

## Section 3.1 | Aesthetics/Visual Resources

### 3.1.1 Introduction

This section describes the affected environment for aesthetics and visual resources, the regulatory setting associated with aesthetics and visual resources, the impacts on aesthetics and visual resources that would result from the project, and the mitigation measures that would reduce these impacts.

The following impact determinations were made in the County of Los Angeles Initial Study Checklist for the proposed project.

- The project site would not be located in an undeveloped or undisturbed area that contains unique aesthetic features.
- The project's proposed use would not be out of character in comparison to adjacent uses because of height, bulk, or other features.
- The project would not likely create substantial sun shadow, light, or glare problems.
- The project would not result in other factors related to aesthetics/visual resources (e.g., grading or landform alteration).

These issues are not discussed further in this section.

### 3.1.2 Regulatory Setting

#### 3.1.2.1 Federal

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USDA Forest Service) will ensure that visual resources within the Los Padres and Angeles National Forests are preserved. USDA Forest Service regulations cannot be altered by the proposed project. A federal agency must comply with the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) whenever it proposes an action, grants a permit, or agrees to fund or otherwise authorize any other entity to undertake an action that could possibly affect environmental resources. Compliance with NEPA may involve evaluation of aesthetic and neighborhood character impacts. It is anticipated that NEPA compliance would be required only for the proposed project locations within national forests. This compliance would occur during environmental review for individual projects of the Bicycle Master Plan (project-level analysis).

#### 3.1.2.2 State

##### California Scenic Highway Program

Caltrans manages the California Scenic Highway Program, which was created in 1963 by the California legislature to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from changes that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. The program includes a list of highways that are eligible for designation as scenic highways or that have been designated as such. A highway

may be designated as scenic based on how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes on the traveler's enjoyment of the view. State laws governing the California Scenic Highway Program are found in the Streets and Highways Code, Sections 260 through 263.

### **3.1.2.3 Local**

#### **Los Angeles County General Plan**

##### **General Goals and Policies**

This section contains goals and policies from the General Goals and Policies of the *County of Los Angeles General Plan* and subsequent amendments related to aesthetics and visual resources (County of Los Angeles 1980a).

##### **General Goals**

- Conserve resources and protect the environment.

##### **Plan Policies**

##### ***Resource Conservation and Protection of Environmental Quality***

- Protect areas that have significant natural resources and scenic values, including significant ecological areas, the coastal zone and prime agricultural lands.

#### **Scenic Highway Element**

This section contains goals and policies from the Scenic Highway Element of the *County of Los Angeles General Plan* related to aesthetics and visual resources (County of Los Angeles 1974).

##### **Statement of Goals**

The basis ideals and values of the Scenic Highway Element are reflected in goals which link assets, problems, issues, and opportunities with policies and programs. They provide the emphasis for developing policy and implementation programs. Actions affecting the quality of roadside scenic resources should be based on the intent of the Scenic Highway Element's goals which follow:

- A scenic highway system serving the public through a variety of transportation modes.
- Enhanced recreational opportunities served by a system of scenic highways.
- Preservation and enhancement of aesthetic resources within scenic corridors.

##### **Statement of Policies**

It shall be the policy of Los Angeles County to:

- Establish a countywide scenic highway system in urban and rural areas.
- Encourage utilization of appropriate existing roads as scenic highways rather than the construction of new routes.

- Protect and enhance aesthetics resources within corridors of designated scenic highways.
- Establish and maintain rural scenic highways to provide access to scenic resources and serve recreational users.
- Establish and maintain urban scenic highways to provide access to interesting and aesthetic manmade features, historical and cultural sites, and urban open space areas.
- Provide a comprehensive scenic highway system which [safely] accommodates various forms of transportation compatible with scenic highway criteria and standards.
- Develop and apply standards to regulate the quality of development within corridors of designated scenic highways.
- Remove visual pollution from designated scenic highway corridors.
- Require the development and use of aesthetic design considerations for road construction, reconstruction or maintenance for all designated scenic highways.
- Increase governmental commitment to the designation of scenic highways and protection of scenic corridors.
- Encourage the fair distribution of social and economic costs and benefits associated with scenic highways.
- Promote the use and awareness of scenic highway amenities for all segments of the population.
- Improve scenic highway coordination and implementation procedures between all levels of government.
- Encourage increased citizen participation in the scenic highway programs at all governmental levels.

### **3.1.3 Environmental Setting**

#### **3.1.3.1 Regional Visual Setting**

The unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County encompass 2,656.6 square miles of the County's 4,083.2 square miles, comprising a diverse topography that includes coastline, flatlands, mountains, and deserts. Towering mountain ranges, deep valleys, forests, islands, lakes, rivers, and desert define the visual character of the inland eastern County areas. The waters of the Pacific Ocean and broad sandy beaches define the western margin of the County.

Several waterways, including the Los Angeles River, the Rio Hondo, the San Gabriel River, and the Santa Clara River traverse the County, while the primary mountain ranges are the Santa Monica Mountains and the San Gabriel Mountains. Stands of pine, fir, and other evergreens cover the higher slopes of the San Gabriel Mountains. The San Gabriel Mountains are part of the Transverse Ranges of Southern California, and are contained mostly within the Angeles National Forest. The western extent of the Mojave Desert begins in the Antelope Valley, in the northeastern part of the County. The desert floor of the Antelope Valley is carpeted with wildflowers in the early spring.

The County's urban setting also offers a variety of scenic resources ranging from California bungalows to modern skyscrapers. Many historical sites have been identified by state and local groups. Buildings designed by notable architects and other buildings of special significance offer outstanding examples of many architectural styles. Museums, amphitheaters, schools, and parks display excellence in both landscaping and design. The developing skyline of Downtown Los Angeles is a vivid landscape, and many residential areas in the County such as the Palos Verdes Peninsula, Woodland Hills, West lake Village, and La Cañada Flintridge have developed or retained scenic qualities as urbanization took place.

Many scenic drives connect urban areas with natural regions in other parts of the County. For example, Mulholland Highway in the Santa Monica Mountains offers spectacular views of the urban pattern, steep canyons, bold geologic formations, and significant ecological areas. Other roads pass through areas of diverse scenery such as the Angeles National Forest and the San Andreas fault zone. Designated scenic highways are discussed in Section 3.1.3.2 below.

