Technical Report
LAX Master Plan EIS/EIR

11. Design, Art and Architecture Application/Aesthetics Technical Report

January 2001

Prepared for:

Los Angeles World Airports
U.S. Department of Trasnportation
Federal Aviation Administration

Prepared by:

PCR Services Corporation

Table of Contents

List of Figures

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report assesses the existing aesthetic quality and views at the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) and in surrounding areas. This report has been prepared in support of the Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the LAX Master Plan pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act. This report supplements the EIS/EIR's analysis of the potential for the LAX Master Plan Alternatives to impact aesthetic quality and views at LAX and in surrounding areas through a comparison of environmental baseline conditions to conditions proposed under the LAX Master Plan No Action/No Project Alternative and build alternatives. The report discusses relevant standards, plans, regulations and guidelines; existing aesthetic and view conditions; methodology; and, thresholds of significance.

2.0 GENERAL APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Impacts on aesthetics and views, for the EIS/EIR, will be determined by comparing existing visual conditions on and around the airport with conditions expected under each of the LAX Master Plan alternatives. Existing visual conditions were documented through a series of site tours that involved photo-reconnaissance to record views from key vantage points on and around the airport. Key vantage points included scenic or valued views, views along major roadways, and other observation points where substantial visual change would occur with implementation of the Master Plan alternatives. As several areas of the airport have been subject to new development or visual enhancement since the EIS/EIR baseline year of 1996, descriptions of visual conditions in certain areas reflect more recent conditions.

Establishing the basis for the analysis also involved collection and review of existing plans and guidelines in effect at LAX that address design, architecture and landscaping. These plans, which include the LAX Street Frontage and Landscape Plan, the LAX Air Cargo Facilities Design Guidelines, and the LAX Interim Plan, are discussed in detail in this report. These plans present current standards for development at LAX which are assumed to be incorporated as minimum expectation for development under Master Plan alternatives. Additionally, Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) staff were contacted to gain an understanding of current beautification and enhancement efforts and current processes for architectural and design review.

The specificity with which future visual conditions can be forecasted is a function of the level of detail in project plans. Because final design plans are not available at this point in the planning process, the analysis in this section is based on the conceptual site plans provided in Chapter 3, *Alternatives* (including Proposed Action). Generally, impacts will be considered significant where scenic or valued views would be blocked or where the loss of visual resources or where the introduction of contrasting features would degrade aesthetic quality within the study area. As the site plans are conceptual and do not incorporate architectural detail, projected effects on views and aesthetics will be based on the proposed locations of development, maximum building heights and massing, and on the location and extent of landscape buffers and open space. Setbacks from streets and surrounding land uses will, at a minimum, be expected to follow current airport standards and guidelines except in areas where the Master Plan alternatives indicate otherwise.

Specific methodology will be employed in the EIS/EIR for assessing both aesthetic impacts (degradation of visual quality), and view impacts (loss or diminishment of important views). Impacts on aesthetics will be considered adverse where the project would result in the loss of scenic natural features or areas, the removal of urban features with aesthetic value, or the introduction of contrasting urban features into valued natural areas or urban settings. Scenic natural features could include open space, vegetation, topography and natural water sources. Urban features contributing to valued aesthetic character could include structures of architectural or historic significance, public plazas, art or gardens, heritage trees, consistent design elements (such as setbacks, massing, height, and signage), pedestrian amenities and landscaped medians or park areas.[1] While the loss of valued natural or urban features can be somewhat easily assessed, impacts associated with the introduction of negatively contrasting features into aesthetically valued areas are more difficult to assess. As a result, certain terminology and methods in this report and in the EIS/EIR section are drawn from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Contrast Rating System to lend a greater degree of objectivity to the analysis.[2]

---

1 City of Los Angeles, Draft Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide, L.1. Aesthetics, May 14,1998.

2 U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Manual 8431, Visual Resource Contrast Rating, November 14, 1986.

To assess contrasts between proposed and existing conditions, basic features (i.e., landform/water, vegetation, and structures) and basic elements (i.e., form, line, color, and texture) are identified with the significance of change then based on how dissimilar introduced features and elements would be to those continuing to exist in the landscape. Contrast is assessed from the most critical viewpoints, which included scenic or valued views, as well as views along commonly traveled routes and at key observation points. The degree of contrast is defined as follows:

- None - The contrast is not visible or perceived.
- Little or Weak - The contrast can be seen but does not attract attention.
- Moderate - The contrast begins to attract attention and begins to dominate the characteristic landscape.
- Strong - The contrast demands attention, will not be overlooked, and is dominant in the landscape.

Factors considered when evaluating contrast include the following:

- Distance - The contrast created by a project usually is less as viewing distance increases.
- Angle of observation - The apparent size of a project is directly related to the angle between the viewer's line-of-sight and the slope upon which the project is to take place. As this angle nears 90 degrees (vertical and horizontal), the maximum area is viewable.
- Length of time the project is in view - If the viewer has only a brief glimpse of the project, the contrast may not be of great concern. If, however, the project is subject to view for a long period, as from an overlook, the contrast may be very significant.
- Relative size, scale and spatial relationships as compared to the surroundings. The contrast created by the project is directly related to its size and scale and its spatial relationships as compared to the surroundings in which it is located.

In addressing view blockage, the analysis In the EIS/EIR will focus on valued focal or panoramic views, and views from scenic highways or major roadways. The potential for blockage or substantial diminishment of scenic or ocean views from primary vantages within certain residential and commercial areas will also be assessed. Panoramic views or vistas provide visual access to a large geographic area, for which the field of view can be wide and extend into the distance. Panoramic views might include an urban skyline, valley, mountain range, and ocean or other water bodies. Focal views focus on a particular object, scene, setting, or feature of visual interest. Focal views might include arriving and departing aircraft, natural landforms, public art/signs, individual buildings, and heritage trees or unique urban landscape features.[3] Significance of view blockage in the EIS/EIR will be determined based on consideration of the quality or importance of the view, portion of the field of view obstructed, and the duration of the obstruction where views along roadways are at issue.

In terms of aesthetic and view conditions, individuals respond differently to changes in the visual environment and that an adverse visual scene to one person may represent an improved visual condition to another. As a result, the assessment of aesthetics and views is necessarily influenced by a degree of subjectivity.

