

**Appendix 3:
Visual Impact Assessment**



Visual Impact Assessment Fulton Mall Reconstruction Project City of Fresno, California

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1. Introduction

This Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) was prepared for the City of Fresno for the proposed Fulton Mall Reconstruction Project. The purpose of this VIA is to document potential visual impacts caused by the proposed project and propose measures to lessen any detrimental impacts that are identified. This VIA was prepared using a process developed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The visual impacts are demonstrated by identifying visual resources in the project area, measuring the amount of change that would occur as a result of the project, and predicting how the affected public would respond to or perceive those changes. This assessment defines the visual assessment methodology, existing visual environment, and quantitatively evaluates the visual impact.

2. Project Description

The City of Fresno, in cooperation with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), proposes to convert the pedestrian-only paths associated with the Fulton Mall into multi-use roadways to reintroduce vehicle traffic into the Downtown Mall Area.

The purpose of the proposed project is to increase mobility and access in the Fulton Mall study area by providing more convenient multi-modal access options on the Mall and its cross streets; to improve visibility of businesses, offices and other amenities in the Fulton Mall study area by improving traffic circulation, thereby encouraging additional economic development in the area; and to increase the Fulton Mall study area's consistency with the requirements and goals of proposed land use plans by making the area more accessible to the public, thereby encouraging greater public use of the area and bolstering future economic development opportunities.

2.1 Project Location

The proposed Fulton Mall Reconstruction project is located in Downtown Fresno (Exhibit 1). Fulton Mall consists of six blocks bounded by Van Ness Avenue to the east, Inyo Street to the south, Broadway/H Street to the west, and Tuolumne Street to the north (Exhibit 2). Tulare Street and Fresno Street divide the Mall into three equal portions. The project site includes the existing 80-foot rights-of-way within Fulton Mall including Fulton between Inyo Street to Tulare Street, Tulare Street and Fresno Street, and Fresno Street and Tuolumne Street. The project also includes the existing 80-foot rights-of-way along (1) Kern between Van Ness Avenue and Home Run Alley, (2) Mariposa between Van Ness Avenue and Broadway, and (3) Merced between Van Ness Avenue and Congo Alley. In addition to the Mall, there are areas adjacent to the new streets within the Mall that would allow transitional streetscape to accommodate the project.

Furthermore, the project includes a parcel at the Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission campus near the intersection of Mariposa and Congo Alley for the proposed tot lot.

2.2 Project Description

The City of Fresno (City) proposes to reconstruct Fulton Mall as a complete street by reintroducing vehicle traffic lanes to the existing pedestrian mall. The Mall consists of six (6) linear blocks that were open to traffic prior to 1964 but now do not allow public vehicle access. The Mall is bound by Tuolumne Street to the north and Inyo Street to the south, and includes portions of three cross streets. The total length of the new roadways would be 0.67 mile; a total of 0.74 mile of existing Fulton Mall right-of-way would be affected.

The “Mall” refers specifically to the pedestrian areas between adjoining buildings located on the former City streets of Fulton, Mariposa, Merced, and Kern, which function as an integrated pedestrian Mall. Fresno Street and Tulare Street, which do allow vehicle traffic, run through the Mall and divide it into three roughly equal sections. Mall landscaping elements include fountains, planters, benches, sculptures, electrical systems, irrigation systems, and two “tot lots.” The Mall does not include the adjoining buildings or their façades.

The City of Fresno is proposing two build options for the Fulton Mall Reconstruction Project. These two build options propose to reconstruct the Mall using “complete streets” design concepts. Complete streets are those designed to function as shared public space, or as “living streets” - for pedestrians, cyclists, outdoor businesses, and slow-moving, cautiously driven vehicles. Complete streets may include narrow roadways, corner bulb-outs, winding streets, and other traffic calming measures to lower driving speeds; street trees and other landscape elements; wide pedestrian sidewalks and crosswalks; and bicycle accommodations such as dedicated bicycle lanes or wide shoulders. The purpose of incorporating these design concepts into the proposed project is to retain portions of the historic fabric and character of the Mall, maintaining the key elements, feeling and unique experience of a pedestrian mall in downtown Fresno.

This Draft EIR addresses two build options, which are described below.

Project Option 1

Option 1 consists of reopening the Fulton Mall with two-way streets, with one lane of vehicular traffic in each direction alongside bicycle, pedestrian, and potentially other travel modes, along the length of the Fulton Mall and three cross streets: Merced between Congo Alley and Federal Alley, Mariposa between Broadway Plaza and Federal Alley, and Kern between Fulton and Federal Alley. On-street vehicle parking spaces would be reintroduced along the length of the Fulton Mall (including cross streets), mid-block pedestrian crossings would be provided, and

construction of streetscape improvements would optimize the streets for the new blend of travel modes. One 11-foot-wide vehicle travel lane would run in each direction, with a parallel parking lane of 8 feet included on both sides of the streets. Sidewalks would include a typical 14-foot sidewalk on one side of the street and a 28-foot-wide promenade on the other. This promenade is intended to approximate the mall-like pedestrian experience of the original Eckbo Fulton Mall. Like the existing mall, the Option 1 promenade would feature artworks, water features, seating, and trees and would allow for walking and pedestrian-only seating, landscaping, and lighting. Pedestrians would be separated from vehicles. There are existing street rights-of-way adjacent to the new streets within the Mall that would include minor public infrastructure improvements such as new curb locations, traffic signal improvements, and lane striping. These improvements would provide transitional streetscape to accommodate the project. Under Option 1, the two tot lots present, one located near the corner of Merced and Fulton, and the other located near the corner of Kern and Fulton, would be consolidated into one larger tot lot at the Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission campus near the intersection of Mariposa and Congo Alley.

Project Option 2

Option 2 consists of reconnecting the street grid similar to Option 1, but would include rebuilding distinctive elements of the Fulton Mall in five to six specific locations, known as “vignettes,” in their exact current size and configuration. The vignettes are intended to preserve existing shade trees and features of the historic Eckbo design, and would include many of the existing elements (sculptures, fountains, pavement pattern, trees, and so on). To accomplish this, the street would have gentle curves that would allow for greater preservation of historic features including fountains, art and existing shade trees. One 11-foot-wide vehicle travel lane would run in each direction and would curve through the vignettes. Outside the vignette areas, the street would straighten, and the landscape would include, where possible, an 8-foot-wide parallel parking lane, as well as a pedestrian-only walking, seating, vegetation, and public art area that varies between 14 and 44 feet wide on each side of the street. Within the vignettes, there would be no parking lane, and the existing Fulton Mall landscape elements would be kept intact as much as possible. The remaining space on each side of the street would be dedicated to pedestrian travel, seating, vegetation, and artwork. There are existing street rights-of-way adjacent to the new streets within the Mall that would include minor public infrastructure improvements such as new curb locations, traffic signal improvements, and lane striping. These improvements would provide transitional streetscape to accommodate the project. Under Option 2, the two tot lots present, one located near the corner of Merced and Fulton, and the other located near the corner of Kern and Fulton, would be consolidated into one larger tot lot at the

Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission campus near the intersection of Mariposa and Congo Alley.

3. Existing Visual Environment

3.1 Regional Setting

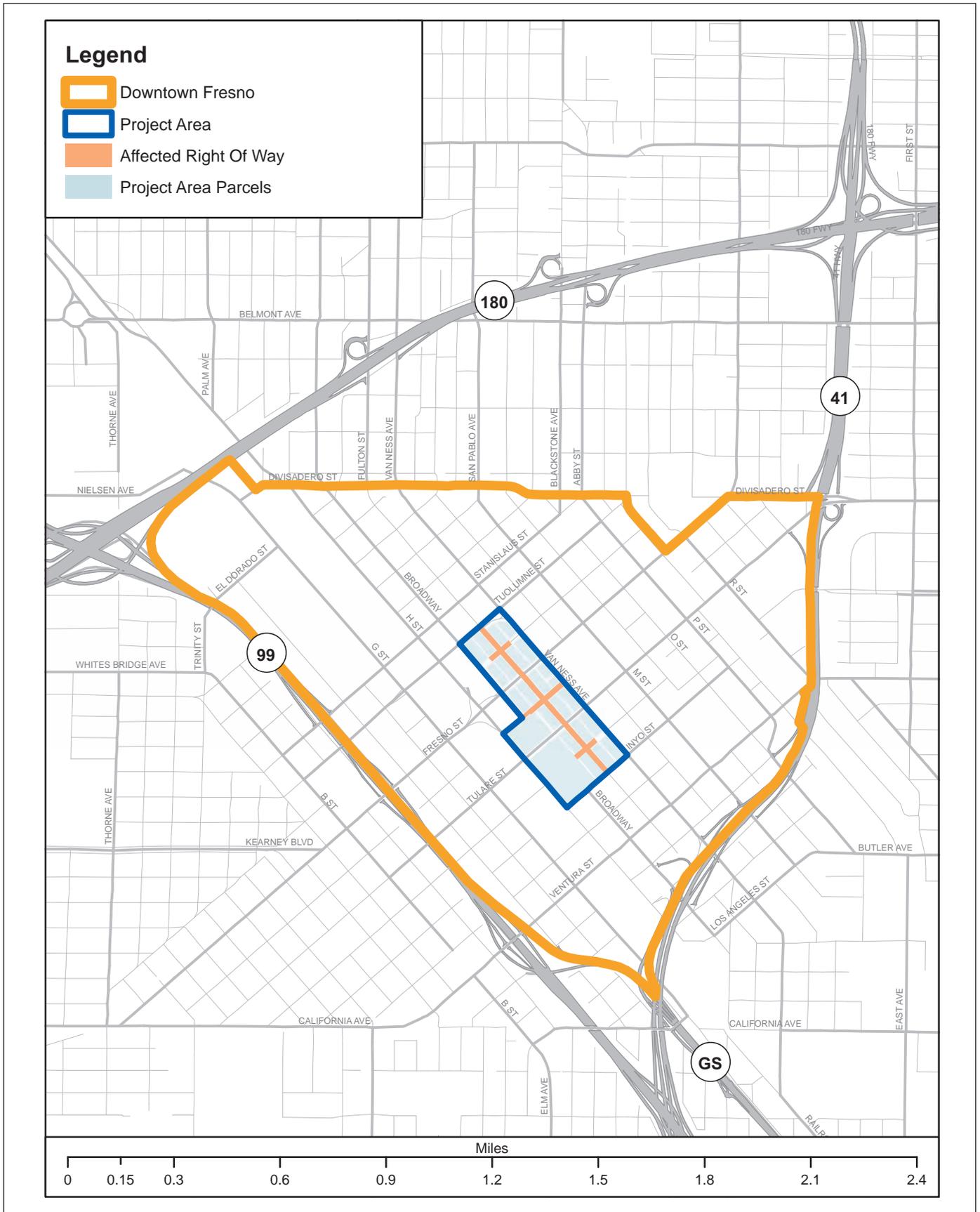
The region is characterized by the relatively flat San Joaquin Valley that rises into the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the northeast and east. The San Joaquin River extends along the north side of the City and County boundary of Fresno and the Madera County boundary. Due to the relatively flat terrain of the valley, views of the high-rise buildings within downtown Fresno can be viewed from great distances in all directions.

