

Memorandum

To: Awais Sheikh
Project Manager
Department of Transportation, District 8
464 West 4th Street, 6th Floor (MS 1229)
San Bernardino, CA 92401
Phone (909) 381-1772

Date: April 13, 2015

From: Jennifer Stock, PLA
Visual Resource Specialist
ICF
Phone (916) 231-9609

File No.: SBD-210 -PM R28.3/30.3
District 8 - Project Number 08-
13000105/EA 1C970
State Route 210 / Base Line
Interchange Improvement Project

Subject: Scenic Resources Evaluation and Visual Impact Assessment

Project Description

The San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG), in cooperation with the California Department of Transportation, District 8 (Caltrans), and the City of Highland (City), proposes to improve the State Route 210 (SR-210)/Base Line interchange in the City of Highland, San Bernardino County, California. Specifically, the project would widen Base Line from Buckeye Street to Seine Avenue, including widening the Base Line overcrossing, located on SR-210 between PM R28.3 and R30.3. The project also includes widening three of the four existing on- and off-ramps, and improvements at the ramp terminal intersections. The purpose of the proposed project is to reduce congestion and improve operational efficiency at the interchange and throughout the Base Line corridor. The proposed Build Alternative includes the following design features and elements (see Attachment A: Project Layout Map):

- Base Line between Buckeye Street and Seine Avenue and the SR-210 interchange ramps would be widened to add through lanes, turn lanes, and storage for vehicle queues.
- Existing pavement adjacent to pavement widening would be rehabilitated or reconstructed, as needed.
- Base Line from Buckeye Street to Seine Avenue would generally be widened from four through lanes (two in each direction) to six through lanes (three in each direction).
- A two-lane exit would be created at the westbound exit ramp.
- Entrance ramps would be widened to accommodate preferential lanes for high-occupancy vehicles (HOVs)
- The existing Base Line overcrossing would be widened to accommodate the new lanes.

- Retaining walls would be constructed, as needed, in areas of widening.
- The proposed project would require the acquisition of new permanent right of way and temporary construction easements (TCEs) would be needed during the construction period to facilitate access to the construction work areas.
- Drainage system improvements would be constructed to address storm water runoff.
- Ramp metering would be installed on the entrance ramps at the interchange.
- Utilities would be relocated, as needed, to accommodate the improved facility.

Scenic Resources Evaluation and Visual Impact Assessment

Base Line is generally a four-lane arterial (two in each direction) with turn lanes at intersections that are flanked by vacant lots on the north and commercial land uses on the south. Residential neighborhoods are located just outside of the project limits of disturbance. Existing SR-210 is a four-lane highway (two lanes in each direction) with a wide center median. Vegetation in the project area is primarily located within the SR-210 ramp in-field areas and on the ramp side slopes up to the adjoining land uses. The vegetation is somewhat sparse in locations and does not provide continuous median or side slope coverage. However, it does provide an attractive visual resource and improves the aesthetics of the existing roadway corridor. There are also a small amount of trees and shrubs along Base Line, adjacent to the project site, that are associated with the vacant lot between the SR-210 westbound on-ramp and Seine Avenue; the 76 gas station located south of Base Line; and along the eastbound on-ramp.

SR-210 is not an eligible or officially designated scenic highway through the project area¹. However, the SR-210 corridor has distant views of the San Bernardino Mountains that are available when traveling eastbound. These views would also be available from Base Line, if roadway travelers are looking east, when traveling on the SR-210 overcrossing.

As described above, the proposed project involves widening the existing Base Line overcrossing of the SR-210. In addition, on- and off-ramps would be widened to provide for better traffic flow and management. While the existing overcrossing would be widened, all of the features associated with an overcrossing are existing visual elements of the project site. The widened overcrossing, lanes, and pavement and striping associated with the proposed project would not substantially alter the existing visual character of the project area as seen by all viewer groups. All additions would be similar in appearance to existing facilities in the project area. The widened interchange ramps would also appear visually similar to existing visual conditions and would not constitute a substantial visual change. The proposed project would not involve improvements that would substantially increase light or glare affecting daytime or nighttime views. Ramp metering would add an

¹ Caltrans. 2014b. *Eligible (E) and Officially Designated (OD) Routes*. Available: <<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic/cahisys.htm>>. Last updated: December 19, 2013. Accessed: July 8, 2014.