3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE

LAWA exerts land use control over the aesthetic enhancement and development of its own properties. The westerly portion of the airport property also falls within the jurisdiction of the California Coastal Commission and is subject to policies that promote preservation of particular scenic qualities. The following plans and guidelines address aesthetic and visual considerations, and are applicable to the proposed LAX Master Plan alternatives.

[3] City of Los Angeles, Draft Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide, L.2. Obstruction of Views, May 14,1998.

FAA Requirements for Design, Art, and Architecture

The FAA Airport Environmental Handbook sets forth design, art, and architecture considerations that should be evaluated in an EIS. These include:

- The adverse effects of encroachment onto residential or recreation areas, or disruption of scenic vistas.
- Actions which involve extensive earthmoving, disrupting landscape visible from great distances.
- The reflection of notable architectural, cultural, or ethnic assets of a region in the design of new facilities or terminal expansion. Such influences may be reflected in interior design, landscaping or architectural treatment.
- Relocation of streams or other water courses.
- Application of the principles of good design, art, and architectural treatment in anything that interfaces between airport facilities and the public.

California Coastal Act of 1976

The LAX property, between Vista del Mar and Pershing Drive, is located within the California Coastal Zone and falls under the regulations and policies of the California Coastal Act. The Coastal Act recognizes that the coastal zone is a distinct and valuable resource and that the permanent protection of the state's natural and scenic resources is of paramount concern to present and future residents of the state. One of the basic goals of the Coastal Act is to protect, maintain, enhance and restore the overall quality of the coastal zone environment. Article 6, Section 3051 of the Act provides the following relevant policy: The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of the surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. New development in highly scenic areas, such as those designated in the California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation and by local government, shall be subordinate to the character of its setting.

Los Angeles Citywide General Plan Framework

The Los Angeles Citywide General Plan Framework, adopted July 17, 1997, provides a broad policy for promoting urban form and neighborhood design. The General Plan Framework sets forth a specific policy for areas identified as Centers. Within the General Plan Framework, Century Boulevard corridor, between La Cienega Boulevard and the entrance to the airport Central Terminal Area, west of Sepulveda Boulevard, is designated as the LAX/Century Boulevard Regional Center. According to the General Plan Framework, Centers contain a distinct identity and can be made more aesthetic and livable through the implementation of urban landscape and appropriate development scale. The Policies from the Framework that apply to Centers are listed below.

- **Policy 5.1.2.** Use the Community Plan update process and related efforts to define the character of communities and neighborhoods at a finer grain that the Framework permits.
- **Policy 5.2.1.** Designate centers and districts in locations where activity is already concentrated and/or where good transit service is, or will be, provided.
- **Policy 5.2.2.** Encourage the development of centers, districts, and selected corridor/boulevard nodes such that the land uses, scale, and built form allowed and/or encouraged within these areas allow them to function as centers and support transit use, both in daytime and nighttime. Additionally, develop these areas so that they are compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Policy 5.8.1.** Buildings in pedestrian-oriented districts and centers should have the following general characteristics: (a) An exterior building wall high enough to define the street, create a sense of enclosure, and is typically located along the sidewalk; (b) A building more or less continuous along the street frontage; (c) Ground floor building frontage designed to accommodate commercial uses, community facilities, or display cases; (d) Shops with entrances directly accessible from the sidewalk and located at frequent intervals; (e) Well lit exteriors fronting on the sidewalk that provide safety and comfort commensurate with the intended nighttime use, when appropriate; (f) Ground floor building walls devoted to display windows or display cases; (g) Parking located behind the commercial frontage and screened from view and driveways located on side streets where feasible.

LAX Interim Plan

The Los Angeles International Airport Interim Plan states the objective to provide the best possible coordination and compatible development of the airport with surrounding communities. A feature of the Interim Plan includes the provision of airport buffer areas, in which a dense greenbelt of trees, shrubs, and grass will be provided and maintained between all airport and adjacent residential uses and other uses as appropriate. Other buffers recommended by the Interim Plan include the construction of a landscaped barrier and, where feasible, a noise barrier between the airport and the community. According to the Interim Plan, landscape design should take into account its visual impact. Interim Plan policies have led to specific policies contained in the Street Frontage and Landscape Development Plan, which provides aesthetic guidelines for the benefit of airport users and the surrounding community.

LAX Street Frontage and Landscape Development Plan

The LAX Street Frontage and Landscape Development Plan (Street Frontage and Landscape Plan), dated June 1994, was drafted by LAWA's Environmental Management Bureau. The purpose of the plan is to establish policies and standards to guide the development of the airport property along adjoining streets and highways. The plan is primarily used as a guide and standard for evaluating airport improvement projects and for private on-site projects. Objectives of the Street Frontage and Landscape Development Plan, relevant to aesthetic considerations include:

- To coordinate and enhance the visual appearance of the airport and promote airport security by the use of landscaping, fences, and setbacks.
- To screen unsightly uses and reduce noise impact by the construction of walls, landscaping, berms and other buffers.
- To showcase aviation and recreational uses by the use of see-through fencing.
- To develop uniform improvements for identity, harmony, and accessibility within LAX.
- To promote conservation of green belt areas and enhance and combine aesthetic features with the usefulness and efficiency of facilities and uses around the airport perimeter.

The Street Frontage and Landscape Development Plan features a variety of interface treatments along the airport perimeter for the purpose of achieving "functional aesthetics and wall configurations compatible with a range of adjacent land uses." The plan sets forth the following treatment for Service and Maintenance Areas, Approach Areas, Airport Buffer Areas, Open Space and Aviation View Areas, and Airport Entry Areas. Standards and criteria for the development of walls and fences, landscaping, parking lots areas, irrigation systems, and maintenance are also described by the plan. Treatment for the five land use areas are described by the plan and include the following**:**

