Use</u></b></p> <p>Maximize commercial uses on the ground floor by requiring 10% of commercial development to serve needs of the residential portion of the buildings.</p>	<b>Consistent.</b> It is anticipated that this requirement would be met with onsite mixed use development. Mitigation Measure AES-2(e) would ensure consistency.
<p><b><u>Pedestrian Oriented Districts</u></b></p> <p>Structures shall be oriented toward the main commercial street where a parcel is located and shall avoid pedestrian/vehicular conflicts by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Locating surface parking to the rear of structures</li> <li>b) Minimizing the number of widths of driveways providing sole access to the rear of commercial lots</li> <li>c) Maximizing retail and commercial service areas along frontages of commercial developments</li> <li>d) Providing front pedestrian entrances for businesses fronting on main commercial streets</li> <li>e) Providing through arcades from the front of buildings to rear parking for projects within wide frontages</li> <li>f) Providing landscaping strips between driveways and walkways accessing the rear of properties</li> <li>g) Providing speed bumps for driveways paralleling walkways of more than 50 feet</li> <li>h) Requiring site plans which include ancillary structures, service areas, pedestrian walkways, vehicular paths, loading areas, drop off and landscaped areas</li> <li>i) Providing where feasible, the under grounding of</li> </ul>	<b>Consistent.</b> As discussed above, it is anticipated that the mixed use development onsite would generally comply with applicable commercial site planning principles. It is anticipated that onsite parking would be subterranean and that retail and commercial service areas would front on commercial streets, including 1 <sup>st</sup> Street and Alameda Street. Pedestrian walkways, vehicular paths, loading and drop off areas would be provided as appropriate and site development would be required to comply with applicable landscape standards and undergrounding utilities.





**Table 4.1-2  
Consistency with Central City North Community Plan  
Urban Design Goals, Objectives, and Policies**

<b>Goal, Objective, Policy</b>	<b>Analysis of Consistency</b>
new utility service	
<p><b><u>Multiple Residential Site Planning</u></b></p> <p>All multi-family residential projects of five or more units shall be designed around a landscaped focal point or courtyard to serve as an amenity for residents and the following goals are proposed:</p> <p>a) Requiring useable open space for outdoor activities, especially for children</p>	<p><b>Consistent.</b> It is anticipated that the residential component(s) of onsite development would provide useable open space. Mitigation Measure AES-2(g) would ensure consistency with this policy.</p>
<p><b><u>Multiple Residential Design</u></b></p> <p>The design of all buildings shall be of a quality and character that improves community appearance by avoiding excessive variety and monotonous repetition. Achievement of this can be accomplished through:</p> <p>a) Requiring the use of articulation, recess, or perforations of surfaces to break up long, flat building facades</p> <p>b) Utilizing complementary building materials in building facades</p> <p>c) Integrating building fixtures, awnings, security gates, etc. into the design of a building</p> <p>d) Screening all rooftop equipment and building appurtenances from adjacent properties</p>	<p><b>Inconsistent.</b> As noted above under “Commercial Height and Building Design,” it is anticipated that site development would generally be consistent with policies relating to architectural features, building materials, articulation, and screening of equipment. However, as discussed above, the scale of the development (up to 16 stories in height) could be considered out of character with the 1<sup>st</sup> Street corridor and, therefore, could be considered a potential inconsistency with this policy. Mitigation Measure AES-2(d) addresses this potential inconsistency.</p>
<p><b><u>Multiple Residential Parking Structures</u></b></p> <p>Parking structures shall be integrated with the design of the buildings they serve through:</p> <p>a) Designing parking structure exteriors to match the style, materials, and color of the main building</p> <p>b) Maximizing commercial uses on the ground floor</p> <p>c) Landscaping to screen parking structures not architecturally integrated with the main building</p> <p>d) Utilizing decorative walls and/or landscaping to buffer residential uses from parking structures</p>	<p><b>Consistent.</b> As noted above, it is anticipated that onsite parking would be primarily subterranean, with limited surface parking. As such, these requirements do not apply. In the event any parking structures are provided, they would be expected to comply with these requirements.</p>

**Mitigation Measures.**

*Standard Measures.* Onsite development would be required to comply with the following standard measures relating to rubbish, debris, graffiti, signs, and lighting.