In the late 1800s, Fresno began to colonize, and the land use became predominately agricultural. Development began to occur within the downtown area of Fresno subsequent to the construction of the Central Pacific Railroad that extended through the San Joaquin Valley. In the first few decades of the 1900s development continued to occur within Fresno including major high-rise buildings in the downtown area, where the Fulton Mall was later constructed in the early 1960s.

3.2 Project Setting

Distant views from within the Fulton Mall area are limited due to the surrounding high-rise development. Pedestrians who travel within Fulton Mall have very few locations where distant views are available. These distant views are located on the edges of the Mall and typically along existing streets. Within the Mall, pedestrian views are internal and include the various features of the Mall including trees and shrubs, pavement, planters, sculptures, fountains, seating areas, and other artwork.

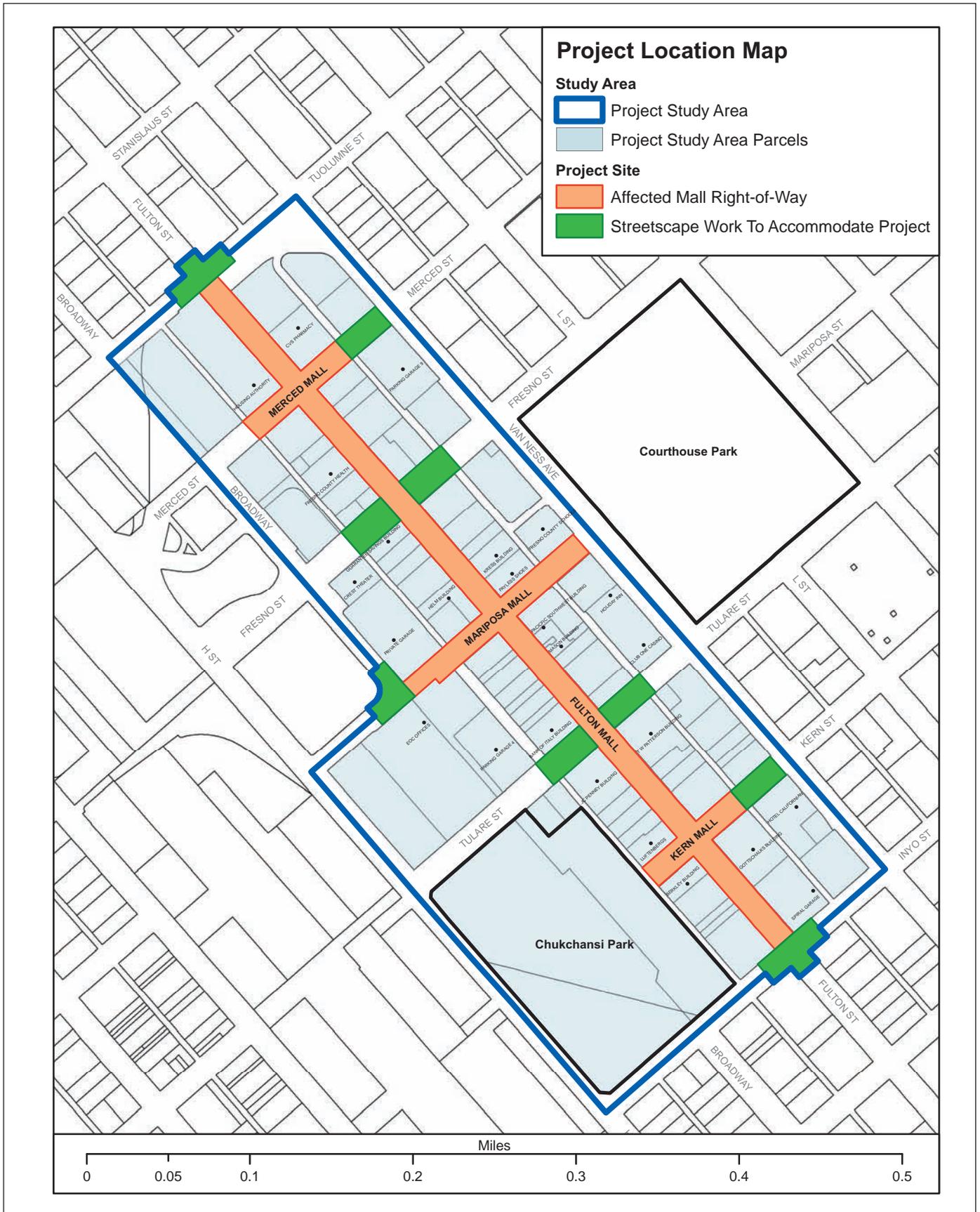
There are approximately 140 trees and a large number of shrubs and flowers that provide a visual relief to the urban environment within the Mall. However, although not evaluated by an arborist or urban forester, most of the trees do not appear to be well maintained due to the presence of broken or crossing limbs, misshapen trunks, and roots protruding into the concrete sidewalks. However, the mature trees provide shade, which is much needed in the warmer months in Fresno.



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Figure 1
Project Vicinity Map



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Figure 2
Project Location Map

Because the streets with vehicular traffic in the immediate vicinity are perpendicular to the mall, views to the storefronts along the public streets that are adjacent to Fulton Mall such as Inyo Street, Tulare Street, Fresno Street, and Tuolumne Street are limited. Limited views of storefronts do not allow motorists or pedestrians traveling along Inyo Street, Tulare, Street, Fresno Street, and Tuolumne Street to orient themselves in relation to specific stores within the Mall that are adjacent to these streets. Opening up the Mall to vehicular traffic would allow motorist to have direct physical and visual access to the shops since the streets would allow access.

The Mall's pavement includes a paving pattern that resembles the contours of the natural landscape. However, the overall appearance of the Mall is that it is minimally maintained; the pavement is dirty, with numerous areas of food stains, discarded chewing gum, cigarette butts, and the pavement is cracked in many locations due. At the time the trees were planted, advanced planting techniques, such as structural pavement, drip irrigation, and root barriers were not prevalent, and therefore, tree roots have cracked the pavement in numerous locations.

Additionally, many planter walls and curbs are cracked, which decrease the quality of the visual environment, and generally give the Mall a visually unattractive appearance. The sculptures and fountains provide unique elements to the Mall; however, some sculptures have been vandalized and others are not prominently displayed or identified.

Additionally, some of the 21 fountains have been vandalized, and 14 of the 21 existing fountains have not been operable for years. Plaster is cracked, and the pumps and/or lighting are inoperable and have become repositories for debris, discarded bits of food, and cigarette butts.

Due to the ground floor vacancies within the Fulton Mall, which is approximately 26 percent, many of the businesses have industrial-looking metal gates that extend across the storefront indicating that the building space is vacant and abandoned. The gates are used to deter vandalism; however, they also detract from the overall visual environment of the Mall.

In addition, there are vacant storefronts that have numerous haphazardly placed flyers, various advertisements, and other posted materials that are attached to their frontage, which further degrades the visual experience of visiting the Mall. Although the 140 trees in the Mall provide a visual amenity, the presence of the inoperable fountains that are used as repositories for trash, in addition to dirty and broken sidewalks, metal security gates and numerous flyers at the vacant storefronts greatly reduce the visual quality of the mall.