- *Service and Maintenance Areas*. These areas are located between the two runway complexes, on both sides of the southerly runway complex west of the Central Terminal Area and east of Sepulveda Boulevard. Loading and fueling facilities, cargo and aircraft maintenance areas and unsightly storage uses are allowed in this designation. These uses sometimes require visual screening from public view to maintain the aesthetic integrity of the area. The landscape interface treatment will include decorative block wall, earth berms, ground cover and random planting of trees and/or shrubs. Landscape interface and street frontage setbacks will vary between 15 to 20 feet and 50 feet in steep grade areas, depending on land utilization characteristics and relationships to street conditions/dimensions and adjoining uses.
- *Approach Areas.* Surface parking, cargo or storage uses, storage facilities, landside passenger terminals and airport-related commercial uses are allowed in the Approach Areas. Landscape treatment will consist of decorative walls, security barrier fencing, earth berms, ground cover and random planting of trees and/or shrubs. In cases where aviation-related commercial uses adjoin residential uses, sound buffers and landscape interface treatment should be utilized to include sound attenuation wall improvements, tree clusters, or small consistently-spaced trees, tall shrubs, earth berms, and sidewalks. Landscape interface and street frontage setbacks will vary from 15 feet to 45 feet, depending on land utilization characteristics and relationships to street conditions/dimensions and adjoining uses.
- *Airport Buffer Areas.* These areas are generally located along the northerly boundary adjacent to residential uses and along the southerly boundary from a point about 1,000 feet west of Sepulveda Boulevard to Pershing Drive. These areas provide for parking, storage, terminals, cargo, and office uses. A green belt of trees, shrubs, and grass will be provided and maintained in these areas to

shield adjoining residential properties from noise, glare, odor, vibration, and other consequences of aircraft-and airport-related uses and to preserve the residential character of adjacent off-airport developments. Landscaping along these areas will consist of a varied arrangement of interface treatments to include small consistently-spaced trees, a double row or clusters of formally arranged trees, pedestrian sidewalks, tall shrubs, earth berms, ground cover and decorative block walls or sound attenuation improvements along selected street segments. Landscape interface and street frontage setbacks will vary from 15 to 50 feet, depending on land utilization characteristics and relationships to street conditions/dimensions and adjoining uses. A minimum landscape setback of 20 feet is generally required along major highways.

- *Open Space and Aviation View Areas.* These areas are located westerly of Pershing Drive and at the Westchester Community Golf Course, south of Manchester Avenue. Recreation, habitat and parking uses are designated in the LAX Interim Plan. The areas will have landscape interface treatments that provide public view of aviation and recreation amenities. Landscape treatment will consist of wrought iron fencing, security barrier fencing, ground cover and random and loose planting of trees and low-profile shrubs with through-views to open space areas. Low profile decorative block walls and/or earth berms, ground cover and shrubs may be used in lieu of wrought iron fencing for screening automobile parking areas. Landscape interface and street frontage setback will vary depending on land utilization characteristics and relationships to street conditions/dimensions and adjoining uses.
- *Airport Entryway Areas.* Along highways that serve as major access routes, and entry points to the airport, landscaping emphasis will be placed on plant bed areas at designated street corners. An effective combination of signage treatment, tree massings, entry palms, and flowering landscape on knoll settings will be arranged to create an attractive landscape identity statement for the airport. Palm tree clustering and ground cover on earth berms will be emphasized.

Several surface entrances are tentatively selected for treatment as Gateways and Entry Points to LAX. The entryways from Century Boulevard and from Sepulveda Boulevard at I-105 and Imperial Highway are identified as major gateways. On the westside, two Entry Points are recommended on Pershing Drive: one on the north of and just before its intersection with Westchester Parkway, and the other immediately north of its intersection with Imperial Highway.

- *Walls and Fences*. Under the plan, standards and criteria for the development of walls and fences include: construction of wrought iron fences where open space and aviation view areas are adjoining; constructed of decorative block walls on streets to screen service/maintenance, cargo, and unsightly storage areas; options for combinations of decorative block walls and landscaped berms for automobile parking lot areas in the front of buildings, in aviation-related commercial areas and along designated segments of the airport perimeter; construction of all walls and fences along a designated setback distance of the subject property; location of chain link fencing along service roads adjoining airport leaseholds as unobtrusively as possible and practical so as not to detract from the appearance of the airport view from perimeter streets; and, installation of reinforced concrete retaining walls along segments of the airport perimeter where slope retention becomes necessary.

The following standards and criteria are also set forth by the Landscape Development Plan:

- *Additional Landscaped Areas.* Airport property adjoining streets or highways (parkways), areas on a leased site not used for buildings, walkways, driveways, auto or aircraft parking, outdoor maintenance or storage and at least four percent of parking lot interior areas shall be landscaped. Parkway setbacks and plant bed areas along the street frontage will vary according to street type (i.e., frontage road, secondary, major, etc.) and property utilization characteristics. A minimum standard setback (parking lot screens) for parking lot areas shall be 15 feet from the street right-of-way or lease line unless specified otherwise.
- *Landscaping Materials and Maintenance.* Trees, shrubbery and ground cover of types and varieties selected shall be approved by the Maintenance Bureau, Landscaping Section. Landscape improvements at the airport will include the use of plant materials that are in harmony with the landscape theme typified around the airport. Artificial plants and ground cover shall not be used, unless otherwise approved by the Executive Director. Crushed rock, redwood bark chips, pebbles, and stone or masonry slabs may be selectively used. At present, certain palm trees are discouraged as they attract rodent infestation. Currently under the landscape plan, ivy ground cover is being removed and replaced with grasses. All landscaped areas shall be provided with a fixed automatic method for irrigation and shall be continually maintained in a neat, clean, and healthful condition.
- *Street Cross-Section Diagrams.* Street cross-section diagrams have been incorporated into the landscaping plan and include street dimensions and right-of-way dedications. The plan establishes

maximum, berm heights, setbacks, landscape type, wall heights, and slope criteria for center medians on specific roadways. The cross-section for a residential buffer interface on Pershing Drive, for instance, includes a six-foot-high chain link fence and a 50-foot irrigated landscaped open space buffer "to include random, loose planting of trees, shrubs, sod ground cover to provide veiled views through open space." The specifications for Loyola Boulevard, between 91st Street and 93rd Place, calls for an eight-foot high decorative block wall, a ten-foot concrete sidewalk with tree wells, a single row of Carrotwood trees spaced at 40-foot centers, on both sides of the street, and a 15-foot irrigated landscaped parkway setback to include tree clusters, shrubs, a three-foot-high berm (optional), and ground cover.

The landscape and development guidelines are applied to new development on airport property. Many vacant areas have not been developed, such as, the 111th Street frontage at Imperial Highway. Until locations are developed, the street frontages are not landscaped to the specified design standard.

