# 1. AESTHETICS

In 2013, the State of California enacted Senate Bill 743 (SB 743), which made several changes to the California Environmental Quality Action (CEQA) for projects located in areas served by transit. Specifically, Public Resources Code Section 21099 provides that "aesthetic and parking impacts of a residential, mixed-use residential, or employment center project on an infill site within a transit priority area shall not be considered significant impacts on the environment." Public Resources Code Section 21099 defines a "transit priority area" as an area within one-half mile of a major transit stop that is "existing or planned, if the planned stop is scheduled to be completed within the planning horizon included in a Transportation Improvement Program adopted pursuant to Section 450.216 or 450.322 of Title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations." Public Resources Code Section 21064.3 defines "major transit stop" as "a site containing an existing rail transit station, a ferry terminal served by either a bus or rail transit service, or the intersection of two or more major bus routes with a frequency of service interval of 15 minutes or less during the morning and afternoon peak commute periods." Public Resources Code Section 21099 defines an infill site as a lot located within an urban area that has been previously developed, or on a vacant site where at least 75 percent of the perimeter of the site adjoins, or is separated only by an improved public right-of-way from, parcels that are developed with qualified urban uses. This state law supersedes the aesthetic impact thresholds set forth in the L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide.

The Project includes the development of two sites in Downtown Los Angeles. Site 1 development includes 222,574 square feet of mixed residential (382 dwelling units), philanthropic institution, and commercial retail land uses in two towers (Tower 1A and Tower 1B) and one level of subterranean parking garage with 32 vehicle parking spaces. Site 2 development includes 164,875 square feet of mixed-use residential (303 dwelling units) and commercial retail land uses in two buildings (Building 1 and Building 2) and 212 vehicle parking spaces in a parking garage. Extensive public bus and rail transit service is provided within the area of the Project Sites that provide regular service intervals of 15 minutes or less near the sites during the peak hours. Public bus transit service in the immediate Project study area is currently provided by Metro, City of Gardena Transit, and City of Montebello bus lines. Additional public bus transit service in the Downtown Los Angeles area is provided by Foothill Transit, LADOT DASH Transit Service, Orange County Transportation Authority, and Torrance Transit Service. The Metro Red and Gold rail lines also are provided in proximity to the Project Sites. Metro's nearest Purple/Red line station is the Pershing Square station, which is located approximately 0.7 miles northwest of the Project Sites, while the nearest Metro Gold Line station is situated approximately 0.8 miles northeast of the Project Sites at the Little Tokyo/Arts District station. Additionally, as noted in Section 2 (Project Description), the Project Sites are located less than 1.0 mile from Metro's Regional Connector 1st Street portal, which is currently under construction.

On February 10, 2016, the City issued Zoning Information File No. 2452 to clarify the locations of transit priority areas within the City, which restate that aesthetic impacts shall not be considered a significant impact on the environment under the provisions of SB 743 (refer to Appendix D). Specifically, Zoning Information File No. 2452 states that impacts to visual resources, aesthetic character, shade and shadow, light and glare, and scenic vistas or any other aesthetic impact, as defined in the City's L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide, shall not be considered an impact for infill projects within transit priority areas pursuant to CEQA. A map of transit priority areas is attached to Zoning Information File No. 2452 in Appendix D. As shown on that map, and as confirmed by the City's Zone Information and Map Access System (ZIMAS) website, the Project Sites are located in a transit priority area.

Thus, the Project's aesthetic (and parking) impacts are not considered significant impacts on the environment pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21099. Therefore, an assessment of the Project's potential aesthetics impacts is not required. Thus, the aesthetics pertaining to addressed in the Appendix # for **informational purposes only and not for impact analysis**.

**a) Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?**

**No impact pursuant to PRC 21099(d).**

**This discussion is for informational purposes only**.

A scenic vista generally provides focal views of objects, settings, or features of visual interest; or panoramic views of large geographic areas of scenic quality, primarily from a given vantage point. Scenic vistas are generally associated with public vantages. A significant impact may occur if the Project introduces incompatible visual elements within a field of view containing a scenic vista or substantially alters a view of a scenic vista.