**AES-2(a) Rubbish, Debris, Graffiti Control.** In order to minimize the potential for visual impacts relating to the presence of rubbish, debris, and graffiti, the following shall be implemented:



- *All onsite buildings, structures, and portions thereof, shall be maintained in a safe and sanitary condition and good repair, and free from graffiti, debris, rubbish, garbage, trash, overgrown vegetation or other similar material, pursuant to Municipal Code Section 91.8104.*
- *The exterior of all buildings and fences shall be free from graffiti when such graffiti is visible from a public street or alley, pursuant to Municipal Code Section 91,8104.15.*

**AES-2(b) Onsite Signage.** The following shall be implemented to ensure that onsite signage does not detract from the appearance of the project site:

- *On-site signs shall be limited to the maximum allowable under the LAMC.*
- *Multiple temporary signs in the store windows and along the building walls are not permitted.*

**AES-2(c) Landscaping.** To ensure that minimum landscape standards are met, all open areas not used for buildings, driveways, parking areas, recreational facilities, and walks shall be attractively landscaped and maintained in accordance with a landscape plan, including an automatic irrigation plan, prepared by a licensed landscape architect to the satisfaction of the decision maker.

*Site-Specific Measures.* In addition to the above standard measures, the following measures are required to address the potentially significant impact of onsite development relating to development scale and neighborhood compatibility, as well as the potential inconsistencies with the Central City North Community Plan.

**AES-2(d) Building Height Limitation.** In order to avoid conflicts with the scale and character of the 1<sup>st</sup> Street corridor, there shall be a building step back of 10 feet from 1<sup>st</sup> Street for every story above eight stories.

**AES-2(e) Ground Floor Commercial.** Commercial development shall be provided at the ground floor along the 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Alameda Street frontages. A minimum of 10% of onsite commercial development shall be neighborhood-serving commercial that serves the needs of onsite and other neighborhood residents.

**AES-2(f) Parking Lot Landscaping/Landscape Buffers.** The following shall be implemented in conjunction with onsite development:

- *A minimum of 7% of total surface area of any onsite surface parking lots shall be dedicated to landscaping*
- *Any surface parking shall be located in the interior of the lot. No parking shall abut a public right-of-way.*

**AES-2(g) Landscaped Focal Point.** Onsite development shall provide a landscaped focal point or courtyard to serve as an amenity for residents and the public that provides useable open space for outdoor activities.

**AES-2(h) HVAC Screening.** All onsite heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems shall be screened from view to the satisfaction of the Department of Building and Safety.

**Significance After Mitigation.** Implementation of the above standard requirements and additional site-specific measures would reduce impacts to a less than significant level. Notably, by limiting building height in the southern half of the project site, Measure AES-2(d) would address the potential scale impact associated with building height along the 1<sup>st</sup> Street corridor.

**Impact AES-3**    **Onsite development would add new sources of light and glare on and around the project site, due to the increased size and scale of development. However, because the project site is in a highly urbanized area already characterized by high light and glare levels, the incremental increase in lighting would not substantially alter light/glare conditions. Impacts related to light and glare would be *less than significant*.**

As discussed in the *Setting*, the project site vicinity is urban in character, with high levels of existing lighting. The nearest sensitive receptors are the multi-family residences immediately to the south across 1<sup>st</sup> Street and the Buddhist temple located about 300 feet to the east on the north side of 1<sup>st</sup> Street.

Onsite development would eliminate some existing light and glare sources and introduce new ones. The expansive surface parking lot that is currently present onsite, which generates glare due to the presence of both large amounts of pavement and parked cars, would be eliminated if the site is redeveloped with up to 1.2 million square feet of mixed use development. In addition, existing security lighting for the parking lot would be removed, eliminating a source of nighttime lighting.

Potential new sources of light and glare include:

- *New signs and exterior illumination for the commercial components of onsite development*
- *Reflective materials, including windows, on new buildings*
- *Vehicles entering and exiting onsite parking garages*

Because of the existing relatively high ambient lighting levels present in the site vicinity, onsite development would not be expected to substantially alter light or glare conditions. In addition, all onsite development would be required to comply with adopted City regulations that limit the intensity of night lighting. These regulations, discussed above under *Regulatory Setting*, specify that outdoor light standards must be designed to reflect the light away from any adjacent street or property and that exterior lighting may not generate direct glare or a light intensity greater than two foot-candles onto habitable and/or recreational uses. In addition, for

non-residential uses, the light source may not be visible from adjacent properties or the public right-of-way. Finally, the Planning Commission would have review and approval of authority over the architectural design, including the lighting plans for proposed development. Therefore, impacts related to lighting would be less than significant. Nevertheless, standard light and glare reduction methods are recommended below to further reduce the potential for light and glare generated onsite to adversely affect nearby receptors, particularly the residential uses immediately south of the site.