Another example of a street frontage improvement that has been specified, but not yet completed, is Vista del Mar, between Imperial Highway and Westchester Parkway. At present, the street frontage contains a varying five- to six-foot wide sidewalk in a varying six- to ten-foot setback. The Vista del Mar right-of-way, including the setback, is approximately 36 feet. Proposed improvements would include a 40-foot street right-of-way, including a five-foot wide plant bed, a 13-foot wide concrete sidewalk and bike path, and eight-foot high wrought iron fence. Street trees will be planted on 25-foot centers in the landscaped plant bed. Jute net with hydroseed or other impregnated seed is recommended as a ground cover for slope retention areas along Vista del Mar.

Standards for Pershing Drive, adjacent to the dunes preservation area, include a similar eight-foot high wrought iron fence (to replace the existing chain link) and concrete bike paths, pursuant to the Los Angeles Airport/ El Segundo Dunes Specific Plan.

LAX Beautification Enhancements Program

LAWA is currently implementing a Beautification Enhancements Program (Beautification Program) for the purpose of improving the image, function, circulation, and wayfinding of the airport, through the use of architecture, graphics, landscaping, lighting, and art. The mission of the Beautification Program is to recognize the importance of LAX as an international gateway, and to provide an eventual design program, which is inspired by the unique culture, energy, diversity, vision, and excitement of the Los Angeles experience.

One of the primary themes of the Beautification Program is the recognition of the airport as a gateway landmark. As proposed, gateway themes will be implemented through symbolic art and architecture in several locations at the periphery of the airport, and within the existing central terminal area (CTA) on World Way. Under the preliminary plan, significant Gateway theme structures would be developed at Century Boulevard and Vicksburg Avenue (Gateway Symbol East), Sepulveda Boulevard and Lincoln Boulevard (Gateway Symbol North), and above the Sepulveda Boulevard tunnel, between Imperial Highway and Century Boulevard (Gateway Symbol South).

Another major feature of the project is the creation of a buffer zone along the south side of Century Boulevard, between Aviation Boulevard and the CTA entrance. According to preliminary plans, architecture, graphics, landscape, lighting and art will be implemented within this zone area to create a buffer between the roadway and airport-related uses south of Century Boulevard.

LAX Air Cargo Facilities Design Guidelines

The Los Angeles International Airport Air Cargo Facilities Design Guidelines (Cargo Guidelines) were developed in August 1998 as a tool to assist tenants, architects, and engineers in developing cargo facilities in the area near Century Boulevard and Aviation Boulevard. The guidelines are intended to reflect current industry standards and future design trends. Building design criteria identify primary image buildings and secondary image buildings, and address ideas for relating proposed cargo structures to views from non-aviation adjacent land use.

Under the guidelines, the image of airport cargo facilities will be enhanced through the creation of interest and diversity in airport facilities as they are viewed by pedestrians, passengers in vehicles, and occupants in hotels and offices. The guidelines provide recommendations for variation in the massing of buildings to reflect different functions, the provision of overhangs, the articulation of facades to reflect variety, and the addition of human scale by giving structures scale, rhythm and proportion. Other design goals include the use of patterns and contrasting colors, enhancement of roof design as part of the overall image of the

building, and balancing the exterior façade of the cargo building with the potential architectural expression of structure, aerodynamics, and expression of technological advances found in modern building design. Signage on cargo facilities is required to add to the overall image of the building. Approved landscape includes a combination of trees, shrubs, and groundcover to provide effective flexibility in plant selection, while maintaining a limited inventory to give unity to the buildings.

Scenic Highways Plan

The adopted Scenic Highways Plan, an element of the City of Los Angeles General Plan, designates Vista del Mar between Culver Avenue and the City Boundary, south of Grand Avenue, as a Scenic Highway. According to the plan, the Vista del Mar corridor is valued for beach, sand dune, and ocean views. Although a corridor plan for Vista del Mar has not been developed, the objectives of the plan are: 1) to preserve and enhance existing Scenic Resources and to develop potential Scenic Resources; 2) to create a coordinated and integrated system of Scenic Highways and Corridors that strengthen the city's image, maximize views from public ways, and provide access to enjoyable Scenic Resources; 3) to provide for the protection and enhancement of views of scenic features within or visible from Scenic Corridors; 4) to provide for the consideration of aesthetics and scenic preservation and enhancement in the design and maintenance of Scenic Highways; and, 5) to promote concern for the city's visual environment in public and private decision making.

The plan includes definitions and programs relating to the city's visual environment and the identification, protection, and enhancement of existing Scenic Resources. According to the plan, although scenic features may be viewed from numerous vantage points, the plan emphasizes views from public ways and seeks to ensure a pleasant or interesting view from the road. The viewer may be in a moving or parked vehicle, or standing and walking alongside a public way or at a specifically designed vista point. Under the Scenic Highways Plan development criteria, new corridor ordinances may be enacted to preserve and enhance the Scenic Corridors by regulating heights of structures, building setbacks, building spacing, location and design of subdivisions, and other appropriate land use controls. According to the Plan, other complementary facilities should be planned, constructed, and maintained in harmony with the Scenic Corridor.

LAWA Architectural/Design Review Process

Plans for airport improvement projects, from schematic to final, go through a series of reviews starting at the LAWA Engineering Department. The plans are then forwarded for review to various airport departments. In general review is based on compliance with three design related documents. The Environmental Management Bureau typically reviews projects for consistency with the Street Frontage and Landscape Plan and applies conditions for landscape and street frontage amenities. The Engineering Department typically reviews plans for consistency with the Air Cargo Facilities Design Guidelines and the Beautification Enhancements Program.

Prior to finalization, plans are also forwarded to the City of Los Angeles Building and Safety Department for review as part of the permitting process. Building and Safety distributes the plans as appropriate to other City departments including Planning, Public Works and Cultural Affairs. If a structure has been designated as a landmark by the City's Cultural Heritage Commission, consent from the Cultural Heritage Commission is required for all changes needing a Building and Safety permit. The Preservation Officer reviews applications and approves minor alterations that meet the Department's design guidelines (the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation). Major projects and those inconsistent with the design guidelines are scheduled for a Cultural Heritage Commission meeting.