The Project Sites are located in Downtown Los Angeles, a highly urbanized area of the City. Specifically, Site 1 is located at 554 South San Pedro Street and Site 2 is located at 600 South San Pedro Street. Site 1 is developed with a surface parking lot and a 7,000-square-foot food service building; Site 2 is developed with a surface parking lot. The area surrounding the Project Sites are developed with low-rise buildings associated with a variety of commercial and residential land uses, with some mid-rise buildings mixed in. The Weingart Center building to the south of Site 1 is 10 stories in height. Due to existing topography and urban development, views from within the vicinity of the Project Sites are limited to short- and mid-range views of existing structures; no scenic vistas are present from and/or near the Project Sites. For this reason, the Project would not have the potential to result in a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

**b) Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a scenic highway?**

**This discussion is for informational purposes only**.

The Project is not located along or near a state scenic highway

A total of 20 trees are located on the Site 1 and Site 2 (including 6 street trees). Additionally, 27 trees are located within the courtyard associated with the Weingart Association Center building to the south of Site 1, the site of the proposed transformer relocation. These trees include the following:

- 7 Indian Laurel Fig (*Ficus nitida*)[1]
- 6 Tipu Tree (*Tipuanan tipu*)
- 7 Apricot Tree (*Prunus armeniaca*)
- 3 Weeping Fig (*Ficus benjamina*)
- 1 Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*)
- 3 Canary Island Pine (*Pinus canariensis*)
- 9 Redbud Tree (*Cercis Canadensis*)

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[1] *Six of these trees are street trees.*

- 10 Australian Tea Tree (*Leptospermum laevigatum*)
- 1 Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*)

None of these trees are protected species as defined by the City's Projected Tree Ordinance No. 177,404(refer to the Tree Reports in Appendix E). The 20 trees (including the 6 street trees) associated with Site 1 and Site 2 would be removed during construction of the Project. Also, while a maximum of 27 trees in the courtyard (the site of the proposed transformer relocation) may be removed, it is anticipated that fewer trees would be removed.

Prior to the removal of trees located within the public right-of-way, the Project Applicant would be required to obtain approval by way of a Tree Removal Permit from the Board of Public Works for the removal and replacement of said trees. Street trees would be required to be removed and replaced as required by the Urban Forestry Division and the Board of Public Works. The landscape plans for the Project shall identify the all trees that would be removed. Compliance with the City's requirements would ensure no significant impacts related to scenic resources, in particular trees, would occur.

As discussed in greater detail under Section 6(a) of Section 6 (Sustainable Communities Environmental Impact Analysis) of the SCEA and in the Historic Resources Memo in Appendix G, the existing building on Site 1 is listed in the National, California Register of Historical Resources, or the City's local register due to lack of significance as well as a lack of integrity, nor is it eligible for designation as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument. In addition, the Project would not result in any significant direct or indirect impacts to the El Rey Hotel (a historical resources) located adjacent to Site 1. The El Rey Hotel has been adaptively reused and is now operating as the Hope Row Resource Center and Weingart Center Association, a 10-story facility with housing, clinical, and legal support services. For these reasons, the Project would not substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a scenic highway.

**c) Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?**

**No impact pursuant to PRC 21099(d).**

**This discussion is for informational purposes only**.

The Project Sites are located in Downtown Los Angeles. Site 1 is developed with a surface parking lot and a food service building. Views of Site 1 are shown on Figure 2-4 in Section 2 (Project Description). Adjacent properties are improved with a variety of uses, including homeless and residential support services as well as warehouses. The property to the south of Site 1 is improved with the Hope Row Resource Center and the Weingart Center Association. The property to the north of the site is the Lamp Community and the Volunteer of America property, both of which provide social services. The property to the west, across San Pedro Street, is the Central City Community Church and the Union Rescue Mission, both of which also provide social services. The property to the east, across Crocker Street, is a surface parking lot and Sam Dae Enterprises, a light industrial use. Views of the land uses surrounding Site 1 are shown on Figure 2-5 in Section 2 (Project Description).

Site 2 is developed with a surface parking lot. Views of Site 2 are shown on Figure 2-6 in Section 2 (Project Description). The property the north of Site 2, across 6$^{th}$ Street, is improved with the Hope Row Resource Center and the Weingart Center Association. The property to the west is improved with the Midnight Mission, a homeless services organization. The property to the south of is improved with a

warehouse. The property to the east improved with a 4-story transitional housing facility. Views of the land uses surrounding Site 2 are shown on Figure 2-7.

The visual character of the area surrounding the Project Sites is characterized by high-density, primarily low-rise development, including a mix of land uses and development that varies in age and architecture. Mid-rise buildings are interspersed throughout the area in the vicinity of the Project Sites. Additionally, the Weingart Center building to the south of Site 1 is 10 stories in height.