Many scenic resources have been diminished by urban development. In some areas, insensitive hillside grading has been destructive of the natural character of the land, particularly ridgelines. Roads and freeways have sometimes visually separated communities and caused scars on hillsides (County of Los Angeles 1980b). Most of the County's population is focused in the south and southwest, with major population centers in the Los Angeles Basin, San Fernando Valley, and San Gabriel Valley as well as the Santa Clarita Valley, Crescenta Valley, and Antelope Valley.

### **3.1.3.2 Local Visual Setting**

The paragraphs below describe the general visual setting of each of the County's 10 affected planning areas and identify any state- or County-designated scenic highways within them. In addition, existing County-maintained regional Class I bike paths located within each of the planning areas are listed below. Figures 3.1-1 and 3.1-2 show the location of officially designated scenic highways within each planning area.

#### **Antelope Valley Planning Area**

The Antelope Valley Planning Area consists of 1,800 square miles of unincorporated territory within the Antelope Valley. The planning area encompasses most of northern Los Angeles County and primarily consists of rural communities and open space, including high desert lands, the Liebre and Sierra Pelona mountain ranges, and the Angeles National Forest.

The northeastern half of this planning area exhibits a generally planar landform with low-density suburban and rural development, while the southwestern half of this planning area exhibits great topographic relief consisting of rolling hills and steep, angular mountains comprising the Transverse Ranges.

## Scenic Highways

### State Route 2

State Route 2 (SR-2), located in the southern portion of the Antelope Valley Planning Area, is a state- and County-designated scenic highway and USDA Forest Service Scenic Byway (part of the Angeles Crest Scenic Byway) that winds along the spine of the San Gabriel Mountains for a distance of 55 miles from 2.7 miles north of I-210 to the San Bernardino county line. It provides views of the mountain peaks, the Mojave Desert, and the Los Angeles Basin (Caltrans 2007).

### East San Gabriel Valley Planning Area

The East San Gabriel Valley Planning Area is the easternmost planning area in the Los Angeles Basin, and it is bordered to the east by the San Bernardino county line. This planning area contains a high number of unincorporated communities, many of which are small, non-contiguous communities that are interspersed with incorporated cities. This planning area is primarily built out with mid- to high-density development composed of single- and multi-family residential, commercial, and industrial uses dotted with supporting infrastructure (i.e., transportation, communication, and electrical). Also, some areas within the planning area are reserved for open space uses; however, it generally exhibits a highly urbanized, utilitarian character. No officially designated scenic highways are located within this planning area.

Existing County-maintained regional Class I bike paths located within this planning area include a portion of the San Gabriel River Bicycle Path and the San Jose Creek Bicycle Path.

### Gateway Planning Area

The Gateway Planning Area is located in the southern portion of the County, bordering Orange County, the Metro Planning Area, and the West and East San Gabriel Valley Planning Areas. Several relatively dense unincorporated communities are located within this planning area, most of which are predominately residential interspersed with a mix of educational, commercial, office, facilities, open space, and recreational land uses. Some industrial uses are located on the outskirts of the planning area. North Whittier is primarily open space, and Rancho Dominguez and the Bandini Islands are dominated by industrial land uses. Overall, this planning area generally exhibits a highly urbanized, utilitarian character. No officially designated scenic highways are located within this planning area.

Existing County-maintained regional Class I bike paths located within this planning area include the following: Compton Creek Bicycle Path, Coyote Creek Bicycle Path, Dominguez Channel Bicycle Path, La Cañada Verde Creek Bicycle Path, Los Angeles River Bicycle Path, North Fork Coyote Creek Bicycle Path, Rio Hondo Bicycle Path, and a portion of the San Gabriel River Bicycle Path.

### Metro Planning Area

The Metro Planning Area is located in a dense urban area of central Los Angeles County. The planning area supports approximately 21 square miles of densely populated unincorporated communities, including East Los Angeles. It also contains a large portion of the incorporated City of

Los Angeles, including Downtown Los Angeles and South Los Angeles. The communities are transit-rich and are transected by light-rail lines. The planning area contains a mix of primarily commercial, mixed use, industrial, multi-family residential, and single-family residential land uses. Overall, this planning area generally exhibits a highly urbanized, utilitarian character. No officially designated scenic highways are located within this planning area.

## **San Fernando Valley Planning Area**

The San Fernando Valley Planning Area is mostly incorporated with only a few small unincorporated communities scattered along the periphery of the planning area in the foothills of the mountain ranges surrounding San Fernando Valley. The planning area's unincorporated communities include Kagel Canyon, La Crescenta-Montrose, Lopez Canyon, Oat Mountain, Sylmar Island, Twin Lakes, Universal City, West Chatsworth, and West Hills. These communities encircle the incorporated San Fernando Valley, which includes the Cities of Los Angeles (San Fernando Valley portion), Burbank, Glendale, and San Fernando.