3.3 Landscape Assessment Unit

To provide a framework for understanding and disclosing the potential visual effect of project alternatives, the FHWA visual methodology recommends the landscape be divided into sub-units for further analysis. Landscape Assessment Units are based on distinct areas or zones, which have certain common characteristics. Since the proposed Fulton Mall Reconstruction project is located in an urban setting that has similar features throughout the Mall and has limited views beyond the Mall, the project is identified as one Landscape Assessment Unit where views from the Unit as well as views of the Unit are primarily limited to foreground and middle ground views within the malls. There are limited background views from the Mall and these view locations are near the edges of the Mall. This Landscape Assessment Unit is identified as Fulton Mall - Urban/Built. Appendix A includes the Landscape Unit Checklist that identifies the visual resource components of Visual Information and Visual Character for the Fulton Mall - Urban/Built Landscape Assessment Unit. The Visual Information identifies the supply of the visual resource while the Visual Character identifies the visual pattern of the elements and character.

4. Visual Assessment Methodology

This study uses an assessment model developed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects. The major components of this process include establishing the visual environment of the project, assessing the visual resources of the project area, and identifying viewer response to those resources. Those components define the existing conditions. Resource change introduced by the project and the associated viewer response is then assessed, providing a basis for determination of potential visual impacts. Assessing visual impacts is a function evaluating the extent of physical change (resources change), and comparing that with the degree of viewer sensitivity (viewer response). A generalized visual impact assessment process is as follows:

$$\text{Resource Change} + \text{Viewer Response} = \text{Visual Impact}$$

4.1 Viewer Resource Change

The physical changes caused by the project would be noticeable in terms of form, line, color, and texture, as well as scale, dominance, diversity, and continuity. These inherent physical attributes are visually experienced as an integrated whole, defining the perceived visual character of the landscape. The relationship of these attributes to one another and their setting is assessed in part by analyzing the view's vividness, intactness, and unity as defined in the FHWA methodology guidance. These three visual rating criteria are as follows:

Vividness is the visual power or memorability of the landscape components as they combine in striking and distinctive visual patterns.

Intactness is the visual integrity of the landscape and its freedom from non-typical encroaching elements. If all of the various elements of a landscape seem to “belong” together, there will be a high level of intactness.

Unity is the visual harmony of the landscape considered as a whole. Unity represents the degree to which potentially diverse visual elements maintain a coherent visual pattern.

To assess the degree of resource change caused by the project, the FHWA method recommends a numerical rating process, which compares the visual quality in terms of vividness, intactness, and unity of both the existing and proposed conditions for each project alternative under consideration. Ratings were conducted utilizing photographs and photo-simulations.

Separate Resource Change evaluations were conducted from each of the three Key Observation Points. A numerical rating between 1 and 7 was assigned for the visual quality of the existing conditions from each viewpoint, with 1 having the lowest value and 7 the highest. Photographic simulations were then prepared illustrating the likely appearance of each view after project implementation. Based on the photographic simulation and field reviews, numerical ratings were then assigned to each of the proposed views. The numerical difference, if any, between the existing and proposed conditions quantifies the degree of resource change, which may occur as a result of the proposed project.

The Resource Change evaluation determines which specific criteria contribute most to the existing quality of each view, and if change would occur to that criteria as a result of the project. If a numerical change in visual criteria was identified, this change was analyzed for its potential affect on the existing visual quality.

Ultimately, the degree of resource change, as determined by the Resource Change evaluation, must be combined with the anticipated viewer response in order to understand and determine potential levels of visual impact.

4.2 Viewer Response

To understand and predict viewer response to the appearance of a roadway project, information must be known about the viewers who may see the project and the aspects of the visual environment to which they are likely to respond. The major viewer groups can be differentiated by physical factors that modify perception. For the proposed project, there is a basic distinction of the views from the existing roads that cross Fulton Mall, views of Fulton Mall, the physical

location of each viewer group, the number of people in each group, and the duration of their view. The receptivity of different viewer groups to the visual environment is not equal. This variable receptivity is defined as viewer sensitivity and is strongly related to visual preference. It modifies visual experience directly by means of viewer activity and awareness. Indirectly, sensitivity modifies experience by means of values, opinions, and preconceptions.

Within the project area, the extent and characteristics of potential viewer groups are few. Viewer groups that would see the project include motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians/shoppers, and retail/office workers.

Motorists would have limited views of the project due to short (low) duration of their views as they drive past the connections of Fulton Mall on the existing streets. The general speeds on the existing streets within the project vicinity are 30 miles per hour. Once the motorists park their vehicles, they exit their vehicle and become pedestrians/shoppers, or retail/office workers. Pedestrians/shoppers within Fulton Mall pass through much slower than motorists and have a longer (high) duration of views while retail/office workers within Fulton Mall pass through much slower than motorists and have a longer (moderately high) duration of the views.

Bicyclists would have moderately extended views of the project as they moved through the Mall. This group of viewers will be affected because of their duration of views of the Mall. Bicyclists are currently allowed to ride their bikes within the Mall. With the project, the bicyclists will be allowed to ride along the streets similar to other streets within downtown Fresno. Bike racks are currently provided within the Mall and will be provided with the project. The viewer sensitivity for this group is moderately high.

Pedestrians/Shoppers include visitors who are pedestrians using the Mall to recreate or shop. This group includes those who park their cars on the street or within garage structures and walk to the Mall, walk to the Mall from their residence, or walk to the Mall from public transportation. This group is the primary group of affected viewers because of their long duration of views of the Mall. The viewer sensitivity for this group is moderately high.

Retail/Office Workers include the employers and employees of the retail stores and offices within Fulton Mall. The majority of these users park their cars in the surface or structured parking areas in the vicinity of Fulton Mall or ride public transportation and walk to their destination. As they walk to their destination, they have extended views of Fulton Mall. Since the workers' primary purpose within the Mall is to walk to their place of work, their view sensitivity is considered average.

The viewer response by these groups include the quantity of viewers (i.e., number of viewers), their sensitivity to change, and their duration of their view. A driver passing through the project vicinity at 30 miles per hour would not be as sensitive to changes in the visual environment as a pedestrian walking through the environment. Visual sensitivity means how sensitive users are to changes. A very low, low, and a moderately low rating means that the project would not contrast with the visual quality of the existing environment. An average rating means that the project would have some contrast with the visual quality of the existing environment. A very high, high, and moderately high rating means that the project would contrast with the visual quality of the existing environment. Table 1 provides a summary of the viewer groups and their responses.

Table 1: Viewer Group Response

Viewer Group Response				
Viewer Group	Quantity	Sensitivity	Duration	Viewer Response
Motorists	Low	Low	Low	Low
Bicyclists	Low	Moderately High	Moderately High	Moderately High
Pedestrians/Shoppers	Very High	Moderately High	High	High
Retail/Commercial Workers	Low	Moderately Low	Moderately High	Moderately Low

This study considers and identifies these viewer modifiers for each of the three viewpoints. A numerical viewer response rating between 1 and 7 was assigned for each viewpoint, with 1 being the least sensitive anticipated response and 7 being the most sensitive anticipated response. In determining the potential levels of visual impact, the anticipated viewer response is combined with the degree of resource change.

4.3 Photographic Simulations and Project Representations

Photographic simulations illustrate the visual character from each of the Key Observation Points and provide an overview of the visual setting of the project area. For each Key Observation Point, the existing image shows how the view looked at the time of the study, and the proposed simulation represents how that location might appear with the particular alternative in place. The known dimensions of existing onsite elements were used as visual scale references to increase accuracy of the photographic simulations. For the purpose of this study, the new landscaping in the photographic simulations show plant growth at approximately 5 to 7 years after project construction.

This analysis represents the basic location, mass, and scale of the proposed elements. For project features not specifically defined by design at this time, the study assumes a “reasonable worst

case” scenario. Where specifically proposed, landscaping and aesthetic treatments are shown in the photographic simulations.