The Site 1 Project includes removal of the existing food service building and surface parking area from the site and development of 222,574 square feet of mixed residential (382 dwelling units), philanthropic institution, and commercial retail land uses in two towers (Tower 1A and Tower 1B) and one level of subterranean parking garage with 32 vehicle parking spaces. Site plans for the Site 1 Project are included as Figures 2-9 through 2-46. Tower 1A would be 18 stories, reaching 200 feet in height, and Tower 1B would be 12 stories, reaching 132 feet in height. The Site 2 Project includes 164,875 square feet of mixed-use residential (303 dwelling units) and commercial retail and office land uses in two buildings (Building 1 and Building 2) and 212 vehicle parking spaces in a parking garage. Site plans for the Site 2 Project are included as Figures 2-47 through 2-64. Building 1 would 19 stories, reaching 219 feet and 6 inches in height, and Building 2 would be 4 stories, reaching 57 feet in height.

As shown on Figures 2-31 through 2-34, Figures 2-45 and 2-46, and Figures 2-60 through 2-63 in Section 2 (Project Description), the architecture of the buildings would be modern. Building materials that would be used would include concrete, metal, and glass (refer to Figure 2-37). On Site 1, the two towers are designed to integrate simplicity to add to the urban fabric of the Skid Row area. Durable and high-quality concrete, metal, and glass are interwoven into the architecture of the building to create a relaxed modern elegance. The towers are segmented into top, middle, and base portions to help break up the mass of the buildings. The bases of the buildings have been designed to have transparent ground floors with floor-to-ceiling storefront windows. The intent is to create a more activated street frontage, allowing for a better pedestrian experience. The higher ceiling heights and storefront window system creates a transition for an appropriate pedestrian scale. The entries to all buildings have been inset to create a break in the front building façade and add an element of interest. The middle portion of the buildings highlights the use of concrete and metal panels creating changes in the horizontal and vertical plane. Variations of green are introduced to create a complex pattern on the facades. Metal trim is used to add depth and to accentuate the cutout portions for the courtyards. The combination of the materials and their placement allows for interesting shadow lines to be produced. Lastly, the top portions of the buildings use a trellis system over the open space and a window wall system to create a lighter feel to the upper portion of the towers.

The floor plates of the towers on Site 1 have been setback from the neighboring property lines. The setback allows for pedestrian access along the proposed paseos and to minimize impacts on the adjacent neighbors. The setback breaks up the front façade on both South San Pedro and South Crocker Streets, giving a bit of relief to the neighboring buildings. The building would observe a zero-foot setback from the property line along South San Pedro Street and would observe a zero-foot setback along South Crocker Street after a three-foot dedication is provided to the City. Additionally, at various levels, terraces have been placed at the corners of the building to give depth and relief of the overall form of the building.

On Site 2, the tower and parking structure would be designed similarly to Site 1, but with enough contrast to clearly distinguish the buildings from one another. High-quality materials would be utilized, such as concrete, metal and glass. The materials would be varied in color, finish, and/or application. The design would echo the same segmentation demonstrated in the Site 1 Project into top, middle, and base portions

to break up the mass. The base of the building would have transparent ground floor with floor-to-ceiling storefront windows. The retail lining the parking structure along South San Pedro Street would have the same treatment as on Site 1, allowing for maximum street activation. The tower entry would be inset in the front building façade. The top portion of the building also would include trellis and transparent window wall systems with a varied in application.

The floor plate of the tower on Site 2 would be set back three feet from the existing property line to allow for the Project's street dedication to the City. The tower and parking structure would be sited on the property line along South San Pedro Street. The east side of the site would include a ground level plaza that would create new open space adjacent to the existing buildings and would distance the parking structure away from neighboring buildings on the east and southeast.

The parking structure on Site 2 would provide required parking for residents and office workers and would also accommodate the existing parking demand as measured in the Project's parking demand study.[2] The structure would be wrapped in metal paneling, similar to the adjacent residential tower with the addition of windows in the stairwells to bring in light. The paneling is designed to obstruct the view of vehicles parked on the four-story parking structure. A portion of the fourth level provides an additional open space area, allowing for large group activities.

Although the Project would alter the visual character of the Project Sites and the surrounding area, the Project is consistent with the general urban character of the surrounding area and existing uses in the vicinity and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the sites and its surroundings. Pursuant to SB 743, the Project's aesthetics impacts would not be considered significant.