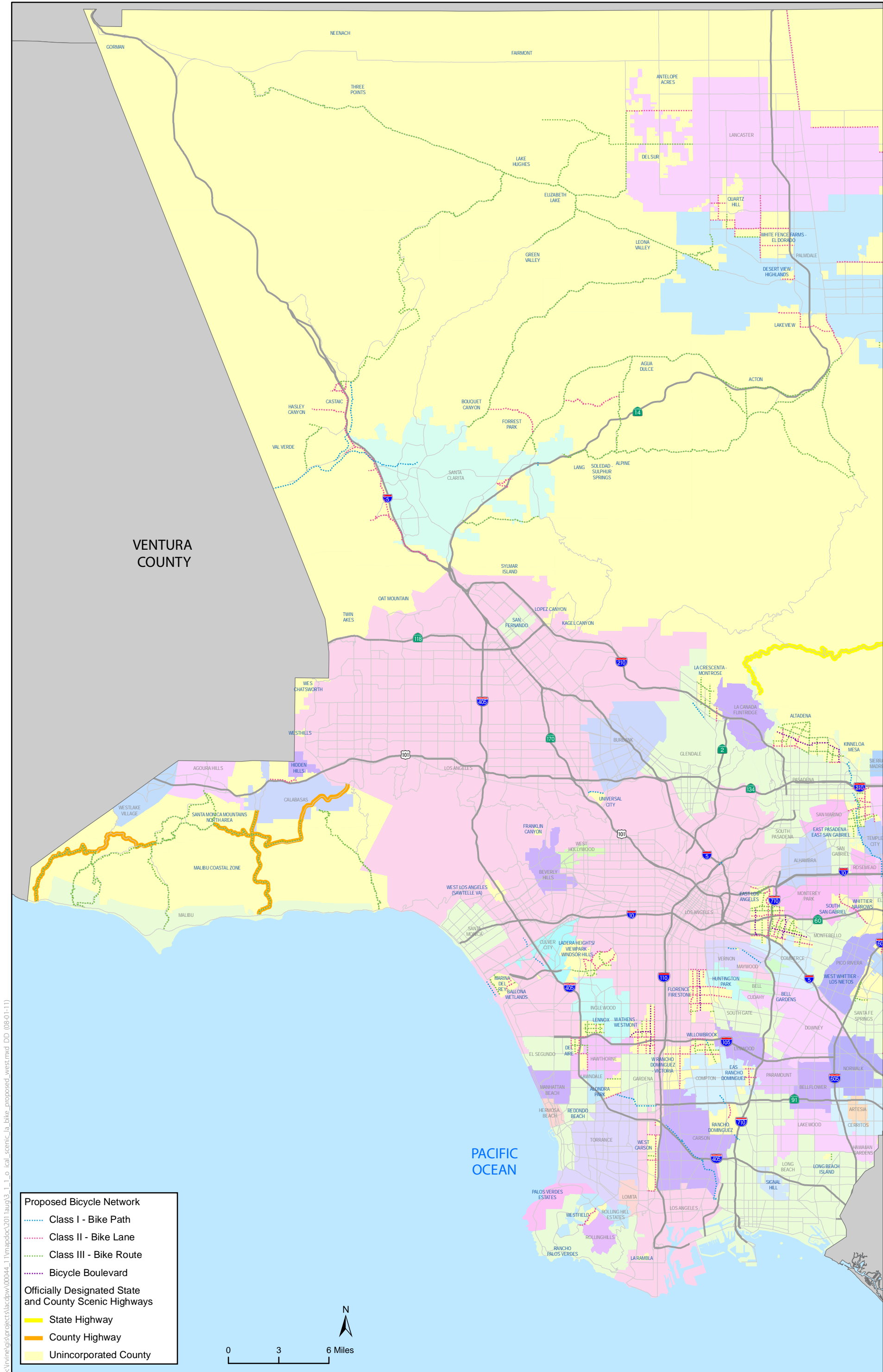
The San Fernando Valley is demarcated by the Santa Susana Mountains to the northwest, San Gabriel Mountains to the northeast, Verdugo Mountains to the east, and the Santa Monica Mountains to the south separating the San Fernando Valley from the Los Angeles Basin. The Chalk Hills to the south and the Simi Hills to the west also define the valley area.

Land uses within the planning area are diverse. The communities of Kagel Canyon, Lopez Canyon, and Sylmar Island are mountainous with predominantly rural residential, open space, and park land uses. Industrial uses occupy the southern portion of Lopez Canyon. La Crescenta-Montrose is primarily low- to medium-density single-family residential with commercial activity concentrated along Foothill Boulevard. Oat Mountain and Twin Lakes have a combined population of 1,358. Whereas Oat Mountain is mainly rural, park, and open space, Twin Lakes is dominated by single-family residential land uses. Universal City is exclusively occupied by Universal Studios property. The unincorporated area has no residences and is designated for commercial and industrial land uses only. Located on the western boundary of the planning area, West Chatsworth and West Hills encompass 2 square miles of rural residential and single-family residential land. West Chatsworth is largely rural residential with a sparsely populated hillside community located in the northern portion of the community. By comparison, the incorporated cities of the San Fernando Valley are mostly built out, with strong patterns of urban and suburban development. No officially designated scenic highways are located within this planning area.

## **Santa Clarita Valley Planning Area**

Unincorporated County land covers approximately 195 square miles of the Santa Clarita Valley Planning Area's total 484 square miles. The planning area is located in the northern County, bounded by Ventura County to the west, the Antelope Valley Planning Area to the north and east, and the San Fernando Valley Planning Area to the south.

The planning area is characterized by several village-like communities with distinct development patterns and histories of development. Many of these communities are isolated from each other by built and natural barriers such as topography, the Santa Clarita River, and Interstate 5. The valley



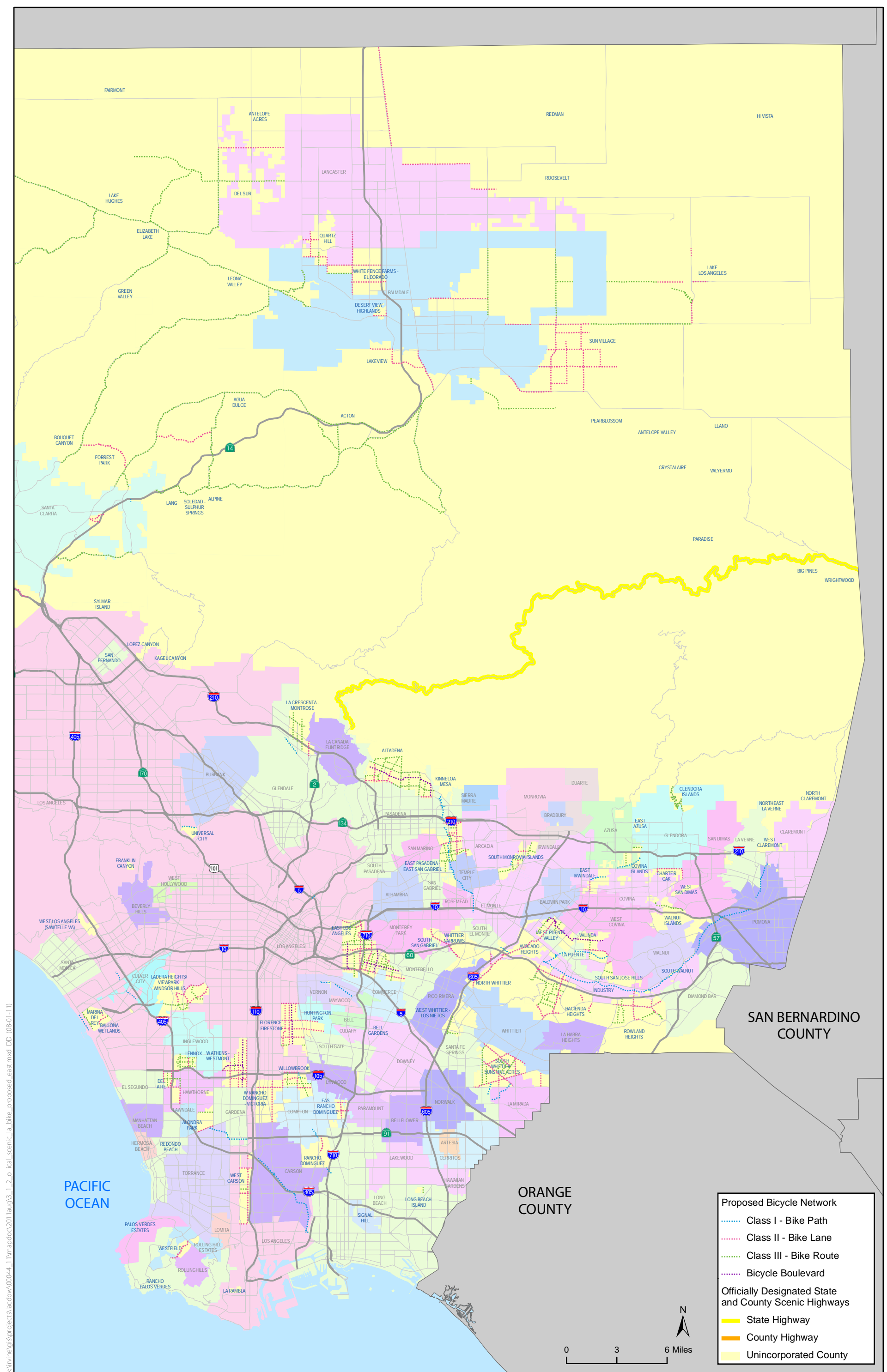
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Source: ESRI Streetmap USA (2008); Alta Planning + Design (2011); California Department of Transportation (2010)