**Mitigation Measures.** Although significant light and glare impacts are not anticipated, the following measures are recommended to minimize the potential for light and glare impacts due to onsite development.

**AES-3(a) Light Shielding.** Outdoor lighting shall be designed and installed with shielding, so that the light source cannot be seen from adjacent residential properties.

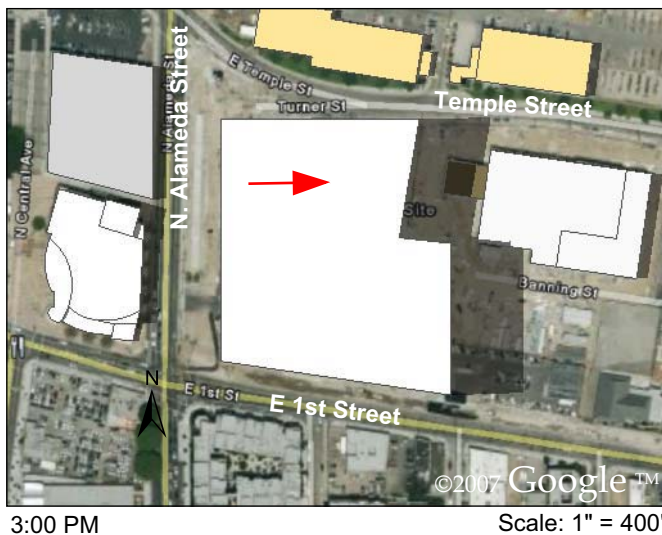
**AES-3(b) Non-Reflective Surfaces.** The exterior of onsite buildings shall be constructed of materials such as high-performance tinted non-reflective glass and pre-cast concrete or fabricated wall surfaces.

**Significance After Mitigation.** Light and glare impacts would be less than significant without mitigation. The recommended measures would further reduce light and glare impacts.

**Impact AES-4 Onsite development could cast shadows onto adjacent properties, particularly in the winter when shadows are most extreme. However, as no shadow-sensitive land uses would be shaded for extended periods, shadow impacts would be less than significant.**

Because no specific development is proposed at this time, potential shadow effects associated with onsite development were analyzed based on the tallest and most massive structure that could be built onsite. This was assumed to be a 16-story building that covers virtually the entire site. Shadows associated with such a structure are depicted on figures 4.1-4 and 4.1-5. It should be noted that it is unlikely that a 16-story structure would actually be built onsite. Moreover, even if a structure 16 stories in height were developed, it would not encompass the entire site. Therefore, figures 4.1-4 and 4.1-5 provide a “worst case” scenario that almost certainly overstates the actual effect of shadows generated by onsite development.

In general, shadows cast by buildings are longest at the winter solstice and shorten through the equinox periods until their shortest length during the summer solstice. The projected summer solstice (June 21) shadows are illustrated on Figure 4.1-4. During summer mornings, shadows would fall to the northwest, and would project onto Alameda Street and the Little Tokyo/ Arts District Metro Gold Line station along site’s western boundary (see 9 A.M image on Figure 4.1-4). However, shadows would not affect adjacent buildings along the west side of Alameda Street. As the day progresses, shadows would shorten and move northeast. At noon, shadows from onsite development would project only minimally onto Temple Street and would not affect any adjacent properties. By 3 P.M., shadows would be cast primarily to the east.



← Shadow Direction

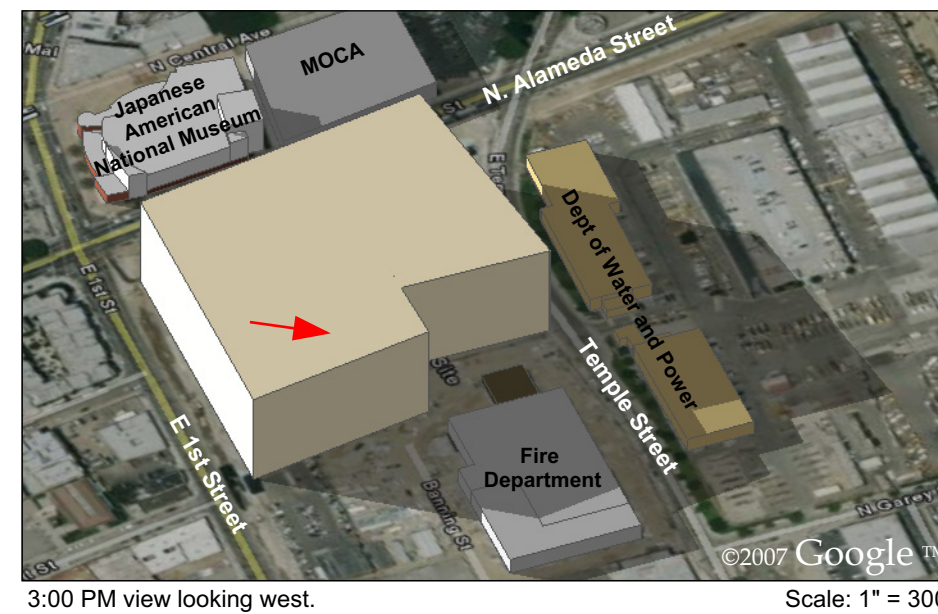
Note: 16-Story Building is depicted without architectural design to show maximum buildable area for shadow effects.