**d) Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?**

**No impact pursuant to PRC 21099(d).**

**This discussion is for informational purposes only:**

Site 1 is developed with a surface parking lot and a food service building; Site 2 is developed with a surface parking lot. The surrounding area is fully developed with low and high-density land uses and roadway and utility infrastructure, all of which produce light and glare (e.g., indoor/outdoor lighting, windows, light-colored surfaces, etc.) typical of such urban uses in the City. No protected or scenic nighttime views are available from the area of the Project Sites, due to existing terrain, development, and lighting. Project building materials would include non-reflective glass and metal and stucco. Consistent with applicable energy and building code requirements, including Section 140.3 of the California Energy Code as may be amended, glass with coatings required to meet the Energy Code requirements shall be permitted. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the type or categories of all exterior glass and architectural features on the building façades and rooftops would be submitted for review to the Department of the Building and Safety to ensure that highly reflective materials are not utilized, and thus the project would not result in a substantial new source of glare that would adversely affect daytime views in the area.

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[2] *Weingart Projects – Parking Needs Assessment for the 600 South San Pedro Street Site, LLG Engineers, June 18, 2018. Refer to Appendix C.*

Additionally, the Project would include interior and exterior building lighting, lighted signage, and street/pedestrian pathway lighting that would comply with the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) provision that requires minimizing the effect of the new sources of lighting. Specifically, LAMC Section 93.0117 requires that no person shall construct, establish, create, or maintain any stationary exterior light source that may cause residential or recreational and open space areas to be either illuminated by more than three foot-candles 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 are in the field of view. Consequently, no substantial changes in nighttime illumination would occur that would adversely affect nighttime views in the area and prevent spillover lighting. For these reasons, the Project would not create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. Pursuant to SB 743, the Project's aesthetics impacts would not be considered significant.

**Shade/Shadow**

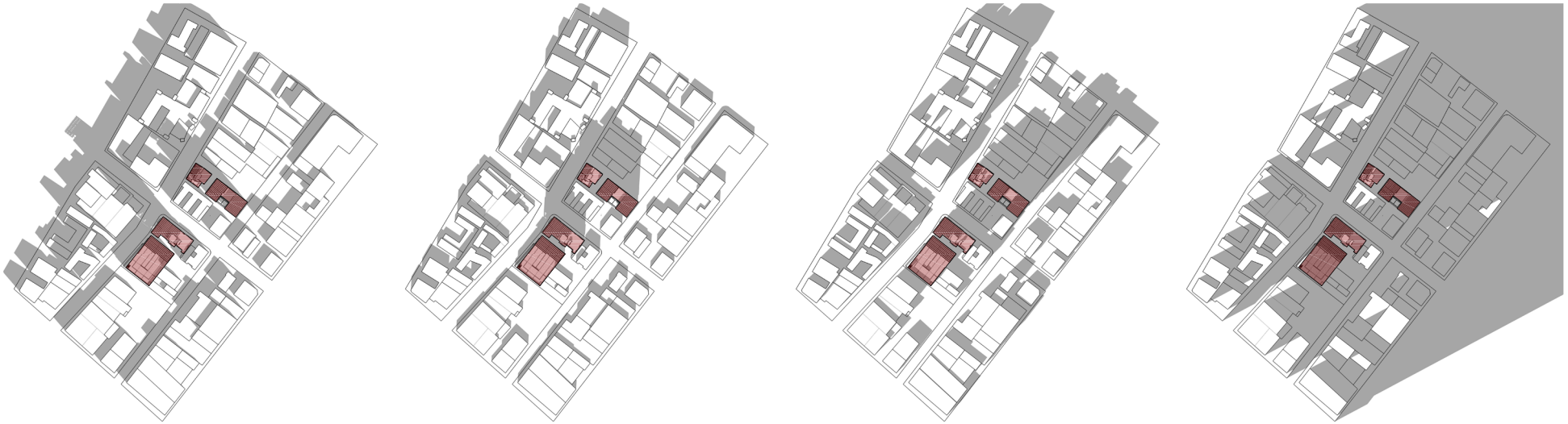
The issue of shade and shadow pertains to the blockage of direct sunlight by project buildings, which may affect adjacent properties. Shading is an important environmental issue because the users or occupants of certain land uses have some reasonable expectations for direct sunlight and warmth from the sun. These land uses are termed "shadow-sensitive." Shadow lengths are dependent on the height and size of the building from which they are cast and the angle of the sun. The angle of the sun varies with respect to the rotation of the earth (i.e. time of day) and elliptical orbit (i.e. change in seasons). The longest shadows are cast during the winter months and the shortest shadows are cast during the summer months.