**Figure 3.1-1**  
**Officially Designated State and County Scenic Highways in Western Los Angeles County**  
**Los Angeles County Bicycle Master Plan**







features a significant amount of County park and open space. The Los Padres and Angeles National Forests comprise about 235 square miles of the planning area. Urban development is focused within and just outside of the City of Santa Clarita, while the surrounding unincorporated communities are suburban-rural.

There are 10 unincorporated suburban/rural communities within Santa Clarita Valley Planning Area. They include: Agua Dulce, Alpine, Bouquet Canyon, Castaic, Forest Park, Hasley Canyon, Lang, Soledad-Sulphur Springs, Stevenson Ranch, and Val Verde. The following subsections describe current bicycling conditions within the unincorporated Santa Clarita Valley Planning Area.

Due to its diverse topography, including mountain backdrops, hillsides and ridgelines, canyons and streams, and a broad river valley, the planning area contains a wide range of scenic views and resources. Natural areas range from grasslands to forest, contributing to the variety of scenic experiences. Within the built environment, greenbelts and parkways, trail systems, and parks provide scenic amenities.

The mountains surrounding the Santa Clarita Valley provide a sense of form and containment. Well-defined ridgelines, slopes, and canyons provide a visual backdrop to the urban environment, create a sense of place for each neighborhood or district, and provide opportunities for residents throughout the valley to experience the natural environment. Ridgelines project from the lower foothills of the San Gabriel and Sierra Pelona Mountain Ranges to the valley floor. The City of Santa Clarita and the County have designated specific ridgelines and established land use policies designed to preserve the views of these ridgelines, as described in the Land Use Element. Sloping from the ridgelines are numerous canyons that give local identity to neighborhoods within the planning area. These foothill and canyon zones are important scenic resources that, because of inherent slope constraints, have remained undeveloped and support a variety of natural habitats. No officially designated scenic highways are located within this planning area.

## **Santa Monica Mountains Planning Area**

The Santa Monica Mountains Planning Area is located in a biologically diverse and sensitive mountainous area of the western County. The planning area borders Ventura County, the San Fernando Valley Planning Area, and the Westside Planning Area. Along the northern portion of the planning area are several incorporated cities: Westlake Village, Agoura Hills, Calabasas, and Hidden Hills. Along the coastal portion of the planning area to the south is the City of Malibu. The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreational Area encompasses a vast area of the mountain range. The remaining 113 square miles of unincorporated areas are composed of the Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone and Santa Monica Mountains North Area.

Multi-agency conservation-based planning efforts have helped maintain a low population density throughout the planning area. The Santa Monica Mountains Planning Area land uses are predominately open space, park, and rural residential. There are also discrete pockets of single-family residential and commercial areas dispersed throughout the planning area.

This planning area exhibits a unique and distinctive visual environment characterized by steep mountains, rolling hills, canyons, streams, and oak woodlands in an equally distinctive group of communities (County of Los Angeles 2000).

## **Scenic Highways**

### **Mulholland Highway**

Mulholland Highway is a County-designated scenic highway that runs east-west, through the Santa Monica Mountains between U.S. Highway 101 and State Route 1 (SR-1). The County has designated the following two segments of Mulholland Highway as scenic: (1) from SR-1 to Kanan Dume Road and (2) from west of Cornell Road to East of Las Virgenes Road. Scenic views of the Santa Monica Mountains are available from these two routes.

### **Malibu Canyon-Las Virgenes Highway**

Malibu Canyon-Las Virgenes Highway is also a County-designated scenic highway. The segment of this highway that runs north-south between SR-1 and Lost Hills Road is considered scenic because it affords scenic views of the Santa Monica Mountains.

## **South Bay Planning Area**

The South Bay Planning Area is located in the southwestern-most portion of the County and is bordered by the Gateway Planning Area to the east, the Metro and Westside Planning Areas to the north, and the Pacific Ocean to the south and west. This planning area exhibits a primarily residential character with mid- to high-density development. Unincorporated communities within this planning area include Alondra Park, Hawthorne Island, Del Aire, Lennox, Westfield, La Rambla, and West Carson. In addition, industrial and commercial uses are common and scattered throughout this entire planning area. This planning area exhibits a highly urbanized, utilitarian character. No officially designated scenic highways are located within this planning area.

Existing County-maintained Class I bike paths located within this planning area include the Laguna Dominguez Bicycle Path and a portion of the Marvin Braude Bicycle Path.

## **West San Gabriel Valley Planning Area**

The West San Gabriel Valley Planning Area consists of a cluster of communities located east of Downtown Los Angeles and intermingled with numerous cities, including Pasadena, South Pasadena, Monterey Park, and El Monte. The planning area communities include Altadena, East Pasadena-East San Gabriel, Kinneloa Mesa, San Pasqual, South Monrovia Islands, South San Gabriel, South El Monte Islands, and Whittier Narrows.

The San Gabriel Valley has undergone dramatic population and demographic shifts over the last 30 years. Previously a primarily residential community, it now hosts employment centers and major regional transit access. Mixed-use infill and transit-oriented development are planned for East Pasadena, and it is envisioned as a model for unincorporated communities in this area. Land uses within this planning area are predominately single-family residential. This planning area exhibits a

highly urbanized, utilitarian character. No officially designated scenic highways are located within this planning area.