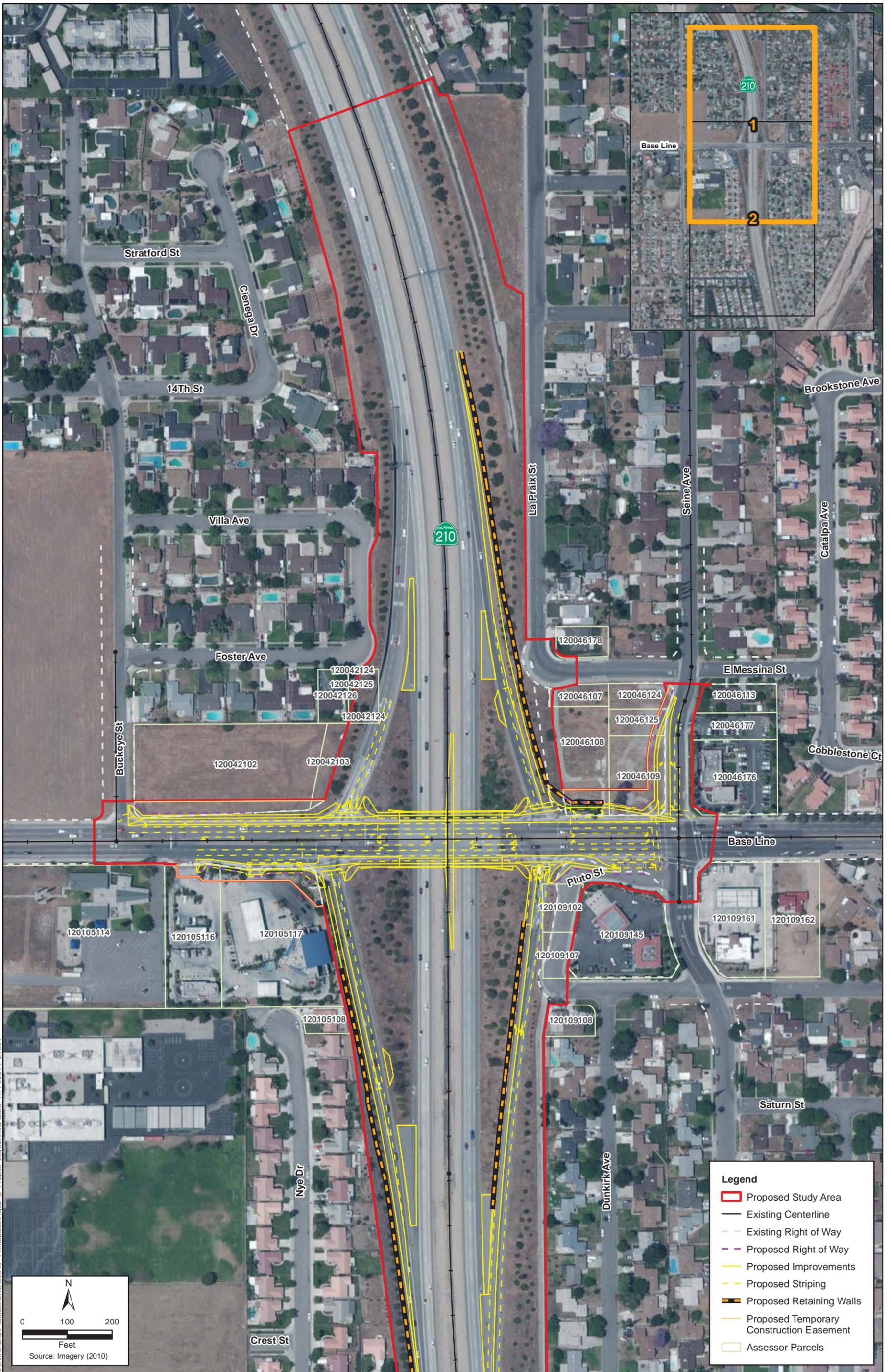
inconsequential amount of light to the project area when meters are in use. Distant views of the San Bernardino Mountains would not be affected by the proposed project.

The primary visual changes resulting from the proposed project would result from the removal of a small amount of vegetation located along the interchange ramps and on the ramp side slopes. Vegetation will be preserved as much as possible; however, some vegetation removal is required in order to accommodate the proposed ramp widening and the retaining wall structures. During the proposed project construction phase, in instances where existing ground cover or other vegetation is removed as a result of proposed project actions, permanent erosion control for all disturbed surfaces and bare soil areas would be applied. Standard soil erosion prevention measures and vegetation will be replaced at a rate and size determined by the District Landscape Architect. Vegetation and permanent erosion control will be subject to approval by the District Landscape Architect. In addition, any tree removal due to this project will be replaced at a ratio determined by the District Landscape Architect.

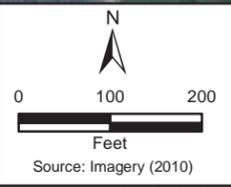
The proposed retaining walls would most likely feature a fractured rib texture for aesthetic enhancement and graffiti deterrence purposes and would be designed to be consistent with the retaining walls that are included along SR-210. This would help the retaining wall structure to visually fit in with the overall SR-210 corridor. Any aesthetic treatments will be designed to be consistent with the overall SR-210 corridor in the City of Highland. There is no Aesthetic Corridor Master Plan for this segment of SR-210. If a master plan is developed for this segment, the aesthetics at the SR-210/Base Line interchange will be designed by the Landscape Architecture Unit and approved by the District Landscape Architect to coincide with that master plan.