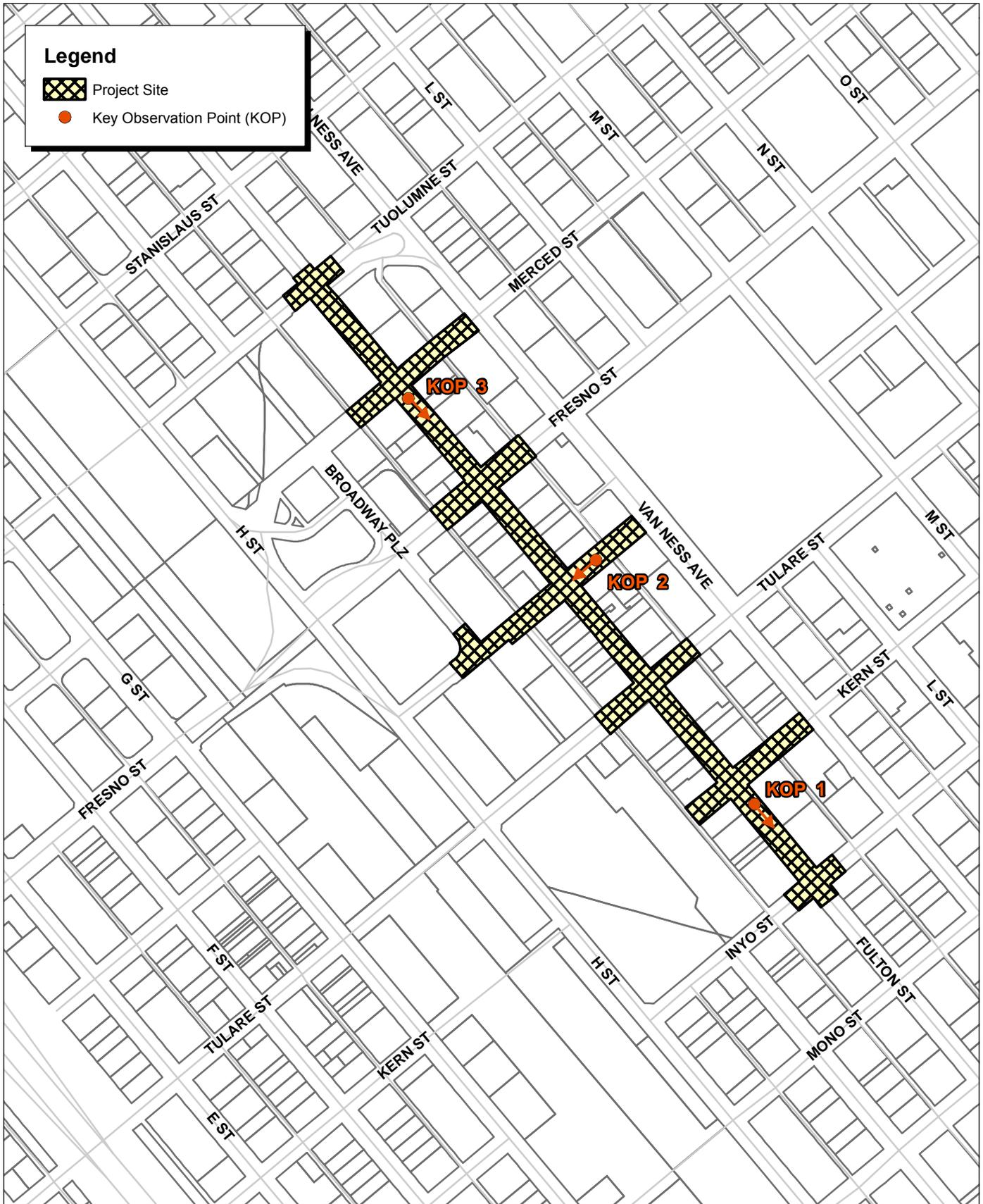
5. Visual Impact Assessment

The following section contains the numerical ratings assigned to the existing and proposed views as seen from each of the Key Observation Points, along with a brief explanation of the rating numbers. Photographs of the existing conditions along with photographic simulations of the project are included to provide a basis for understanding the visual change proposed by the project.

The project is analyzed in terms of the numerical difference in physical change (Visual Quality Evaluation) combined with the expected sensitivities and responses of potential viewer groups (Viewer Response rating). The Visual Quality Evaluation rating (see Appendix B) is combined with the Viewer Response rating, with the results providing the basis for understanding and determining the type and extent of potential visual impacts.

The Visual Impact Rating and analysis is conducted for each of the three Key Observation Points (Figure 3). A separate table is provided for each build alternative (Alternatives 1 and 2). The Resource Change rating has been identified as either a positive or negative numeral, depending on whether the change is a positive or negative one. Viewer Response is always a positive number, which increases as the level of sensitivity and exposure increase. The Viewer Response serves as an amplifier of the resource change number. As a result, the Visual Impact Rating equation is determined by averaging the absolute value of the resource change number with the viewer response rating number, then applying either a positive or negative sign to the averaged number depending on whether the resource change was positive or negative.

Alternative 3 is the No Build Alternative and therefore, a visual evaluation is not warranted because there would be no change to the existing views.



Source: City of Fresno GIS Data.



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Figure 3
Key Observation Points



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Figure 4
Existing View at Key Observation Point 1

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5.1 Key Observation Point 1

Existing Conditions

The existing southern view of Fulton Mall south of Kern Mall is primarily limited to foreground and middle ground views of various visual resources (Figure 4). These resources include mature trees, patterned pavement, artwork, benches, light stands, and flower pots. The landform from this viewpoint is considered to have moderately low vividness due to its relatively flat terrain; however, the irregularly shaped ornamental pine tree in the foreground is considered to have a moderately high vividness due to its unique trunk structure. The manmade features within the pedestrian mall provided in this view are considered to have a low level of vividness because they appear to have an overall low level of maintenance or upkeep, which has resulted in dirty pavements, inoperable and broken concrete fountains, vacant shops, and flyers haphazardly posted at storefronts and lightpoles. The view from this location outside the right-of-way is only applicable to the nominal vegetation in the middle ground near Inyo Street and the buildings that border the Mall. The vegetation and the buildings provide very low to moderately low vividness view from this viewpoint. Overall, the view from this viewpoint of inside and outside of the right-of-way provides low vividness.

This view has some visual encroachments or eyesores including pavement that is dirty, contains chewing gum, and is cracked in various locations. This view also includes flyers in the building windows as well as on the utility poles that are visible in the background view. Overall, the intactness is moderately low.

The unity between natural (trees and vegetation) and manmade as well as the overall unity is considered low due to the low visual harmony that this view provides.

Overall, the visual quality that this view provides is low.

Viewer Response

From Key Observation Point 1, the presence of the artwork, vegetation, and the pavement design provide a unique visual experience compared to some of the other areas within the downtown area. The viewers from this location are currently pedestrians/shoppers, bicyclists, and retail/office workers. Under Alternatives 1 and 2, motorists would be added as a viewer from this location. The pedestrians/shoppers have a relatively lengthy duration of the views. The expected viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is identified as moderately high.

Proposed Condition - Alternative 1

This alternative includes construction of a two-lane street with parallel parking on both sides of the street, and includes approximately 14-foot wide sidewalk on the west side and approximately 28-foot wide sidewalks on the east side with various features (Figure 5). From this viewpoint, the visual features within the sidewalk area would include benches, artwork, trees, water feature, and patterned pavement. This viewpoint also illustrates a mid-block crosswalk. This proposed view provides foreground, middle ground, and background views.

The landform from this viewpoint is considered to have an average level of vividness based on the proposed sidewalk, curb, gutter, and street features. The ornamental trees that are proposed along the road are considered to have moderately high vividness due to their visual pattern. The manmade features within the pedestrian mall provided in this view such as the street, sidewalk pavement, and artwork are considered to provide moderately high vividness while the features outside of the right-of-way such as storefronts as well as the background view of Fulton Street, south of Inyo Street, have average to moderately high vividness. Overall, the view from this viewpoint of inside and outside the right-of-way provides average vividness.

This view has few visual encroachments. Encroachments include the contrast of the sidewalk pavement as well as the parallel parking spaces along Fulton Street. Outside of the right-of-way, the adjacent buildings do not have any visual encroachments while the background view south of Inyo Street includes a few utility poles. The overall intactness from this view is moderately high.

The unity between natural (trees and vegetation) and manmade is considered to be moderately high with the built environment being the dominant view. Overall, the unity is moderately high due to the visual harmony of the view established by the proposed tree pattern.



Figure 5
Visual Simulation at Key Observation Point 1 for Alternative 1



Overall, the visual quality that this view provides is moderately high. Table 2 provides the quantitative comparison between the existing condition and Alternative 1.

Table 2: Visual Impact Assessment for Key Observation Point 1 - Alternative 1

Resource Change (RC) Evaluation				
Description	Vividness (V)	Intactness (I)	Unity (U)	(=V+I+U/3)
Existing	2.56	3.67	2.33	2.85
Proposed Alternative 1	4.56	5.17	5.00	4.91
Resource Change (RC) (Visual Quality Difference)				+2.06

Viewer Response (VR) Rating	
Viewer Response (VR)	5.00

Viewer Impact (VI) Rating	
Resource Change (RC)	2.06
Viewer Response (VR)	5.00
Visual Impact Formula: [(Absolute value of RC) + VR] / 2 With plus or minus sign applied to the result depending on whether the resource change (RC) value is positive or negative.	+3.53

As shown in Table 2, the overall existing visual quality at the Key Observation Point 1 would increase with the development of Alternative 1. This increase in visual quality would primarily occur due to the increase in the visual integrity, reduction of visual encroachments (such as dirty and cracked pavement, and flyers in the building windows), and establishment of a visual pattern with the proposed trees. The character of the view would improve with the addition of the proposed street and its features.

Proposed Condition Alternative 2

This alternative includes construction of a two-lane street with vignettes that consists of the street on one side of the right-of-way to provide larger areas for sidewalks, vegetation, and artwork (Figure 6). Portions of the vignettes will include parallel parking on one side of the street. From this viewpoint, the visual features within the non-street portion includes benches, artwork, trees, potted plants, grass near some water features, and patterned pavement. This viewpoint also illustrates a mid-block crosswalk.

This proposed view provides foreground, middle ground, and background views. The landform from this viewpoint is moderately high due to the slight elevation variation of the grass area and the street. The asymmetrically shaped ornamental pine tree in the foreground is considered to have high vividness due to its unique trunk structure and the level of importance of the tree that is created from the establishment of the roadway. The manmade features within the pedestrian mall provided in this view are considered to have very high vividness because the street and sidewalk pavement are clean and retain the patterns of the original mall pavement. The manmade features outside of the right-of-way provide views with moderately high vividness because the building structures will have increased maintenance as shoppers and retail revenues increase and vacancies decrease within the mall. Overall, the view from this viewpoint of inside and outside of the right-of-way provides moderately high vividness.

This view has few visual encroachments or eyesores. These include the limited contrast of the pavement and the mid-block crosswalk along Fulton Street. The overall intactness from this view is considered moderately high.

The unity between natural (trees and vegetation) and manmade is considered to be moderately high and the overall unity is also considered to be moderately high due to the coherent visual pattern that is established with the proposed improvements.