Existing County-maintained Class I bike paths located within this planning area include a portion of the San Gabriel River Bicycle Path and the Santa Anita Wash Bicycle Path.

## **Westside Planning Area**

The Westside Planning Area is located in the densely urban western part of the County. It contains four unincorporated areas composed of the following six communities: Franklin Canyon, West Los Angeles (Sawtelle Veterans Affairs), Marina del Rey, Ballona Wetlands, West Fox Hills, and Ladera Heights/Viewpark-Windsor Hills. The unincorporated area is surrounded by incorporated jurisdictions, primarily the City of Los Angeles.

Land uses in West Los Angeles are exclusively open space/park and public use, hosting the Veterans Affairs Administration and Hospital, Barrington Recreation Center, and Los Angeles National Cemetery. The remaining communities consist of predominately residential, commercial, open space, and park land uses. This planning area generally exhibits an urbanized, utilitarian character. No officially designated scenic highways are located within this planning area.

Existing County-maintained Class I bike paths located within this planning area include the Ballona Creek Bicycle Path and a portion of the Marvin Braude Bicycle Path.

## **3.1.4 Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

This section describes the impact analysis relating to aesthetics and visual resources for the Bicycle Master Plan at the program level. It describes the methods used to determine the impacts of the project and lists the thresholds used to conclude whether an impact would be significant. Measures to mitigate (i.e., avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, eliminate, or compensate for) significant impacts accompany each impact discussion, if necessary. Detailed analysis at the project level will determine the significance of impacts for individual Bicycle Master Plan projects and, if necessary, the applicability of mitigation measures.

### **3.1.4.1 Methods**

This section was prepared using a qualitative analysis that included the following steps in order to document existing conditions: (1) reviewing the Bicycle Master Plan and other existing County planning documents to document existing visual conditions of the planning areas; and (2) reviewing state- and County-maintained documents and databases to identify adopted scenic highways. In order to assess potential impacts, the proposed Plan bikeways were reviewed to identify where the ones would intersect with or be within viewing distance of scenic resources.

### 3.1.4.2 Thresholds of Significance

For this analysis, an impact pertaining to visual resources was considered significant if it would result in a “yes” answer to any of the following questions from the County of Los Angeles Initial Study Checklist.

- Is the project site substantially visible from or will it obstruct views along a scenic highway (as shown on the Scenic Highway Element), or is it located within a scenic corridor or will it otherwise impact the viewshed?
- Is the project substantially visible from or will it obstruct views from a regional riding or hiking trail?

### 3.1.4.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

#### **Impact 3.1-1: Be substantially visible from or obstruct views along a scenic highway, be located within a scenic corridor, or otherwise impact the viewshed.**

As discussed under Section 3.1.4.2 above, no state- or County-designated scenic highways currently exist within the East San Gabriel Valley, Gateway, Metro, San Fernando, Santa Clarita Valley, South Bay, West San Gabriel Valley, or Westside Planning Areas (see Figures 3.1-1 and 3.1-2). As such, construction and operation of the Bicycle Master Plan would have no effect on views along a scenic highway or scenic corridor throughout the above-listed planning areas. Construction and operational impacts of the Plan to officially designated state and County scenic highways that traverse the Antelope Valley and the Santa Monica Mountains Planning Areas are discussed below.

Also, scenic viewsheds that contain natural resources such as mountain ranges, ridgelines, undeveloped open space, waterways, or other natural features exist in the less urbanized Antelope, San Fernando, Santa Clarita Valley, and Santa Monica Mountains Planning Areas. Implementation of the Plan and its potential to impact these viewsheds are discussed below.

#### **Construction**

No off-road bikeways (Class I bike paths) are proposed within the Antelope Valley Planning Area. Furthermore, no on-road bikeways (i.e., Class II bike lanes, Class III bike routes, or bicycle boulevards) are proposed within viewing distance of SR-2, a state-designated scenic highway (see Figures 3.1-1 and 3.1-2). As such, construction of Bicycle Master Plan projects would not be substantially visible from or obstruct views along a scenic highway or be located within a scenic corridor, and no impact would occur.

The Plan does not propose any off-road bikeways within the Santa Monica Mountains Planning Area. On-road bikeways are proposed within the planning area, including bike routes (Class III) along Mulholland and Malibu Canyon-Las Virgenes Highways, which are County-designated scenic highways (see Figure 3.1-1). Construction of these bikeways would include installation of signage, possible minor roadway widening, and installation of pavement markings. Construction would require the following temporary facilities: assembly areas, parking areas, and staging and laydown

areas. Also, construction may require the use of some heavy equipment such as excavators, pavers, and water trucks. (Construction of the bikeways may be part of larger roadway rehabilitation projects, which are not addressed in this document but would be addressed in their own environmental analyses.) However, construction activities would be temporary and would occupy a small portion of the overall scenic viewing area. As such, construction activities would not permanently alter the existing visual environment or permanently block scenic views available from a scenic highway or be located within a scenic corridor. Impacts would be less than significant.

With regard to scenic viewsheds, the Plan would include off-road and on-road bikeways within the San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valley Planning Areas as well as on-road bikeways within the Antelope and Santa Monica Mountains Planning Areas; construction of these bikeways would likely be visible from various natural areas and viewsheds throughout these planning areas.

Construction of the off-road bikeways may require site preparation (i.e., vegetation removal and moderate to substantial grading), bridge installation, and signage installation that would require the following temporary facilities: assembly areas, parking areas, and staging and laydown areas. Construction activities would require the use of heavy equipment such as water trucks, graders, pavers, rollers, and concrete trucks. Site preparation and grading activities required for the off-road bikeways would be visually apparent because of the removal of vegetation, the creation of graded areas, and the addition of pavement. These bikeways would likely be visible from various viewsheds throughout the more scenic San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valley Planning Areas.

Construction of the on-road bikeways would include installation of signage, minor road widening, installation of pavement markings, and temporary facilities, as described above. These activities and equipment would likely be visible from various viewsheds throughout the more scenic Antelope, San Fernando, Santa Clarita Valley, and Santa Monica Mountains Planning Areas.

Construction would be temporary and would not represent a significant portion of the overall viewshed of each planning area. As such, construction of the Plan would result in less-than-significant impacts to scenic viewsheds within the Antelope, San Fernando, Santa Clarita Valley, and Santa Monica Mountains Planning Areas.