Existing Visual Conditions

LAX is located just east of the Pacific Ocean within a broad coastal plain that is surmounted by rising land to the south and north with more level terrain extending to the east. With the exception of the open coastal and ocean expanse to the west, the airport is surrounded by heavily urbanized development. Panoramic vistas of the airport, arriving and departing aircraft, and visually prominent airport structures, such as the curved arches of the theme building and the thematic air traffic control tower are visible from off-site approaches to the north and the south of the airport. From the perspective of the public airport user who arrives at the airport from one of the major surrounding arterials, such as Lincoln, Sepulveda, and Century Boulevards, there appears to be a general homogeneity in the immediate vicinity of the airport, including a sense of destination. From these boulevards approaching the entrance to the Central Terminal Area (CTA), vistas are dominated by modern high-rise hotels, brightly colored signs and banners, landscaping, concrete intersection bridges, and a number of highways and directional signs.

The two most notable visual features on the airport property are the El Segundo Blue Butterfly Habitat Restoration Area at the western edge of the property, and the arched theme building within the CTA. Although these features and the degree of attention to urban design exhibited along the airports major approach roadways are notable, such as the landscaped parkways and medians along Sepulveda Boulevard and the Century Boulevard approach to the CTA, there are no other areas within the airport property that appear to be highly valued for their aesthetic quality.

LAX is surrounded by a variety of land use types, some of which blend and some of which contrast with the aesthetic character of the airport. For instance, the land use in the region of the airport, between I-405 and Airport Boulevard, several blocks north and south of Century Boulevard, is generally low-rise, industrial, interspersed with some residential neighborhoods. The strip and mini-mall commercial uses serving the industrial area are not inconsistent with the industrial nature of the airport, and, these uses combined with pockets of residential development, contribute to a conglomerate of visual impressions which do not support a unified theme.

The character of airport views varies substantially according to the viewer's location. Panoramic views of the airport and areas beyond the airport are found at higher elevations on the southern and northern boundaries of the site and at the west end of the airport property. Views of the airport by most airport users and others traveling by the airport are generally limited to focal views of airport structures, the airfields, hotels, and parking lots. A focused discussion of existing visual resource conditions in areas on and surrounding the airport is provided below.

Century Corridor/Airport Approaches

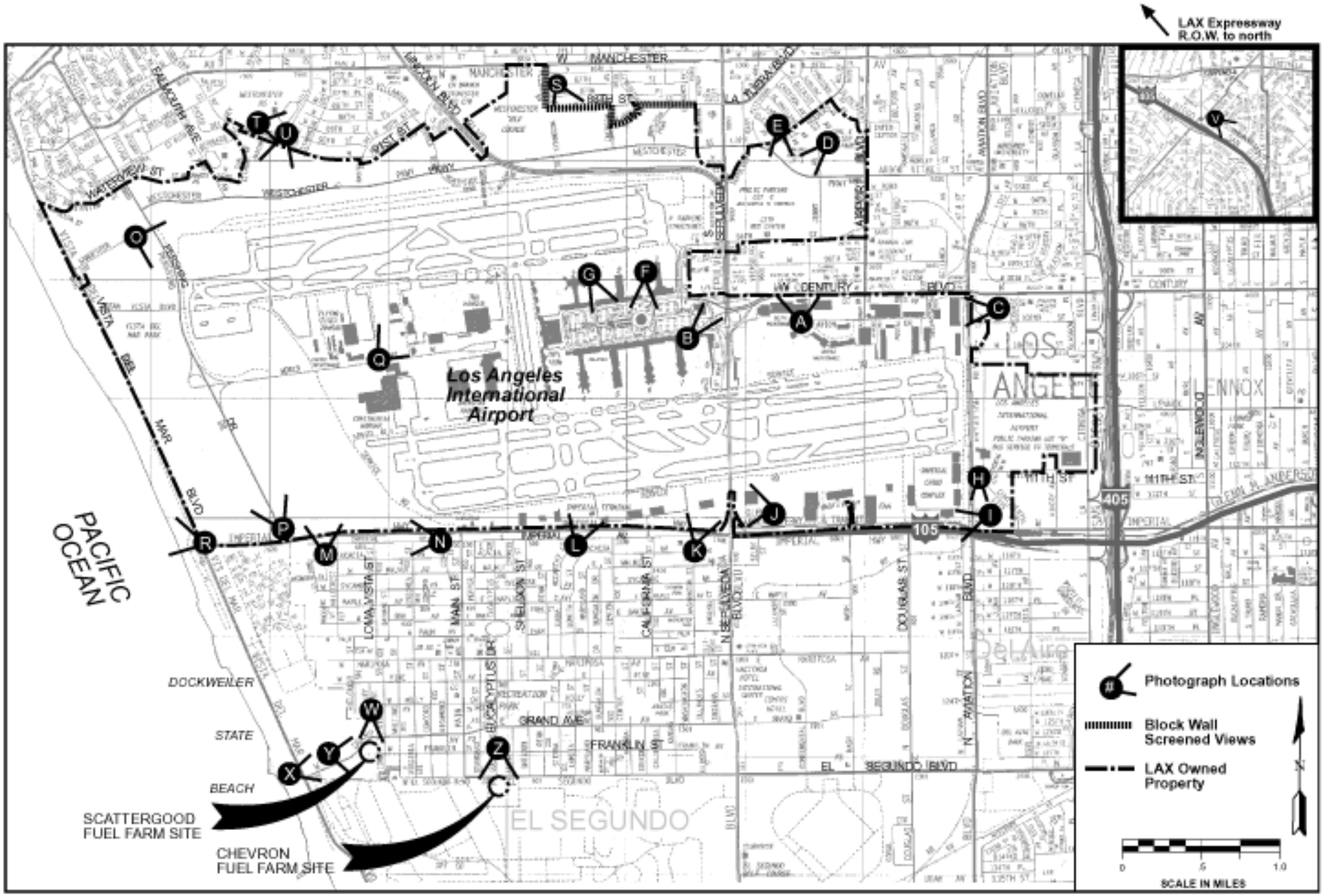
Century Boulevard, between Aviation Boulevard and the entrance to the airport, is being upgraded with implementation of the Gateway LAX project, a component of the LAX Beautification Enhancements Program. The project involves extensive new landscaping along the Century Boulevard median, a 50-foot wide landscaped buffer zone along the south side of the boulevard, and a focal point at the intersection of Century and Sepulveda Boulevard leading into the CTA that features a series of lighted columns (25 to 60 feet high), landscaping, and 32-foot high letters noting "LAX." The rows of palm trees and the large-scale modern hotels along this roadway create a "Southern California" thematic impression. While the improvements underway are substantially upgrading the visual quality along the Century Corridor, the same area contains a high concentration of billboards (approximately 29) which detract from the visual quality of this approach to the airport. The high rise hotel development along Century Boulevard at the entrance of the airport is shown in **Figure 1**, Photograph Location Map, and **Figure 2**, Photograph A. The exit area from the central terminal area is depicted in **Figure 2**, Photograph B.