***Winter and Summer Solstice***

"Solstice" is defined as either of the two points on the ecliptic (i.e., the path of the earth around the sun) that lie midway between the equinoxes (separated from them by an angular distance of 90°). At the solstices, the sun's apparent position on the celestial sphere reaches its greatest distance above or below the celestial equator, about 23 1/2° of the arc. At winter solstice, about December 22, the sun is overhead at noon at the Tropic of Capricorn; this marks the beginning of winter in the Northern Hemisphere. At the time of summer solstice, about June 22, the sun is directly overhead at noon at the Tropic of Cancer. In the Northern Hemisphere, the longest day and shortest night of the year occur on this date, marking the beginning of summer. Measuring shadow lengths for the winter and summer solstices represents the extremes of the shadow patterns that occur throughout the year. Shadows cast on the summer solstice are the shortest shadows during the year, becoming progressively longer until winter solstice when the shadows are the longest they are all year.

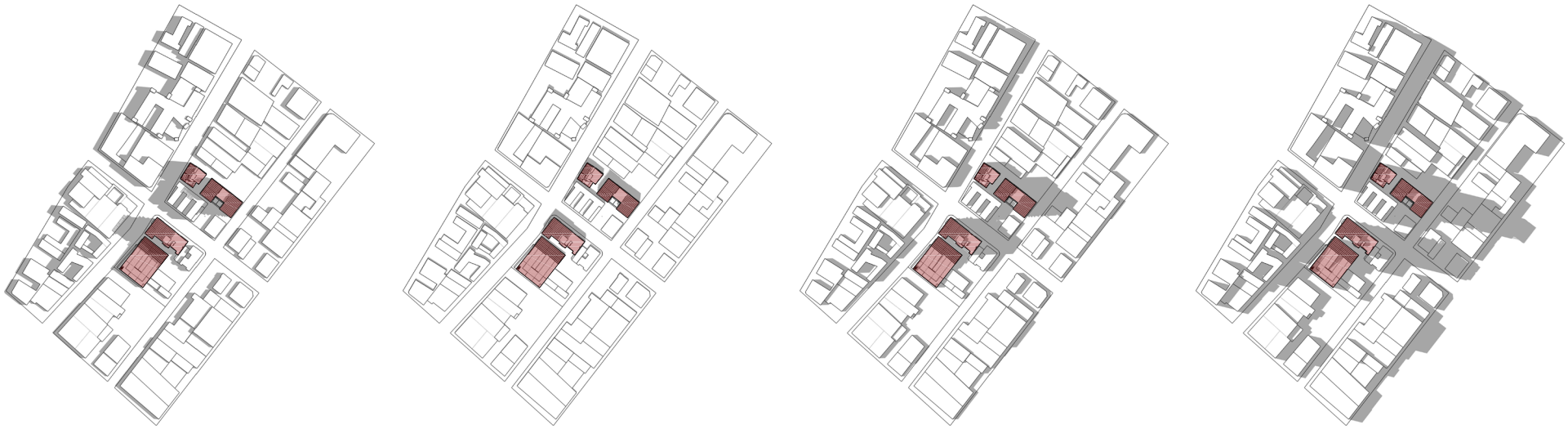
***Sensitive Uses***

Sensitive uses include: routinely useable outdoor spaces associated with residential, recreational, or institutional (e.g., schools, convalescent homes) land uses; commercial uses such as pedestrian-oriented outdoor spaces or restaurants with outdoor eating areas; nurseries; and existing solar collectors. These uses are considered sensitive because sunlight is important to function, physical comfort, or commerce.