## Operation

Operation of the Bicycle Master Plan would have no effect on the views available from scenic highway SR-2 within the Antelope Valley Planning Area. The Plan does not propose any off-road bikeways within this planning area, nor does it propose any on-road bikeways within viewing distance of SR-2 (see Figures 3.1-1 and 3.1-2). As such, the proposed bicycle network would not be substantially visible from or obstruct views along a scenic highway or be located within a scenic corridor. No impact would occur.

Operation of the Plan would result in the addition of several miles of Class III bike routes along Mulholland Highway and Malibu Canyon-Las Virgenes Highway, both of which are County-designated scenic highways. Visible elements of the bicycle routes would be limited to signage installed for identification of routes, pavement markings, and traffic control measures. These elements would be compatible with the existing highways. Otherwise, operation of the Plan would

not involve any changes to aboveground structures that would be substantially visible or obstruct the view along these designated scenic highways. As such, facilities associated with the proposed bicycle network would not be substantially visible from or obstruct views along a scenic highway or be located within a scenic corridor. Impacts would be less than significant.

Although the Plan would not be substantially visible from or obstruct views along any existing adopted scenic highways, there is a potential that existing eligible scenic highways may become officially designated in the future. Numerous eligible scenic highways are located within the County and Plan area, as shown in Figures 3.1-3 and 3.1-4. If any off-road bikeways are established within the viewing area of eligible scenic highways that become adopted/officially designated, they could be substantially visible from or obstruct views along a scenic highway. Mitigation Measure MM 3.1-1 will require the County to implement appropriate design features to avoid visual impacts to designated scenic highways.

With regard to scenic viewsheds, operation of the Plan would establish off-road and on-road bikeways within the San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valley Planning Areas as well as on-road bikeways within the Antelope and Santa Monica Mountains Planning Areas; these bikeways would likely be visible from various natural areas and viewsheds throughout these planning areas.

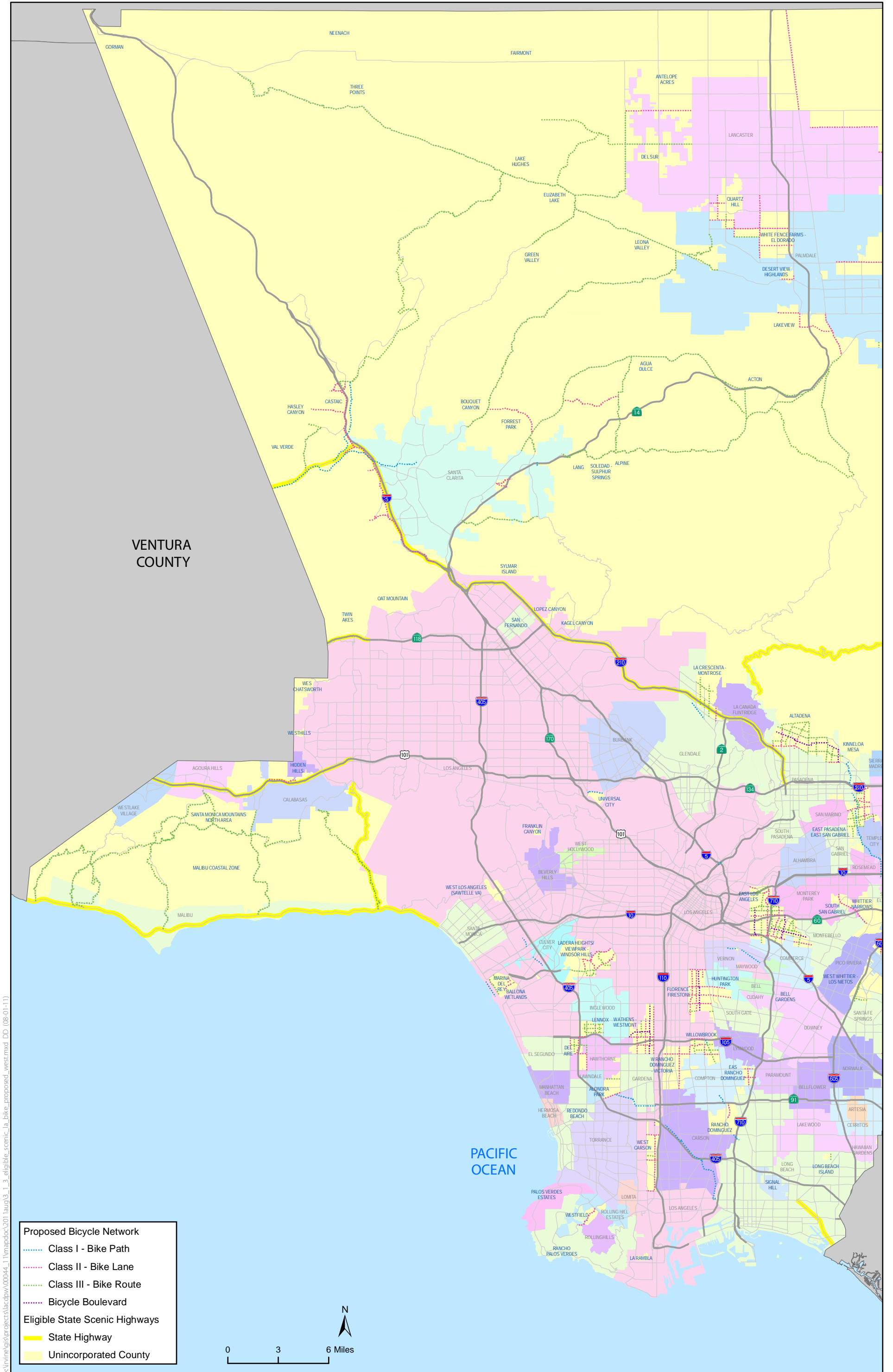
Operation of the Plan would also result in the addition of approximately 18 miles of Class I bike paths within the San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valley Planning Areas. They would likely be located along creek and river channels and along the beach, and visible elements of these bikeways would include additional paving, graded areas, new bridge construction, raised pathways, and signage. If these bikeways are visible from or located within scenic viewsheds throughout the San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valley Planning Areas, adverse effects on the viewshed could occur as a result of the Class I bike paths. Mitigation Measure MM 3.1-2 will require the County to design Class I bike paths in a manner that avoids visual impacts to scenic viewsheds.