Overall, the visual quality that this view provides is moderately high. Table 3 provides the quantitative comparison between the existing condition and Alternative 2.



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Figure 6
Visual Simulation at Key Observation Point 1 for Alternative 2

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Table 3: Visual Impact Assessment for Key Observation Point 1 - Alternative 2

Resource Change (RC) Evaluation				
Description	Vividness (V)	Intactness (I)	Unity (U)	(=V+I+U/3)
Existing	2.56	3.67	2.33	2.85
Proposed Alternative 2	5.33	5.33	5.33	5.33
Resource Change (RC) (Visual Quality Difference)				+2.48

Viewer Response (VR) Rating	
Viewer Response (VR)	5.00

Viewer Impact (VI) Rating	
Resource Change (RC)	2.48
Viewer Response (VR)	5.00
Visual Impact Formula: [(Absolute value of RC) + VR] / 2 With plus or minus sign applied to the result depending on whether the resource change (RC) value is positive or negative.	+3.74

As shown in Table 3, the overall existing visual quality at the Key Observation Point 1 would increase with the development of Alternative 2. This increase in visual quality would occur due to a substantial increase in the vividness, intactness, and unity of the view. The presence of the narrow road as well as a similar paving pattern in the sidewalk provides distinct viewing components and could lead the viewers to provide a more focused view of the natural and manmade elements adjacent to the proposed road. The presence of the proposed road will not substantially alter the character of the existing view. The character of the view would improve with the addition of the proposed street and the retention of existing natural and manmade features.

5.2 Key Observation Point 2

Existing Conditions

The existing western view of the intersection of the Fulton Mall and Mariposa Mall from east of Fulton Mall is dominated by the 60-foot “Clock Tower” (Figure 7). The resources included in this view are mature trees, patterned pavement, a bronze sculpture “La Grand Laveuse (Washer Woman)” by world renown Pierre Auguste Renoir, benches, light stands, and flowerpots. The

landform from this viewpoint is considered moderately low vividness due to its relatively flat terrain.

The ornamental trees and vegetation in the foreground and background are considered to have a moderately high vividness due to the amount of vegetation in this view. The manmade features which are dominated by the existing “Clock Tower” has moderately high vividness due to the Clock Tower’s unique design and height, but it is weathered and not maintained in good condition. The view from this location outside the right-of-way is only applicable to the area southwest of Fulton Street and Mariposa Street and there are no views outside of the Fulton Mall - Urban/Built Landscape Unit.

The area southwest of Fulton and Mariposa includes a stage located adjacent to an existing building and includes various ornamental trees. This stage is located on a parcel that is currently owned by the City of Fresno and is used for various events throughout the year such as the annual Ice Rink, Fiestas Patrias (Mexican Independence Day) celebration, Cinco de Mayo, and the Catacomb Party music and art festival. From this view location, this area outside of the right-of-way as well as the structures that are adjacent to the mall, including the Pacific Southwest Building constructed in 1925, have moderately high vividness while the vegetation, which does not appear to be well maintained, has moderately low vividness. Overall, the view from this viewpoint of inside and outside of the right-of-way provides moderately low vividness.

This view has visual encroachments or eyesores including posters haphazardly taped on the light poles, dirty and cracked pavement, as well as the random location of the flowerpots that are regularly maintained within the right-of-way. The area outside of the right-of-way includes a trash enclosure that is visually intrusive due to the contrasting color of the trash enclosure with the surrounding vegetation. Overall, this view has an average level of intactness.

The unity between natural (trees and vegetation) and manmade features is considered moderately high within the right-of-way due to the visual pattern. Outside of the right-of-way, the unity is considered average. Overall, this view provides an average unifying view.

Based on the vividness, intactness, and unity qualities of this view, the visual quality that this view provides is average.

Viewer Response

From Key Observation Point 2, the presence of the “Clock Tower,” vegetation, pavement design, and the adjacent buildings provide a unique visual experience. The viewers from this location are currently pedestrians/shoppers, bicyclists, and retail/office workers. Under Alternatives 1

and 2, motorists would be added as viewers from this location. The pedestrians/shoppers have a relatively lengthy duration of the views. The expected viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is identified as high.

Proposed Condition Alternative 1

This alternative includes construction of two lane streets along Fulton Street and Mariposa Street with pedestrian bulb-outs and crosswalks at each of the four corners of the intersection (Figure 8). Parallel parking on both sides of Fulton Street and Mariposa Street will be provided. The “Clock Tower” will be refurbished and relocated to the southeast corner of the intersection. Sidewalk widths will range from approximately 14 to 28 feet and have trees, seating, sculptures, and patterned pavement.

The landform from this viewpoint is considered to have low vividness due to its relatively flat terrain. The ornamental trees and vegetation in the foreground, middle ground, and background are considered to have a high vividness due to the number of trees, which provide a leafy canopy. The manmade features include a Clock Tower, sculptures, patterned pavement on the sidewalk, street, and crosswalks and are considered to provide moderately high vividness. The view from this location outside the right-of-way is only applicable to the area southwest of the two malls and there are no views outside of the Fulton Mall - Urban/Built Landscape Unit.

The area southwest of Fulton Street and Mariposa Street includes a stage located adjacent to an existing building and includes various ornamental trees. From this view location, this area outside of the right-of-way as well as the structures that are adjacent to the mall, including the Pacific Southwest Building constructed in 1925, have moderately high vividness while the vegetation has moderately low vividness. Overall, the view from this viewpoint of inside and outside of the right-of-way provides average vividness.

This view has few visual encroachments or eyesores. These eyesores include the contrast of the pavement and the crosswalk as well as the marked parallel parking spaces along Fulton Street and Mariposa Street. The overall intactness from this view is moderately high.

The unity between natural (trees and vegetation) and manmade features is considered to be high within the right-of-way due to the visual integrity of the view and average outside of the right-of-way. The overall unity from this viewpoint is moderately high. Based on the above evaluation, the overall visual quality that this view provides is average. Table 4 provides the quantitative comparison between the existing condition and Alternative 1.

Table 4: Visual Impact Assessment for Key Observation Point 2 - Alternative 1

Resource Change (RC) Evaluation				
Description	Vividness (V)	Intactness (I)	Unity (U)	(=V+I+U/3)
Existing	3.84	4.50	4.50	4.28
Proposed Alternative 1	4.00	5.50	5.00	4.83
Resource Change (RC) (Visual Quality Difference)				+0.55

Viewer Response (VR) Rating	
Viewer Response (VR)	6.00

Viewer Impact (VI) Rating	
Resource Change (RC)	+0.55
Viewer Response (VR)	6.00
Visual Impact Formula: $[(\text{Absolute value of RC}) + \text{VR}] / 2$ With plus or minus sign applied to the result depending on whether the resource change (RC) value is positive or negative.	+3.28

As shown in Table 4, the overall existing visual quality at the Key Observation Point 2 would increase with the development of Alternative 1. This increase in visual quality would primarily occur due to an increase in the intactness of the view by eliminating the dirty and cracked pavement as well as the unification of the visual pattern of the mall features. The presence of the road does not substantially alter the character of the existing view.



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Figure 7
Existing View at Key Observation Point 2

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VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT



Figure 8
Visual Simulation at Key Observation Point 2 for Alternative 1



Proposed Condition Alternative 2

This alternative includes construction of two lane streets along Fulton and Mariposa with pedestrian bulb-outs and crosswalks at each of the four corners of the intersection similar to Alternative 1 (Figure 9). Perpendicular parking is proposed on one side of Mariposa Street. The “Clock Tower” will be refurbished and relocated to the southeast corner of the intersection. Sidewalks will range from 14 to 28 feet in width with trees, artwork, and patterned pavement.

The landform from this viewpoint is considered to have low vividness due to its relatively flat terrain. The proposed ornamental trees and vegetation within the right-of-way would have high vividness while the trees outside of the right-of-way would have moderately low vividness. The manmade features include the Clock Tower, artwork, pattern pavement on the sidewalk, street, and crosswalks would be considered to provide very high vividness due to the Clock Tower’s unique design and height. The manmade features outside of the right-of-way includes the structures adjacent to the mall, including the Pacific Southwest Building constructed in 1925, have moderately high vividness. Overall, the view of inside and outside the right-of-way from this viewpoint has average vividness.

This view has no visual encroachments within the right-of-way. The overall intactness from this view would be high due to the improvement of visual integrity.

The unity between natural (trees and vegetation) and manmade features within the right-of-way is considered to be high because this view provides visual harmony while the unity outside of the right-of-way provides average unity. Overall, the unity is moderately high from this viewpoint.

Based on the above evaluation, the overall visual quality that this view provides is moderately high. Table 5 provides the quantitative comparison between the existing condition and Alternative 2.

Table 5: Visual Impact Assessment for Key Observation Point 2 - Alternative 2

Resource Change (RC) Evaluation				
Description	Vividness (V)	Intactness (I)	Unity (U)	(=V+I+U/3)
Existing	3.84	4.50	4.50	4.28
Proposed Alternative 2	4.00	5.50	5.00	4.83
Resource Change (RC) (Visual Quality Difference)				+0.55

Viewer Response (VR) Rating	
Viewer Response (VR)	6.00

Viewer Impact (VI) Rating	
Resource Change (RC)	0.55
Viewer Response (VR)	6.00
Visual Impact Formula: [(Absolute value of RC) + VR] / 2 With plus or minus sign applied to the result depending on whether the resource change (RC) value is positive or negative.	+3.28

As shown in Table 5, the overall existing visual quality at the Key Observation Point 2 would increase with the development of Alternative 2. This increase in visual quality would primarily occur due to the increase in intactness of the view by eliminating the dirty and cracked pavement as well as the unification of the visual pattern of the mall features. The presence of the road does not substantially alter the character of the existing view.