This review indicates that the project would not adversely affect any "Designated Scenic Resource" as defined by CEQA statutes or guidelines, or by Caltrans policy. As discussed above, the proposed project would be compatible with the existing visual character and quality of the existing study area, which would not be substantially altered by the proposed project. Implementation of the standard measures described above would ensure visual effects from the removal of vegetation are minimized.

Attachment A: Project Layout Map

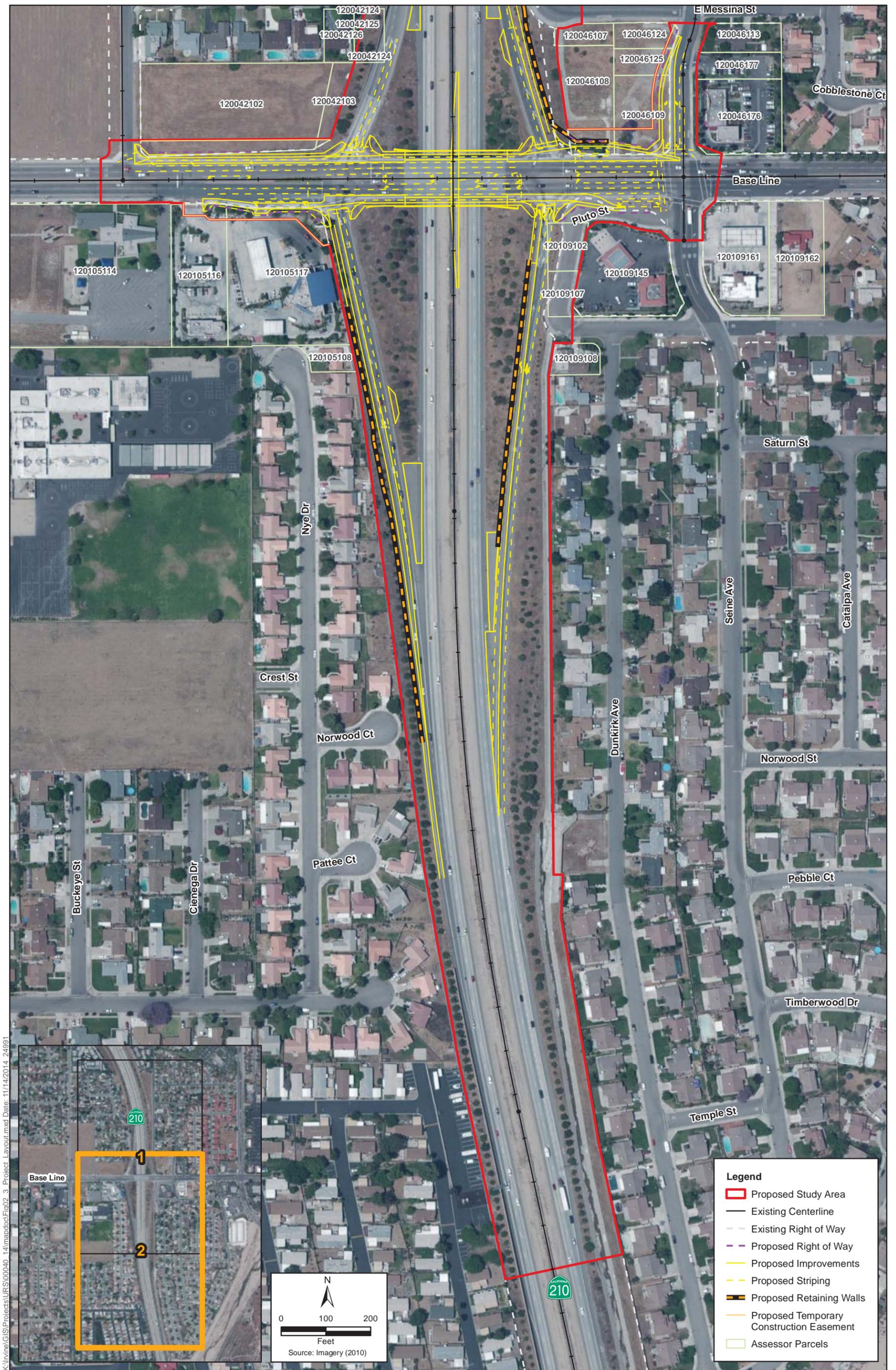


K:\In\GIS\Projects\URS\00040_14\mapdocs\Fig02_3_Project_Layout.mxd Date: 11/14/2014 2:49:11



| Legend | |
|--|--|
| | Proposed Study Area |
| | Existing Centerline |
| | Existing Right of Way |
| | Proposed Right of Way |
| | Proposed Improvements |
| | Proposed Striping |
| | Proposed Retaining Walls |
| | Proposed Temporary Construction Easement |
| | Assessor Parcels |

Figure 1 - Sheet 1
Project Layout Map
SR-210/Base Line Interchange Project



K:\In\GIS\Projects\URS\00040_14\mapdocs\Fig02_3_Project_Layout.mxd Date: 11/14/2014 24991

Figure 1 - Sheet 2
Project Layout Map
SR-210/Base Line Interchange Project