Airfield and aircraft operations are easily visible from the upper stories of hotels and office buildings located along the north side of Century Boulevard. Views of airport operations are much more limited from other residential and commercial properties in this area due to lower building heights, orientation of buildings, and intervening development and landscaping.

Along the south side of Century Boulevard, west of Aviation Boulevard, views into the airport are dominated by the Century Cargo Complex. The most prominent features of the complex are the Delta facility, parking structures, the Post Office terminal annex, and various cargo carrier facilities. Landscaped setbacks along the airport property and other landscaping on Century Boulevard enhance street front views in this area. Many of the buildings within the cargo complex, between Aviation Boulevard and the entrance to the central terminal area, are equivalent in scale to the hotels on the north side of Century Boulevard. Together, the large structures on both sides of Century Boulevard help define this approach as a gateway to the airport.

The separated grade for the Santa Fe Railroad dominates the northeast corner of the airport at Aviation and Century Boulevards. The views of the Century Cargo Complex from Aviation Boulevard are buffered by the railroad tracks and reveal few landscape amenities. A view of the Century Cargo Complex from Aviation Boulevard is shown in **Figure 2**, Photograph C.

In addition to the Century Corridor, Sepulveda Boulevard serves as an additional primary approach roadway. Approaching the airport from the north, there are landscape strips fronting the airfield and Parking Lot C. Views of the landscaped walls and entrance at Parking Lot C are shown in **Figure 2**, Photographs D and E. Approaching from the south at the intersection of Sepulveda and Imperial Highway, the airfield is visible where it crosses over the Sepulveda Tunnel. Also figuring prominently in this view is the I-105 overpass and its supporting columns, and the merging lanes from the freeway. While it is clear from this vantage that you are approaching the airport, there is little in the way of landscape amenities and the view is not considered aesthetically notable. Continuing north toward



Los Angeles International Airport Master Plan	**Photograph Location Map**	Figure 1

A: Highrise hotels and offices on Century Boulevard near Central Terminal entrance.

B: Exit from Central Terminal Area.

C: View ot west of Century Cargo Complex from Aviation Boulevard.

D: Landscaped entrance Parking Lot "C".

E : View of Parking Lot "C" wall and landscaped setback on Westchester Parkway.

F: Central Terminal Area theme building.

G: New Air Control Tower in Central Terminal Area.

H: View of Continental City site looking south from 111th Street.

I: View of landscaped setback and wall at Imperial Cargo Complex, looking west from Imperial Highway and Aviation Boulevard.

Los Angeles International Airport Master Plan

LAX Site Photographs

Figure 2

Century Boulevard and exiting the Sepulveda Tunnel, there is more in the way of landscaping that contributes to a sense of gateway or arrival.

Central Terminal Area

Visual quality within the CTA is characterized by the same general southern California landscape theme as on Century Boulevard and by an array of roadways and lanes turning into terminal departure and arrival bays. Parking structures with perimeter landscaping and overhead walkways occupy a large part of the center of the terminal area. The arched terminal theme building, a City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument Symbolizing a "Jet Age" theme, is prominently located in the center of the eight terminals and houses an observation deck and a restaurant. The new air traffic control tower, rising above the west side of the theme building, is another monument of unusual design. The air traffic control tower, which is visible from all directions, and in some cases, from relatively great distance, contributes to the airport's sense of destination and to a regional airport theme. The theme building and new air traffic control tower are depicted in **Figure 2**, Photographs F and G, respectively.

In contrast to the valued aesthetic character of the theme building and new air traffic control tower, the terminal buildings along the outside of the World Way ring road consist of concrete slab construction and are primarily designed for function and access. While the Tom Bradley International Terminal exhibits a degree of architectural interest and incorporates landscape amenities, the other terminal buildings have little in the way of landscaping and do not contribute meaningfully to the aesthetic quality of the CTA. Within the CTA views of the airfield and areas adjacent to the airport are blocked from view by the terminal buildings.

Southern Boundary

The I-105 rises approximately 80 feet above the airport elevation as it crosses over the I-405 and provides a dramatic panoramic view of the airport to travelers approaching from the east. The airfield and airplane operations are easily visible from the upper stories of hotels and office buildings located along the south side of Imperial Highway, from Aviation Boulevard to Sepulveda Boulevard.

The Continental City project site, located on Imperial Highway west of the I-405 and north of I-105, can be viewed from these roadways. The Continental City project site is a currently vacant site that has poor visual quality and no valued aesthetic resources. A view of the vacant Continental City property from 111th Street is shown in **Figure 2**, Photograph H. The Imperial Cargo Complex can be viewed from Imperial Highway and the west side of Aviation Boulevard, south of the runways. On this section of Imperial Highway, building setbacks and landscaping provided in compliance with the Cargo Guidelines enhance the visual appearance of the cargo sites. A view of the Imperial Terminal and South Cargo Complex at Aviation Boulevard is shown in **Figure 2**, Photograph I. A view of the South Cargo Complex, south of Sepulveda Boulevard from East Imperial Avenue, is shown in **Figure 3**, Photographs J and K.

The El Segundo bluff rises at the south side of Imperial Highway, generally running from Sepulveda Boulevard to Pershing Drive on the west. From vantages on Imperial Avenue between Sepulveda and California Street looking north there are views of the airport from the upper stories of a seven story office building and from upper story rooms of the Embassy Suites Hotel. The Imperial Terminal and ancillary and cargo buildings along Imperial Highway figure prominently in these airport views.