5.3 Key Observation Point 3

Existing Conditions

The existing southern view of Fulton Mall south of Merced Mall is limited to foreground and middle ground views of various visual resources (Figure 10). These resources include the mature trees, shrubs, planters, patterned pavement, artwork, benches, light stands, and flower pots. The landform from this viewpoint has very low vividness due to its relatively flat terrain; however, the ornamental trees in the foreground and middle ground are considered to have moderately high vividness. The manmade features within the pedestrian mall provided in this view are considered to have low vividness because they do not appear to be well maintained and have dirty, stained, and broken or cracked pavement, benches, and planter areas.



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Figure 9
Visual Simulation at Key Observation Point 2 for Alternative 2

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VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The view from this location outside the right-of-way is only applicable to buildings that border the pedestrian mall. The buildings provide moderately high vividness from this viewpoint due to their unique architecture. Overall, the view from this viewpoint of inside and outside of the right-of-way provides moderately low vividness.

This view has several visual encroachments or eyesores that include posters on light poles, dirty and cracked pavement, and benches and has moderately low intactness. Outside of the right-of-way, there are some visual encroachments from this viewpoint including the dirty and cracked pavement, benches, and planters. This view is considered to have a moderately high intactness. Overall, the intactness of this view is average.

The unity between natural (trees and vegetation) and manmade features is considered moderately low because the features within the mall from this viewpoint do not appear to be well maintained. There is little visual harmony of this view.

Viewer Response

From Key Observation Point 3, the presence of the vegetation, the pavement design, and the adjacent buildings provide a unique visual experience; however, the noticeable stains on the pavement and seating area reduces the quality of the view. The viewers from this location are currently pedestrians/shoppers, bicyclists, and retail/office workers. Under Alternatives 1 and 2, motorists would be added as a viewer from this location. The pedestrians/shoppers have a relatively lengthy duration of the views. The expected viewer sensitivity rating from this viewpoint is identified as average.

Proposed Condition Alternative 1

This alternative includes construction of a two-lane street with parallel parking on both sides of the street, and includes a range of approximately 14 to 28-foot wide sidewalks with various features to improve the shopping experience (Figure 11). From this viewpoint, the visual features within the sidewalk area includes light poles, artwork, trees, and patterned pavement. This viewpoint also illustrates a mid-block crosswalk. This proposed view provides foreground, middle ground, and limited and confined background views.

The landform from this viewpoint is considered to have low vividness due to its relatively flat terrain; however, the ornamental trees that are proposed along the road are considered to have high vividness due to their visual pattern. The features within the pedestrian mall provided in this view are considered to also have high vividness due to the distinctive patterns of the

sidewalk pavement, artwork, and light poles. There are no available views from this location outside the right-of-way and outside the Fulton Mall - Urban/Built Landscape Unit.

Overall, the view from this viewpoint of inside and outside of the right-of-way provides moderately high vividness.

This view has few visual encroachments or eyesores. These eyesores include the contrast of the pavement and the mid-block crosswalk along Fulton Street. The overall intactness from this view is high. The unity between natural (trees and vegetation) and manmade is considered to be moderately high while the overall unity is also considered to be moderately high due to the visual pattern and harmony that is created under this alternative.

Overall, the visual quality that this view provides is moderately high. Table 6 provides the quantitative comparison between the existing condition and Alternative 1.

Table 6: Visual Impact Assessment for Key Observation Point 3 - Alternative 1

Resource Change (RC) Evaluation				
Description	Vividness (V)	Intactness (I)	Unity (U)	(=V+I+U/3)
Existing	3.84	4.00	3.50	3.61
Proposed Alternative 1	5.34	6.50	4.50	5.47
Resource Change (RC) (Visual Quality Difference)				+1.19

Viewer Response (VR) Rating	
Viewer Response (VR)	4.00

Viewer Impact (VI) Rating	
Resource Change (RC)	1.19
Viewer Response (VR)	4.00
Visual Impact Formula: [(Absolute value of RC) + VR] / 2 With plus or minus sign applied to the result depending on whether the resource change (RC) value is positive or negative.	+2.60



Figure 10
Existing View at Key Observation Point 3



Figure 11
Visual Simulation at Key Observation Point 3 for Alternative 1



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VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

As shown in Table 6, the overall existing visual quality at the Key Observation Point 3 would increase with the development of Alternative 1. This increase in visual quality would occur due to an increase in the vividness, intactness, and unity of the view. Each of these components of the visual quality substantially increase under Alternative 1 due to the provision of distinctive patterns, visual integrity, and visual harmony of the view with Alternative 1. The implementation of Alternative 1 would improve the current view of stained and cracked pavement, seating areas and planters.

Proposed Condition Alternative 2

This alternative includes construction of a two-lane street with vignettes. At this location, the vignette includes the roadway in the middle of the right-of-way and no parallel parking in the vignette area, but parallel parking is provided outside of the vignette area (Figure 12). The vignette allows for a larger area for sidewalks, vegetation, and artwork. From this viewpoint, the visual features within the sidewalk area includes light poles, artwork, trees, potted plants, and patterned pavement.

This proposed view provides foreground, middle ground, and limited and confined background views. The landform from this viewpoint is considered to be low vividness due to its relatively flat terrain; however, the ornamental trees that are proposed along the road are considered to have moderately high vividness due to their visual pattern. The features proposed within the pedestrian mall provided in this view are considered to have high vividness due to the clean pavement and maintained street, sidewalk, lighting fixtures, and artwork. The view outside of the right-of-way includes the structures that are adjacent to the mall. An expected result of opening the mall to vehicular traffic is an increase in customers and retail sales. With an increase in sales, building owners or renters, may use the additional income to improve building exteriors, which would provide the opportunity for the storefronts to have a higher vividness. Overall, the view from this viewpoint of inside and outside of the right-of-way provides high vividness.

This view has few visual encroachments or eyesores under Alternative 2. One eyesore includes the contrast of the patterned pavement and the white stapes that illustrate the separation between the sidewalk and the roadway along Fulton Street (Figure 12). The intactness of the view outside of the right-of-way, which includes the buildings, is considered very high. The overall intactness from this view is high.

The unity between natural (trees and vegetation) and manmade features is considered to be high due to the visual harmony and coherent visual pattern created with the features that are proposed as part of Alternative 2. The overall unity is also considered to be moderately high.

Based on the above evaluation, the overall visual quality that this view provides is moderately high. Table 7 provides the quantitative comparison between the existing condition and Alternative 2.

Table 7: Visual Impact Assessment for Key Observation Point 3 - Alternative 2

Resource Change (RC) Evaluation				
Description	Vividness (V)	Intactness (I)	Unity (U)	(=V+I+U/3)
Existing	3.84	4.00	3.50	3.61
Proposed Alternative 2	5.84	6.50	5.00	5.78
Resource Change (RC) (Visual Quality Difference)				+2.17

Viewer Response (VR) Rating	
Viewer Response (VR)	4.00

Viewer Impact (VI) Rating	
Resource Change (RC)	2.17
Viewer Response (VR)	4.00
Visual Impact Formula: [(Absolute value of RC) + VR] / 2 With plus or minus sign applied to the result depending on whether the resource change (RC) value is positive or negative.	+3.09

As shown in Table 7, the overall existing visual quality at the Key Observation Point 3 would increase with the development of Alternative 2. This increase in visual quality would occur due to a substantial increase in the vividness, intactness, and unity of the view. Each of these components of the visual quality substantially increases under Alternative 1 due to the provision of distinctive patterns, visual integrity, and visual harmony of the view with Alternative 2. The implementation of Alternative 2 would improve the current view of dirty, stained, and cracked pavement, benches, and planter areas.



Figure 12
Visual Simulation at Key Observation Point 3 for Alternative 2

5.4 Summary of Visual Impacts

The implementation of Alternatives 1 and 2 will result in the alternation of the visual character of Fulton Mall. The visual quality of the views as well as the response of the viewers were evaluated at three Key Observation Points along the project area. Based on the evaluation provided above, Alternatives 1 and 2 will result in positive visual changes with the reconstruction of Fulton Mall. However, until the proposed newly planted trees reach maturity and provide shade and increased visual appeal, the removal of the mature trees will have a temporary substantial negative visual impact.

Alternatives 1 and 2

Both alternatives will result in the removal of existing mature trees that are located throughout Fulton Mall. It is assumed that approximately 22 mature trees of the existing 140 trees within the Mall will remain under Alternatives 1 and approximately 27 mature trees within the vignette areas would remain under Alternative 2. Removal of trees will cause a temporary substantial negative visual impact. However, under both Alternatives 1 and 2, replacement trees will be planted within the Mall. Alternative 1 will include the replanting of approximately 132 new trees and Alternative 2 will include the replanting of approximately 70 new trees. The replacement trees that will be located within the sidewalk areas will include root barriers that will diminish future uneven pavement around the trees. Replacement trees will include varying sizes that range from 15-gallon to 36-inch box. Advanced planting techniques will ensure the trees will grow quickly to maturity and provide beauty and shade to Mall visitors.