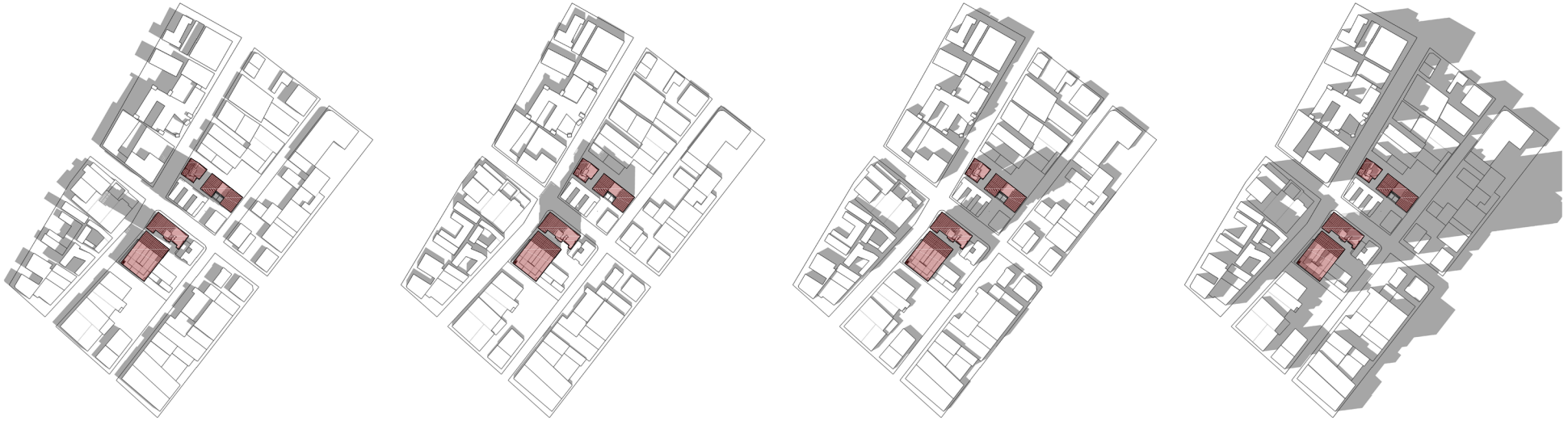

Source: JWDA, 2018.

Figure 1-1
Project Shadows - Winter Solstice




Source: JWDA, 2018.

Figure 1-2
Project Shadows - Summer Solstice




Source: JWDA, 2018.

Figure 1-3
Project Shadows - Equinox

Shadow-sensitive uses in the vicinity of the Project Sites include an outdoor yard and patio area associated with the Volunteers of America property, located to the north of Site 1 (refer to Figures 1-1 through 1-3). The outdoor yard and patio area is located on the eastern portion of the property, along South Crocker Street. The proposed Tower 1A building, which is located along South Crocker Street, would be setback approximately 10 feet from the northern property line of Site 1 and the outdoor yard and patio area. No shade sensitive land uses are located in proximity to Site 2.

***Thresholds of Significance***

A project impact would normally be considered significant if shadow-sensitive uses would be shaded by project-related structures for more than three hours between the hours of 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM Pacific Standard Time (between late October and early April), or for more than four hours between the hours of 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM Pacific Daylight Time (between early April and late October).[3]

**Shadow Analysis**

***Winter Solstice***

Depictions of the Project's winter shadows are provided in Figure 1-1. As shown, Tower 1A would cast shadow on some portion or all of the outdoor yard and patio area of the Volunteers of America property between the hours of 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM, exceeding the City's significance threshold of casting shadow for more than three hours between the hours of 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM (between late October and early April). Pursuant to SB 743, the Project's aesthetics impacts would not be considered significant.

***Summer Solstice***

Depictions of the Project's summer shadows are provided as Figure 1-2. As shown, Tower 1A would cast shadow on some portion or all of the outdoor yard and patio area of the Volunteers of America property between the hours of 12:00 PM and 5:00 PM, exceeding the City's significance threshold of casting shadow for more than four hours between the hours of 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM (between early April and late October). Pursuant to SB 743, the Project's aesthetics impacts would not be considered significant.

***Equinox***

Depictions of the Project's equinox shadows are provided as Figure 1-3. As shown, Tower 1A would cast shadow on some portion or all of the outdoor yard and patio area of the Volunteers of America property between the hours of 12:00 PM and 5:00 PM, exceeding the City's significance threshold of casting shadow for more than four hours between the hours of 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM (between early April and late October) and for more than three hours between the hours of 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM (between late October and early April). Pursuant to SB 743, the Project's aesthetics impacts would not be considered significant.

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[3] *As discussed previously, due to SB 743 and Zoning Information File No. 2452, the Project's aesthetics impacts, including those related to shade/shadow, are considered less than significant. This threshold of significance is included here for informational purposes only.*