Further to the west on Imperial Avenue, from California Street to Pershing Drive, there are views of the airport, urban areas further to the north, and ocean views to the west/northwest from the bluff-top greenbelt and a number of residential properties. Benches along the bluff-top greenbelt are frequently used by the public for viewing arriving and departing aircraft as well as taking in scenic long-range views. A general view of the airport from Imperial Avenue, near Sheldon Street in El Segundo is shown in **Figure 3**, Photograph L. The number and quality of views among residential properties in this area are highly variable due to changes in topography, intervening trees along the greenbelt, and the design and orientation of apartment buildings. While there are notable views from certain properties, few of the single-family homes or apartment buildings are oriented with the objective of taking in long-range scenic views. Residential areas on Imperial Avenue west of Loma Vista Street have views of the southwest end of the airport site. The southwest portion of the airport property has little development, and is mainly limited to taxiways. A view of the southwest portion of the airport property is shown in **Figure 3**, Photograph M.

Views for travelers along Imperial Highway, west of Sepulveda to Main Street, are predominantly of cargo and ancillary facilities. Although a number of these facilities have landscaping fronting Imperial Highway, these facilities do not present a cohesive image due to the variety of building types. Views of the airport

from Imperial Highway, west of Main Street, are blocked by graded-fill berms and both sides of Imperial Highway are bordered by a combination of wood and steel utility poles and lines. A view looking west on Imperial Highway, north of Pershing Drive, is shown in **Figure 3**, Photograph N.

Between Pershing Drive and Vista del Mar, Imperial Highway passes the Hyperion Sewage Treatment Plant on the south and the LAX/El Segundo Dunes study area on the north. The sewage treatment facility is featured prominently in views at the southeast corner of Vista del Mar and Imperial Highway.

Western Boundary

Sandpiper Street, located south of Westchester Parkway between Pershing Drive and Vista del Mar, is an airport viewing area frequented by the public. Sandpiper is a remnant residential street from a single-family neighborhood once established in the airport dunes area. While parking along Sandpiper Street is not permitted, travelers still frequent the street to take advantage of the views. The favored viewing area is at the crest of Sandpiper Street where there are views of the Santa Monica Bay looking south to the Palos Verdes Peninsula and north to the Point Dune Peninsula in clear weather conditions. Views to the east of departing and arriving aircraft are also available. A view from Sandpiper Street looking southeast toward the airport is shown in **Figure 3**, Photograph O.

Between Imperial and Westchester Parkway, views to the east along Pershing Drive, approximately 90 feet above mean sea level (AMSL), are mostly obscured by the hilly terrain and the placement of fill which rises to 100 feet AMSL. The Habitat Restoration Area, a 203-acre portion of the LAX/El Segundo Dunes, is located on the west side of Pershing Drive, and is enclosed by green security fencing. Views of the ocean from Pershing Drive are obscured by the dunes, which rise to levels of approximately 130 to 180 feet AMSL. While large areas of the dunes are undeveloped and somewhat natural in appearance, other areas include remnant residential streets, radar, and other ancillary facilities. Overall, the rural open space appearance of this section of the airport is dominated by the Pershing Drive/World Way West interchange. A view of Pershing Drive, looking north, is shown in **Figure 3**, Photograph P.

The World Way West interchange off Pershing Drive leads into a service facilities area of the airport. Views of the airport in this area are dominated by the eleven-story administrative building (formerly Federal Express) on the north side of the road, flanked by the tanks of the LAX fuel farm, and by the large airplane maintenance and other ancillary facilities on the south side of the road. This is not an area frequented by the public. A view of the LAX fuel farm is shown in **Figure 3**, Photograph Q.

As previously discussed, Vista del Mar is a City of Los Angeles designated Scenic Highway valued for beach, sand dune and ocean views. Vista del Mar bounds the westerly edge of the airport property, adjacent to the LAX/El Segundo Dunes. Views of airport facilities are not available from Vista del Mar due to the intervening dunes. A view of Santa Monica Bay as seen from Vista del Mar looking south from a point west of the airport dunes is shown in **Figure 3**, Photograph R.

Northern Boundary/LAX Northside Development

The LAX Northside site, which is entitled for development, extends nearly 2½ miles from the Westchester business district at Sepulveda Boulevard west to Pershing Drive. Formerly a residential area, the property was acquired by the airport as a buffer between the airport and residential neighborhoods located north of the project. LAWA determined that the property, which is not needed for airport operations, should be developed in a manner that would be aesthetically compatible with the adjoining neighborhoods while returning the land to a productive use.

Westchester Parkway runs through the LAX Northside property. The parkway is fully improved with a landscaped median and perimeter landscaping consistent with the landscape criteria set forth in the airport's Landscape Development Plan. East of Loyola Boulevard, the parkway offers open vistas of the airport. West of Loyola Boulevard, views of the airport are mostly obscured by landscaped berms.

The northern boundary of the LAX Northside site, along West 88th Place between Sepulveda West Way and the Westchester Golf Course, and then north to Manchester Avenue, is primarily bordered by residential uses. To screen the airport property from this residential area, LAWA has constructed twenty-foot high buffers, consisting of twelve-foot high architecturally-treated masonry walls on the crest of eight-foot-high landscaped berms within a fifty-foot setback from 88th Street. The fifty-foot setback was created from lots cleared for expansion of the airport. The landscaping associated with the completed wall project and associated buffering, east of the Westchester golf course, includes grass lawns with trees and sloping berms landscaped with ornamental vegetation, which are attractively designed and well-maintained.

J: View of airport from northeast corner of Sepulveda Boulevard and Imperial Highway.

K: View of airport from Imperial Highway west of Sepulveda.

L: View of airport from Imperial Avenue in El Segundo, looking north. Cargo facilities are in the foreground.

M: View of the southwest corner of the airport from Imperial Avenue.

N: Above ground utility lines on Imperial Highway at airport southern boundary. Viewed from the east.

O: View of airport from Sandpiper Street.

P: View of Pershing Drive from the south. The Habitat Restoration Area is on the left, the airport runway westerly terminus is to the right.

Q: Existing LAX Fuel Farm viewed from the west on World Way West.

R: View of Santa Monica Bay from Vista Del Mar, just west of the El Segundo Dune Preserve.