Alternatives 1 and 2 will also result in the loss of the original patterned pavement of the Mall and replace it with an asphalt road in the middle of the Mall and new patterned pavement along the sidewalks as well as the vignette areas in Alternative 2. The new patterned pavement will replicate the original pavement to maintain the original design. The presence of the asphalt road will alter the views within the Mall. This visual alteration will be positive because both alternatives will replace the dirty, stained, and cracked pavement that decreases the visual quality of the Mall.

The planters throughout the Mall area are also assumed to be removed under Alternatives 1 and 2 and new planters will be constructed in the vignette areas under Alternative 2. The new planters will include new irrigation. Many of the existing planter walls and associated curbs are cracked and stained. The removal of the planters under Alternative 1 would improve the visual quality of the Mall. Under Alternative 2, the inclusion of new planters within the vignette areas will also improve the visual quality of the Mall under Alternative 2.

The existing sculptures will be temporarily removed during construction activities under Alternatives 1 and 2. Some of the existing sculptures have been vandalized. Alternative 1 includes refurbishing the 20 existing sculptures and returning three additional sculptures that have been in storage, placing them within the sidewalk areas of Fulton Mall, and prominently identifying them. The refurbishment of the sculptures will improve the visual quality of the Mall under Alternative 1.

Alternative 2 will also include refurbishing the 20 existing sculptures and returning three additional sculptures that have been in storage. Eleven of the 20 sculptures would be returned to approximately the same location as they exist today. The remaining 12 sculptures would be returned to new locations within the Mall. Each of the sculptures would be prominently displayed and identified. The refurbishment of the sculptures will improve the visual quality of the Mall under Alternative 2.

Some of the existing fountains will be removed and others will remain during construction activities under both Alternatives 1 and 2. Fourteen of the existing 21 fountains are currently inoperable due to cracks, inoperable pumps, and/or electrical problems affecting the lighting. Many have become repositories for debris, discarded bits of food, and cigarette butts. Alternative 1 will refurbish or rebuild 16 fountains that are located within Fulton Mall. Since many of the fountains are in disrepair, refurbishing or rebuilding them under Alternative 1 would improve the visual quality of the Mall.

Alternative 2 will refurbish or rebuild 17 of the 21 fountains. Retaining and refurbishing/rebuilding the fountains will improve the visual quality of the Mall under Alternative 2.

Under both Alternatives 1 and 2, long-term maintenance of the fountains will be provided by the City of Fresno. The City currently provides maintenance of the fountains; however, due to the number of inoperable fountains and their age, substantial funding has been needed. Under Alternatives 1 and 2, fewer fountains will be included in Fulton Mall, and the existing maintenance funding will be adequate to maintain the refurbished or rebuilt fountains.

There are various existing lighting fixtures throughout the Mall that are inoperable due to lack of maintenance. After dark, the Mall appears to be almost abandoned, since most of the retail stores throughout the Mall are closed in the evening due to the lack of customers and many of the stores are locked with metal gates to prevent burglaries and the lights are turned off. Therefore, in the evening, the Mall has a lack of proper lighting and the nighttime visual experience is of very low quality. Under Alternatives 1 and 2, the provision of streets within the Mall as well as parking near the retail stores will indirectly increase the number of shoppers in Fulton Mall,

thereby increasing revenues, decreasing vacancies, and it would be expected that increased maintenance dollars would be available for upkeep of the Mall landscaping, lighting, and storefronts. New irrigation lines would be provided for landscaping within the Mall, and new electrical wiring would be provided for the light fixtures proposed in the Mall.

If sufficient nighttime lighting is provided, and stores remain open in the evenings, the opportunity for increased revenue is created. Therefore, the implementation of Alternatives 1 and 2 will substantially improve the nighttime visual quality of Fulton Mall. Although both Alternatives 1 and 2 will improve the visual quality of the Mall, Alternative 2 will result in a greater increase in the visual quality of the mall compared to Alternative 1. See Tables 2 through 7 to compare the overall higher rating at each Key Observation Point for visual quality improvement with Alternative 2. The higher rating for Alternative 2 is because the implementation of this Alternative will include vignettes that allow for the proposed street to narrow and provide wider sidewalk areas to accommodate more existing Mall design elements compared to Alternative 1.

Additionally, the vignettes proposed for Alternative 2 will incorporate a greater amount of the existing patterned pavement within the Mall area compared to Alternative 1 because the patterned pavement would extend onto the surface of the street. The crosswalks within the vignette areas would include offset color concrete strips. The three Key Observation Points that are evaluated above include locations with special treatment areas. The special treatment areas under Alternative 2 are generally expected to provide a substantially greater visual quality than current conditions.

In the areas of Alternative 2 that will include improvements similar to Alternative 1, the visual quality of the views are expected to be increased compared to the existing conditions. The vignette areas of Alternative 2 would have a greater visual quality compared to Alternative 1.

The implementation of Alternative 3 (No Build Alternative) would retain the existing pedestrian Mall in its current state. The existing pavement, planters, sculptures, fountains, seating areas, other artwork, and lighting that are in various states of disrepair are anticipated to continue to degrade due to lack of maintenance and vandalism thus resulting in the further adverse visual quality of existing views within Fulton Mall. Maintaining status quo may indirectly reduce the number of shoppers and retail revenues. A reduction in retail revenue may result in additional retail store vacancies, and continued degradation of the views within the Mall. The mature trees, although not regularly maintained, would remain and continue to provide shade and visual relief from the minimally maintained storefronts along the Mall. Overall, Alternative 3 will continue

to adversely affect the visual environment and with the passage of time, further reduce the quality of the existing views within the Mall.

6. Recommended Mitigation and Minimization Measures

Following are the recommended mitigation and minimization measures to reduce potential visual impacts associated with Alternatives 1 and 2. The first set of mitigation measures is recommended for both Alternatives 1 and 2. One additional measure is recommended for Alternative 1 only and one additional measure is recommended for Alternative 2 only. No mitigation and minimization measures are recommended for the No Build alternative (Alternative 3).

Alternatives 1 and 2

1. All midblock crosswalks within the project area shall use color concrete with pattern pavement that matches the proposed sidewalk.
2. Drainage structures such as inlets within the sidewalk areas and the face of the curbs shall be designed to visibly blend-in with the color and tone of the setting.
3. Replacement trees to be planted shall be of varying sizes that range from 15 gallon to 36-inch box. Each replacement tree shall have root barriers to prevent sidewalk upheaval from roots.
4. Trash receptacles shall blend in with the landscape by including an exterior color that is similar to the patterned pavement of the sidewalk.
5. All 20 sculptures would be removed during construction activities. Prior to returning the sculptures, they shall be refurbished, and then located in prominent viewable areas within the Mall.

Alternative 1

6. Trees that are removed shall be replaced with a new tree at a 1:1 ratio within the Fulton Mall right-of-way. Currently, the City is planning to replant approximately 132 new trees. The replacement trees shall be consistent with the landscape palette and design approved by the Parks Director and the Public Works Director.

Alternative 2

7. The City shall replace approximately 70 trees within the Fulton Mall right-of-way. The replacement trees shall be consistent with the landscape palette and design approved by the Parks Director and the Public Works Director.

7. References

California Department of Transportation. 2013. Standard Environmental Reference. Chapter 27, Visual & Aesthetics Review.

Site Visit. April 2013. FirstCarbon Solutions.

U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. 1988. Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects (FHWA-HI-88-054).

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8. Appendices

A - Landscape Unit Checklist

B - Visual Quality Evaluation

Appendix A - Landscape Unit Checklist

Landscape Unit Checklist: Visual Inventory and Analysis

Project Name	Fresno Fulton Mall	Evaluator	Houlihan
S.R. Number		Date	April 13, 2013
Assessment Unit	Fulton Mall - Urban Built	Weather	Clear
L/F District			
L/F Section			
L/F Province			

Visual Information (Perception)	Visual Character (Cognition)	
Resource Supply	Pattern Elements	Pattern Character
3 High Prominence	3 High Prominence	3 High Prominence
2 Moderate Prominence	2 Moderate Prominence	2 Moderate Prominence
1 Present	1 Present	1 Present
0 Absent	0 Absent	0 Absent

Landform

0 Mountains	3 Form	3 Dominance of Landforms
0 Steep Hills/Ridges	3 Line	2 Scale of Landforms
0 Rolling Hills	3 Color	2 Diversity of Landforms
0 Undulating Land	3 Texture	1 Continuity of Landform Pattern
0 Plateaus/Plains		
0 Valleys		
0 Cliffs, Bluffs		
0 Points		
0 Beaches		

Land Cover (Water)

0 Bays/Inlets	0 Form	0 Dominance of Waterforms
0 Rivers	0 Line	0 Scale of Waterforms
0 Streams	0 Color	0 Diversity of Waterforms
0 Lakes	0 Texture	0 Continuity of Waterform Pattern
0 Ponds		
0 Marshes		
0 Waterfalls/Rapids		

Land Cover (Vegetation)

0 Coniferous Woods	2 Form	2 Dominance of Vegetation
0 Deciduous Woods	2 Line	2 Scale of Vegetation
0 Scrubland	2 Color	1 Diversity of Vegetation
0 Grassland	2 Texture	1 Continuity of Vegetation Pattern
0 Pasture/Croplands		
0 Parks/Lawns		
0 Street Trees		
0 Agriculture		

Appendix B - Visual Quality Evaluation

Visual Quality Evaluation - Evaluation Scale Fulton Mall Reconstruction

The evaluation scale for each of the components of the visual quality criteria is provided below.