Visible elements of the approximately 106 miles of Class II bike lanes and 280 miles of Class III bike routes within these planning areas would include additional pavement (through widening of existing roadways), striped pavement, sharrows, and signage. These bikeways would be installed within existing paved roadways and would be visually compatible with existing transportation infrastructure (i.e., traffic signage, roadway striping), and no substantial changes to the existing visual environment would occur. As such, operation of the on-road bikeways would result in less-than-significant impacts to scenic viewsheds within the Antelope, San Fernando, Santa Clarita Valley, and Santa Monica Mountains Planning Areas.

## **Mitigation Measures**

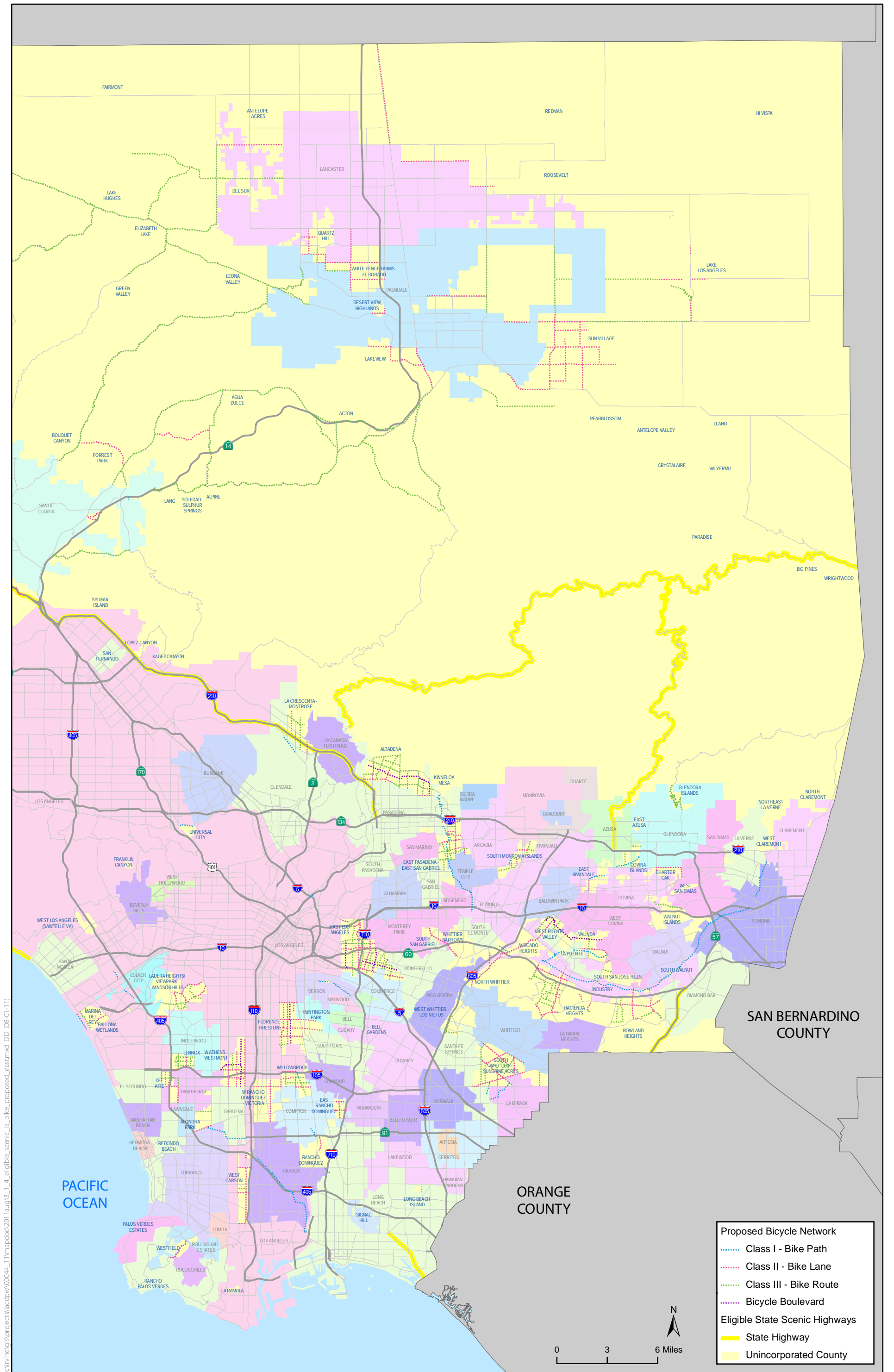
Detailed analysis of impacts related to scenic highways and scenic viewsheds will be required prior to implementation of individual Bicycle Master Plan projects in either of the following circumstances:

- If the project will be visible from an officially designated or eligible scenic highway.
- If the project will be visible from or within any scenic viewshed, including those designated in applicable general plans or community plans.



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Source: ESRI Streetmap USA (2008); Alta Planning + Design (2011); California Department of Transportation (2010)

Figure 3.1-4

## Eligible State Scenic Highways in Eastern Los Angeles County Los Angeles County Bicycle Master Plan

**MM 3.1-1: Avoid view obstruction or alteration along scenic highways and corridors.**

For projects visible from officially designated or eligible scenic highways and where detailed analysis at the project level identifies significant visual impacts, appropriate mitigation measures—such as vegetative screening, replanting, or context-sensitive design—will be developed and implemented to ensure that scenic views are not obstructed or significantly altered or that the project will be visually compatible with the scenic resource.

**MM 3.1-2: Design Class I bike paths to avoid visual impacts to scenic viewsheds.**

For projects visible from or within scenic viewsheds identified in general plans or community plans and where detailed analysis at the project level identifies significant visual impacts, appropriate measures—such as vegetative screening, replanting, or context-sensitive design—will be developed and implemented in order to avoid significant visual impacts to scenic viewsheds or to ensure that the project will be visually compatible with the scenic resource.

**Level of Significance after Mitigation**

With implementation of MM 3.1-1 and MM 3.1-2, impacts would be less than significant.

**Impact 3.1-2: Be substantially visible from or obstruct views from a regional riding or hiking trail.**

As discussed under Section 3.1.4.2 above, the County maintains several regional Class I bike paths. These paths are located throughout the East San Gabriel Valley, Gateway, West San Gabriel Valley, Westside, and South Bay Planning Areas. Also, due to the natural features present throughout the Antelope Valley, Santa Monica Mountains, Santa Clarita Valley, and San Fernando Valley Planning Areas (e.g., mountains, waterways, etc.), it is likely that numerous recreational trails exist within these planning areas as well. Implementation of the Plan and its potential to be substantially visible from or obstruct from a regional riding or hiking trail are discussed below.