Los Angeles International Airport Master Plan

LAX Site Photographs

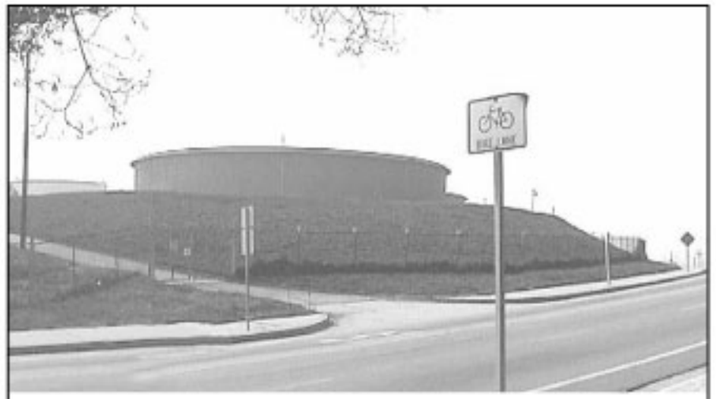
Figure 3

S: Twenty-foot-high sound-blocking wall in 50-foot landscape setback on 88th Street.

T: Typical interface between single family home on 91st Street and vacant LAX Northside property. Street leading into former residential neighborhood have been stubbed and gated.

U: View of LAX Northside property from residential neighborhood on 91st Street.

V: View looking south from La Tijera Boulevard overpass (east of 405 freeway) of Centinela Creek.



W: View of proposed Scattergood Fuel Farm site with existing tanks looking west north side of Grand Avenue.

X: View of proposed Scattergood Fuel site with existing tanks looking east from bike path adjacent to beach.

Y: View of proposed Scattergood Fuel Farm site looking east from north side of Grand Avenue.

Z: View of proposed Chevron Fuel Farm Facility looking south from north side of El Segundo Boulevard.

Los Angeles International Airport Master Plan

LAX Site Photographs

Figure 4

Figure 4, Photograph S, depicts the 20-foot high landscaped wall and berm. A typical view of the interface between single-family homes on 91st Street and the vacant LAX Northside property is shown in **Figure 4**, Photograph T. A typical view of the LAX Northside property from an existing stubbed street adjoining single-family residential properties is shown in **Figure 4**, Photograph U.

The properties northern boundary west of Lincoln Boulevard extending to Pershing Drive also borders residential development. Views of the LAX Northside property from these neighborhoods are generally limited to the apartments located along the west side of Lincoln Boulevard, and from residences along West 91st Street, residents located north of St. Bernard High School, and residents located west of Falmouth Avenue. The high-rise apartments on Lincoln Boulevard have views to the southeast and southwest. These views encompass undeveloped areas of the LAX Northside property, the airport, and longer range ocean and city views. Views from residences along 91st Street are limited as they face away from the LAX Northside property and are separated from LAX Northside by a cinder block wall and trees. The westerly end of the airport's north and south runways is clearly visible to residents adjacent to St. Bernard High School and in neighborhoods north of the airport, and west of Falmouth Avenue. Views from these properties are oriented to the southeast.

Beyond LAX Northside, to the west of Pershing Drive along Waterview Street and Napoleon Street, residences also face airport property. These views include undeveloped dune areas, and more scenic ocean views where homes are oriented to the southwest. Like the Habitat Restoration Area, the dunes in this area have a hilly open space appearance with dune scrub vegetation.

LAX Expressway

Single and multi-family residential units are adjacent to the proposed LAX Expressway right-of-way (ROW) along the south side of Thornburn Street and the north side of 74th Street and Midfield Avenue. The residences face away from the proposed LAX Expressway ROW, Centinela Creek, and the 405 Freeway. A view of the LAX Expressway ROW is shown in **Figure 4**, Photograph V. A more detailed description of existing conditions along the proposed LAX Expressway ROW is provided in Appendix K, *Supplemental Environmental Evaluation for LAX Expressway and State Route 1 Improvements*.

Proposed LAX Off-Site Fuel Farm Sites

South of the airport dune area, from Vista del Mar between Pershing Drive and Grand Avenue in El Segundo, there are views of the surf and bay to the west and views of the City of Los Angeles Hyperion Sewage Treatment Plant and the Department of Water and Power (DWP) Scattergood Power Generating Facility to the east.

The DWP Scattergood Power Generating Facility is located south of the Hyperion property. The Scattergood property rises to the east and is surmounted on its easterly side by a large red and white stack, two large water tanks, a large power generating facility, and multiple-story administrative buildings, which front Vista del Mar. A portion of the Scattergood site, located approximately 700 feet east of Vista del Mar and south of Grand Avenue, is one of the two proposed off-site LAX fuel farm sites. This portion of the Scattergood property contains four, fifty-foot high tan storage tanks. The base of the tanks is approximately 135 feet AMSL. The tanks are encircled by a landscaped earthen berm, which has an elevation approximately 153 feet AMSL. The berm partially obscures views of the tanks from a close view on Grand Avenue and Vista del Mar.

A greater portion of the tanks surface is visible from the westbound lanes on Grand Avenue, because the roadway is set back a greater distance from the berm. The berm almost completely obscures views of the tanks from pedestrians on the south side Grand Avenue. Views of the Scattergood site are shown in **Figure 4**, Photographs W, X and Y.

The residential properties on Loma Vista Avenue that border the site on the east are located approximately 145 feet AMSL. Although views of the ocean from these properties are primarily obscured by the tanks, which rise to approximately 185 feet AMSL, the four most northerly homes in the 200 block of Loma Vista have ocean views directly to the west. The tanks do not screen ocean views from Grand Avenue or from homes north of Grand Avenue. The tanks are also visible looking west from Franklin Avenue, west of Concord Avenue. Because of setbacks, the intervening topography and a dense growth of landscape trees on the east side of the Scattergood property, the existing fuel tanks do not present an objectionable façade from this vantage point.

Alternately, a portion of the 1,000-acre oil refinery located south of the airport, bounded by Vista del Mar, El Segundo Boulevard, Sepulveda Boulevard, and Rosecrans Avenue, is also being considered as a site

for the relocated LAX fuel farm. This Fuel Farm site is located along the southside of El Segundo Boulevard in the north central portion of the oil refinery. On El Segundo Boulevard, the property is largely obscured by a mature growth of eucalyptus trees. This area is located across from primarily industrial land uses. Typical of oil-refining facilities, this property contains large numbers of fuel storage tanks, pipe ways, roads, stacks, and towers. A view of the oil refinery property is shown in **Figure 4**, Photographs Z.