Vividness Criteria - This criteria is based on the memorability of the visual impression received from contracting landscape elements as they combine to form a striking and distinctive visual pattern. This criteria includes Landform, Water, Vegetation, and Manmade Development. If one of the criteria is not present, it is considered not applicable.

Vividness Rating (for all criteria)

7	Very High
6	High
5	Moderately High
4	Average
3	Moderately Low
2	Low
1	Very Low

Intactness Criteria - This criteria is based on the integrity of the visual pattern and the extent to which the landscape is free from visual encroachment or eyesores. This criteria includes Absence of Encroachments and Overall Intactness. Following are the basis of the ratings.

Intactness Rating

Absence of Encroachments		Overall Intactness	
7	None	7	Very High
6	Few	6	High
5	Some	5	Moderately High
4	Average	4	Average
3	Several	3	Moderately Low
2	Many	2	Low
1	Very Many	1	Very Low

Unity Criteria - This criteria is based on the degree to which the visual resources of a landscape join together to form a coherent, harmonious visual pattern. This criteria includes Manmade/Natural Unity, which is the unity between manmade and natural elements and Overall Unity. If there are no manmade elements or natural elements associated with a view then the Manmade/Natural Unity criteria is not present, and it is considered not applicable.

Unity Rating (for both criteria)

- 7 Very High
- 6 High
- 5 Moderately High
- 4 Average
- 3 Moderately Low
- 2 Low
- 1 Very Low

VISUAL QUALITY EVALUATION - VIEW FROM THE ROAD - EXISTING CONDITIONS

VISUAL QUALITY EVALUATION – VIEW FROM THE ROAD

Project Fulton Mall Reconstruction

Evaluator Mike Houlihan

Evaluation Scale: 1-7

S.R. No.

Date November 20, 2013

1 = Very Low

V.R.M. Unit _____

Weather Clear

4 = Average

7 = Very High

Observer Viewpoint	VIEW	VISUAL QUALITY																	Visual Quality (V + I + U) ÷ 3 (Overall Average)
	ZONE	VIVIDNESS						INTACTNESS						UNITY					
		CRITERIA				Vividness (1-7)	Overall Vividness	FEATURES	CRITERIA		Intactness (Av.: 1-7)	Overall Intactness	ENCROACHMENT	CRITERIA		Unity (Av.: 1-7)	Overall Unity		
		Landform	Water	Vegetation	Manmade Dev.				Absence of Encroachment	Overall Intact.				Man/Natural	Overall Unity				
1	Inside R.O.W.	3.00	NA	5.00	2.00	3.67	2.56	Mature trees are distinctive	5.00	2.00	3.50	3.67	Chewing gum, cracked pavement, posters on light poles	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.33	2.85	
	O/S Row	I/S Unit	NA	NA	NA	3.00		3.00	Buildings	6.00	4.00		5.00	Flyers on windows	NA	2.00			2.00
	O/S Unit	NA	NA	1.00	1.00	1.00		Vegetation, utility poles	3.00	2.00	2.50		Utility poles	2.00	2.00	2.00			
2	Inside R.O.W.	2.00	NA	5.00	5.00	4.00	3.84	Clock Tower, mature trees	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.50	Dirty and cracked pavement, posters on light poles	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.50	4.28	
	O/S Row	I/S Unit	3.00	NA	3.00	5.00		3.67	Mature trees	5.00	5.00		5.00	Trash bin	4.00	4.00			4.00
	O/S Unit	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		NA	NA	NA	NA		NA	NA	NA	NA			NA
3	Inside R.O.W.	1.00	NA	5.00	2.00	2.67	3.84	Mature trees, stained pavement	3.00	3.00	5.00	4.00	Posters on light poles, dirty pavement	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.50	3.78	
	O/S Row	I/S Unit	NA	NA	NA	5.00		5.00	Building Architecture	5.00	5.00		5.00	Low exterior maintenance	NA	4.00			4.00
	O/S Unit	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		NA	NA	NA	NA		NA	NA	NA	NA			

O/S R.O.W. = Outside R.O.W.
NA = Not Applicable

I/S Unit = Inside Landscape Unit
O/S Unit = Outside Landscape Unit

VISUAL QUALITY EVALUATION - VIEW FROM THE ROAD - PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE 1

VISUAL QUALITY EVALUATION - VIEW FROM THE ROAD

Project **Fulton Mall Reconstruction**

Evaluator **Mike Houlihan**

Evaluation Scale: 1-7

S.R. No.

Date **November 20, 2013**

1 = Very Low

V.R.M. Unit _____

Weather **Clear**

4 = Average

7 = Very High

Observer Viewpoint	VIEW	VISUAL QUALITY																
	ZONE	VIVIDNESS						INTACTNESS						UNITY				Visual Quality (V + I + U) ÷ 3 (Overall Average)
		CRITERIA				Vividness (1-7)	Overall Vividness	FEATURES	Absence of Encroachment		Intactness (Av.: 1-7)	Overall Intactness	ENCROACHMENT	CRITERIA		Unity (Av.: 1-7)	Overall Unity	
		Landform	Water	Vegetation	Manmade Dev.				Overall Intact.	Overall Intact.				Man/Natural	Overall Unity			
1	Inside R.O.W.	4.00	NA	5.00	5.00	4.67	4.56	Patterned trees, artwork, patterned pavement	6.00	6.00	6.00	5.17	Contrasting crosswalk	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	
	O/S Row	I/S Unit	NA	NA	NA	4.00		Trees	7.00	5.00	6.00		None	NA	5.00	5.00		
	O/S Unit	NA	NA	5.00	5.00	5.00		Few trees, utility poles	3.00	4.00	3.50		Utility poles	5.00	5.00	5.00		
2	Inside R.O.W.	2.00	NA	6.00	5.00	4.33	4.00	Mature trees, artwork, Clock Tower	6.00	6.00	6.00	5.50	Contrasting crosswalk	6.00	6.00	6.00	5.00	4.83
	O/S Row	I/S Unit	3.00	NA	3.00	5.00	3.67	Mature trees	5.00	5.00	5.00		Trash bin	4.00	4.00	4.00		
	O/S Unit	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		NA	NA	NA	NA		NA	NA	NA	NA		
3	Inside R.O.W.	2.00	NA	6.00	6.00	4.67	5.34	Trees, patterned pavement, artwork	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.50	Contrasting crosswalk	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.50	5.47
	O/S Row	I/S Unit	NA	NA	NA	6.00	6.00	Building architecture	7.00	7.00	7.00		None	NA	4.00	4.00		
	O/S Unit	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		NA	NA	NA	NA		NA	NA	NA	NA		

O/S R.O.W. = Outside R.O.W.

I/S Unit = Inside Landscape Unit

NA = Not Applicable

O/S Unit = Outside Landscape Unit

VISUAL QUALITY EVALUATION - VIEW FROM THE ROAD - PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE 2

Project **Fulton Mall Reconstruction**

Evaluator **Mike Houlihan**

Evaluation Scale: 1-7

S.R. No.

Date **November 20, 2013**

1 = Very Low

V.R.M. Unit _____

Weather **Clear**

4 = Average

7 = Very High

Observer Viewpoint	VIEW		VISUAL QUALITY																Visual Quality (V + I + U) ÷ 3 (Overall Average)
	ZONE		VIVIDNESS						INTACTNESS						UNITY				
			CRITERIA				Vividness (1-7)	Overall Vividness	FEATURES	CRITERIA		Intactness (Av.: 1-7)	Overall Intactness	ENCROACHMENT	CRITERIA		Unity (Av.: 1-7)	Overall Unity	
			Landform	Water	Vegetation	Manned Dev.				Absence of Encroachment	Overall Intact.				Man/Natural	Overall Unity			
1	Inside R.O.W.		5.00	NA	6.00	7.00	6.00	5.33	Accentuates the features	6.00	6.00	6.00	5.33	Contrasting crosswalk	6.00	6.00	6.00	5.33	
	O/S Row	I/S Unit	NA	NA	NA	5.00	5.00		Buildings	7.00	6.00	6.50		None	NA	5.0	5.0		
		O/S Unit	NA	NA	5.00	5.00	5.00		Vegetation, utility poles	3.00	4.00	3.50		Utility poles	5.00	5.00	5.00		
2	Inside R.O.W.		2.00	NA	6.00	5.00	4.33	4.00	Clock tower, mature trees, artwork	6.00	6.00	6.00	5.50	Contrasting crosswalk	6.00	6.00	6.00	5.00	
	O/S Row	I/S Unit	3.0	NA	3.0	5.00	3.67		Mature trees	5.00	5.00	5.00		Trash bin	4.00	4.00	4.00		
		O/S Unit	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		NA	NA	NA	NA		NA	NA	NA	NA		
3	Inside R.O.W.		2.0	NA	6.00	6.00	4.60	5.84	Mature trees, artwork	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.50	Contrasting curb divider	6.00	6.00	6.00	5.00	
	O/S Row	I/S Unit	NA	NA	NA	7.00	7.00		Building architecture	7.00	7.00	7.00		None	NA	4.00	4.00		
		O/S Unit	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		NA	NA	NA	NA		NA	NA	NA	NA		

O/S R.O.W. = Outside R.O.W.

I/S Unit = Inside Landscape Unit

O/S Unit = Outside Landscape Unit