**Construction**

The Plan proposes a total of 68.5 miles of Class I bike paths, 183.5 miles of Class II bike lanes, 359.3 miles of Class III bike routes, and 7.9 miles of bicycle boulevards throughout the Antelope Valley, East San Gabriel Valley, Gateway, Santa Monica Mountains, Santa Clarita Valley, San Fernando Valley, West San Gabriel Valley, Westside, and South Bay Planning Areas (Note: no off-road bikeways are proposed within the Antelope Valley or Santa Monica Mountains Planning areas, and no bicycle boulevards are proposed within the Antelope Valley, Gateway, San Fernando Valley, Santa Clarita Valley, Santa Monica Mountains, West San Gabriel Valley, or Westside Planning Areas). Construction of on-road bikeways would include minor road widening, pavement striping, painting of sharrows, and signage installation that would require the following temporary facilities: assembly areas, parking areas, and staging and laydown areas. Also, construction may require the use of some heavy equipment such as excavators, pavers, and water trucks. Construction activities and equipment would likely be visible from numerous regional riding and hiking trails throughout the planning areas listed above and would have the potential to obscure or completely block views during the construction period. However, construction would be temporary, would not occur all at

once, and would not represent a significant portion of the overall viewshed of each planning area. As such, construction of the on-road bikeways would only temporarily be visible from or obstruct views from regional riding or hiking trails within the planning areas listed above. Impacts would be less than significant.

Construction of the Class I bike paths may require site preparation (i.e., vegetation removal and moderate to substantial grading), bridge installation, and signage installation that would require the following temporary facilities: assembly areas, parking areas, and staging and laydown areas. Construction activities for the off-road bikeways would require the use of heavy equipment such as water trucks, graders, pavers, rollers, and concrete trucks. Site preparation and grading activities required for the off-road bikeways would be visually apparent because of the removal of vegetation as well as the creation of graded areas and the addition of pavement. These bikeways would likely be visible from numerous regional riding or hiking trails throughout the planning areas identified above and would obscure or completely block views during the construction period. However, construction would be temporary, would not occur all at once, and would not represent a significant portion of the overall viewshed of each planning area. As such, construction of the off-road bikeways would only temporarily be visible from or obstruct views from regional riding or hiking trails within the planning areas listed above. Impacts would be less than significant.

## Operation

The Plan would include off-road and on-road bikeways within the San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valley Planning Areas, as well as on-road bikeways within the Antelope and Santa Monica Mountains Planning Areas (Note: no off-road bikeways are proposed within the Antelope or Santa Monica Mountains Planning areas, and no bicycle boulevards are proposed within the Antelope, Gateway, San Fernando Valley, Santa Clarita Valley, Santa Monica Mountains, West San Gabriel Valley, or Westside Planning Areas). Operation of these bikeways would likely be visible from numerous regional riding and hiking trails throughout these planning areas.

Operation of the Plan would also result in the addition of approximately 68.5 miles of Class I bike paths throughout the East San Gabriel Valley, Gateway, Santa Clarita Valley, San Fernando Valley, West San Gabriel Valley, Westside, and South Bay Planning Areas. Some of these Class I bike paths would be located along creek and river channels and along the beach and, in many cases, would be extensions of existing regional bicycle paths. Visible elements of the Class I bike paths would include additional paving, graded areas, new bridge construction, raised pathways, and signage. Adverse effects on existing views could occur where the Plan would create additional Class I bike paths adjacent to or within viewing distance of existing regional bicycle paths or hiking trails throughout the planning areas listed above if these new bikeways obstructed views or were incompatible with the existing views. Mitigation Measure MM 3.1-3 will require the County to design Class I bike paths in a manner that reduces the visibility and avoids obstruction of views available from regional trails.

Visible elements of the 183.5 miles of Class II bike lanes, 359.3 miles of Class III bike routes, and 7.9 miles of bicycle boulevards would include additional pavement (through widening of existing roadways), striped pavement, sharrows, and signage. All of these bikeways would be installed along existing paved roadways and would be visually compatible with existing transportation infrastructure

(i.e., traffic signage, roadway striping). Also, none of the aboveground features would be excessively large, substantially visible, or obstruct existing views available from established regional and hiking trails. Thus, no substantial changes to the existing visual environment would occur. As such, operation of the Class II bike lanes, Class III bike routes, and bicycle boulevards would have less-than-significant impacts on views available from regional riding and hiking trails through the planning areas listed above.

## **Mitigation Measures**

Detailed analysis of impacts related to existing riding and hiking trails will be required prior to implementation of individual Bicycle Master Plan projects that would be visible from the existing trails.

### **MM 3.1-3: Design Class I bike paths to avoid visual impacts to regional riding or hiking trails.**

For projects visible from existing regional riding or hiking trails and where detailed analysis at the project level identifies significant visual impacts, appropriate measures—such as vegetative screening, replanting, or context-sensitive design—will be developed and implemented in order to avoid visual impacts to scenic viewsheds or to ensure that the project will be visually compatible with the scenic resource.

## **Level of Significance after Mitigation**

With implementation of MM 3.1-3, impacts would be less than significant.

## **3.1.5 Cumulative**

The geographic scope for cumulative visual impacts that would occur under the Plan includes those areas within the County where the Plan elements could be visible. Past and present development projects have changed land in and around the County from its original natural setting to low- to high-density automobile-oriented development with some natural areas preserved in open space. Views of the Santa Monica Mountains, Transverse Ranges, and other mountain features have been maintained, although development near the mountains has not always been considerate of the aesthetic value the mountains provide. The primary impetuses of potential future visual changes through the County include County planning and design documents as well as planning and design documents of incorporated cities within the County. Over the years, past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects have substantially changed the natural aesthetic of the region into one that exhibits a mostly urbanized character. Therefore, changes from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects have resulted in a cumulatively considerable impact in the project area's vicinity.

The Plan would guide the development of infrastructure, policies, and programs that improve the bicycling environment in Los Angeles County. As discussed above, with implementation of Mitigation Measures MM 3.1-1 through MM 3.1-3, the Plan would result in less-than-significant

impacts on views along scenic highways, scenic corridors, viewsheds, as well as views from a regional riding or hiking trail.

Thus, in consideration of (1) the Plan's limited potential to increase the development footprint outside areas not already developed and (2) the limited above-ground features proposed by the Plan, the Plan's incremental contribution would not be substantial enough to significantly contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact. Therefore, the Plan's incremental contribution to cumulative aesthetic impacts from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects would be less than cumulatively considerable.