Aerial Source: Google Earth 2007,  
 Rincon Consultants, Inc., October 2009.

Summer Solstice Shadow - June 21st

Figure 4.1-4  
 City of Los Angeles





← Shadow Direction

Note: 16-Story Building is depicted without architectural design to show maximum buildable area for shadow effects.

Winter Solstice Shadow - December 21st

Portions of the adjacent City of Los Angeles Emergency Operations Center and the vacant property east of the project site along the north side of 1<sup>st</sup> Street would be shaded in the afternoon, but the shadow-sensitive uses farther east (primarily the Buddhist temple) would not be affected. At no time of day would shadow-sensitive residential uses south of the project site across 1<sup>st</sup> Street be affected by project-generated shadows. Because shadows would not affect any shadow-sensitive uses, shadow impacts would be less than significant during the summer.

Figure 4.1-5 shows winter solstice shadows that would be generated by onsite development. During winter mornings, as evidenced by the 9:00 A.M. image, shadows would fall to the northwest and would project onto both the Japanese American National Museum and the Museum of Contemporary Art. However, by 12:00 P.M., those buildings would no longer be shaded as shadows would extend to the north across Temple Street. Therefore, the two museums would be shaded for less than three hours. Although the DWP facility on the north side of Temple Street would be shaded for most of the afternoon, that facility is not shadow-sensitive. Portions of the City of Los Angeles Emergency Operations Center immediately east of the site along the south side of Temple Street could also be shaded for more than three hours in wintertime afternoons. However, that facility is not considered shadow-sensitive either. Shadow-sensitive uses to the south (multiple family residences) and farther east (Buddhist temple) would not be shaded at any time of day on the winter solstice. Because no shadow-sensitive use would be shaded for three or more hours between 9 A.M. and 3 P.M., impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures.** No mitigation is required, as onsite development would not result in significant shadow impacts.

**c. Cumulative Impacts.** In general, onsite development combined with other pending projects in site vicinity (see Table 3-1 in Section 3.0, *Environmental Setting*) would contribute toward creating a more intensely developed urban environment by adding more than 17,000 new residences as well as more than five million square feet of non-residential development. Among the planned and pending projects are two mixed use developments in the general vicinity of the project site: a project at 905 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street with 320 residences plus retail development and a project at 300 S. Santa Fe Avenue with 459 residences plus restaurant and retail uses. The cumulative impact of onsite development and other projects would be generally consistent with the City's plans for the area, as envisioned in the General Plan Framework and the Central City North Community Plan (see discussion under Impact AES-2). The cumulative change would be expected to generally enhance pedestrian activity in the area, especially along the 1<sup>st</sup> Street corridor. In this sense, the cumulative aesthetic impact associated with planned and pending development is anticipated to be generally beneficial. With recommended mitigation measures, onsite development would generally contribute to this cumulatively beneficial effect.

All planned and pending development would be subject to the lighting restrictions of the LAMC. Compliance with applicable requirements would address any potential cumulative light/glare impacts. As noted under Impacts AES-3, onsite development would not substantially contribute to any increase in light/glare.

Cumulative development of buildings of greater height would generally increase shadowing throughout the area. The shadow effects of individual buildings would need to be addressed

on a case-by-case basis since shadowing is dependent upon building height, massing, and location, as well as the immediately surrounding uses. In any event, shadow impacts associated with individual buildings are isolated in nature and do not contribute to additive effects on particular geographic locations. Moreover, as noted under Impact AES-4, onsite development would not create any significant shadow effects and, therefore, would not substantially contribute to any cumulative increase in shadowing.